

My Senior Girl, Sunny

I have adopted many senior dogs (those aged seven or eight and beyond in human years), and have observed my young dogs age from puppyhood to adolescence to adult to middle-aged to senior). The time passes extremely quickly. As humans age at a far slower rate, it is difficult to comprehend how quickly our four-legged friends grow old and how little time we have to take notice of and observe the changes that take place in their physical and emotional well-being.

As always, our animal companions serve as our guides, teachers and healers. We learn so much about growing old from them. In so many ways, their aging process mimics and mirrors our own. They even share some of the same symptoms and manifestations of aging. They literally slow down – their activity level shifts from high to low. They often suffer from the same disabling illnesses, infirmities and diseases that we do ranging from diabetes and heart disease to cancer, arthritis as well as kidney and liver disease. They also receive similar medications and medical treatments to our own.

My 11 year old yellow lab, Sunny, is a very old 11. She is fun-loving, good-natured and courageous. She is covered with benign tumors (lipomas) and can barely get up and walk as a result of osteoarthritis. Yet her zest for life and strong will to remain with me never cease to impress and amaze me. A lesser dog would have succumbed to the severe pain she is far too often experiencing. . But not my Sunny. She perseveres and loves and loves – and loves. She relishes the cooler weather and breathes in huge gulps of fresh air. She loves her pond and all the creatures that are a part of the pond ecosystem – frogs, toads, fish, turtles, ducks, herons, egrets, and so on. She loves to lie in the grass under the sun. She loves her best friends, Kobuck and Khanti. They are inseparable, and I wonder how they will respond to her loss when she dies. I do not think she has a lot of time left with us. I love her and observe the changes that have taken place in her each and every day.

Sunny is on so much medication – Rimadyl for arthritis, Tramadol for pain, Hydrocodone for pain control periodical fungus medication, antibiotics, and so on. Most recently, the hydrocodone has been introduced into her daily medical diet. It has seemed to be responsible for a remarkable improvement in her mobility. She has slept on her sofa for the first time in months. It is so gratifying to see her more mobile and in less pain than she has been.

Sunny is pure love, joy and delight. She is the friend of everyone she meets. All who know her admire, respect and appreciate her for the beautiful warm, and wonderful spirit she is. I am thankful for each and every day I have to spend with her. May God bless our beloved Sunny and grant her peace, joy and love – and a whole lot of fun!!!!