

Lessons From My Dog

My puppy dog, Violet, taught me something today. She was spayed and had other minor surgery yesterday, so of course she's not feeling great and has to wear a huge, uncomfortable donut around her neck.

I should add that she is the fussiest dog ever when it comes to anything on her except for a standard collar, and has a hissy fit if we try to use even the smallest, softest harness. She is a brave girl, afraid of nothing, yet hypersensitive to even the smallest owie. I should also add that she is the smartest dog I have ever met, and seems to understand nearly everything I say to her, even while deciding which of my instructions she feels like obeying.

While I was trying to make her as comfortable as I could, she looked up at me with the most forlorn expression. She seemed to be asking why I put the horrible collar on her, and why wouldn't I take it off. Why did I take her to that place that hurt her, when we loved each other so much? She seemed to be saying, I love you and trust you, but you let me down so very much.

Her look just melted my heart. I wanted to explain that the surgery was for her own good. It would prevent her from the painful and exhausting work of having puppies, of the harassment of male dogs when she is in season. It will help prevent cancer and other diseases, and give her, and us a better quality of life.

But of course none of this was within her ability to comprehend, even with her high intelligence for a dog. She had no choice but to trust me, and know I loved her and was trying to make things better.

And this is when her lesson hit me. I thought about God, a superior being, who does things that are right for us, but we have no way of understanding. Awful things, like taking away a beloved child, or allowing the best and brightest of us to suffer a terrible disease.

"Why?" we always ask. We can tell ourselves that everyone and everything must pass, in order to make room for the new. Sometimes there must be suffering, so that we can learn to make changes to make things better for others. Maybe God thinks it's better for parents to have a few precious years with their angels, than none at all, as there's only room for so many angels on this earth.

But the lesson my precious Violet was teaching me is that we can't possibly understand. We are human, and these things are simply outside our comprehension. We must trust God, or whatever universal power we believe in, that things happen for an unknowable reason, that He loves us and things are the way they must be.

We must cope the best we can, love and help others to cope as well. We must learn if there is a lesson to be learned, make changes if they are called for, and survive if we simply need to survive.

While I don't believe in throwing up our hands and "leaving it up to God" when things get tough – it is our duty to do all of which we are humanly capable. After that, we must have faith.