

A Letter From Your Dog

Dear Mom and Dad,

Sometimes it is hard for me to be good. I really try, but you humans can be really confusing.

I made a list of what I need to be a good dog. Please read it and don't get mad at me. I'm not perfect but I love you.

A Dog's Needs

I need consistent rules. I really don't mind rules, in fact, knowing the rules and that you will be consistent and fair makes me feel more secure.

I need to know what you want me to do. I get so discouraged when all I hear is "NO!" from you. Please train me so I know what to do to stay out of trouble.

I need lots of exercise. You might think I am exercising when you put me out in the yard, but sometimes I just lay there and get bored. Please take me for a walk or throw my ball for me. Sometimes I need to run and play with other dogs. I like to use my nose to find things too.

I need to be with you. Please let me be in the house with you. I get so lonely that I dig or bark or jump the fence when I am outside alone too long.

My ancestors had a job to do to keep them busy. Maybe it was herding, or bringing back ducks, or killing rats. What is my job now? Everyone says they want a smart dog, but us smart dogs get bored! When I find things to amuse me and keep me busy, sometimes it makes you mad. Please find something for me to do.

If I growl, please take the time to figure out why. I might be hurting somewhere, or maybe the kids are playing too rough with me and I have to warn them.

I need a quiet place that is mine. Sometimes I just want to rest.

I need a way to release tensions and amuse myself. Chewing is one of my favorite activities, even after I'm grown up. Please give me safe chewtoys so I don't make a mistake and make you mad.

Please take me places with you and let me meet different people. If I stay at home all the time, the world seems like a scary place. And when I'm scared I might have to growl to make people go away.

I need to know where I stand. I really want you to be the boss, so I don't have to make all the decisions. I am happy to follow your rules, but please don't yell at me. Just be consistent so I can learn what to do.

Pay attention to me when I am being good, and praise me. If you ignore me too much, I will find ways to get your attention, even if it means you get upset!

Love (and muddy pawprints),

Rover

(as dictated to Pat Scott)

