

Only a hobby? Or a life lesson as well?

Many people love spending time with their pets. Some adults really love walking their pets to socialize with other dog owners. Most kids love playing with their pets, or giving them a bath. As a pet owner, one really enjoys taking care of the animal's daily needs. A dog in particular must be exercised every day since it is completely dependent on its owner for all its needs, including the need for good health and a safe environment.

Therefore, being responsible for a dog also means taking care of the dog so that it stays healthy. Furthermore, the owner must take responsibility for the safety of the dog and the safety of the people it comes into contact with. If one forgets any of these duties and responsibilities, or ignores any of the dog's needs, the dog will suffer. This teaches the owner that his responsibility to the dog is more important than his desire to simply do other things such as: talk on the phone, or watch TV. This is true not only for the care of a dog, but also for the care of oneself, another person, or one's job. Learning how to take responsibility for the health and welfare of a dog leads to

learning how to take responsibility for oneself.

Another lesson that someone can learn from having a dog is how to be empathetic. Empathy is the ability to put oneself in another person's, or in this case another creature's, situation and imagine that person's or creature's feelings or problems. A dog cannot express itself with speech, so its owner must learn how to interpret its behaviour. It is very useful to learn to understand what the dog's behaviour means. Is the dog frightened, aggressive, or sick? One needs to understand what is going on in the dog's mind. Understanding a situation from the dog's perspective helps us understand why the dog is behaving in a certain way and what the dog needs. The result of learning to read a dog's behaviour is that we can develop empathy. By learning how to empathize with a dog, is also possible to learn how to empathize with other people. This leads to become a more considerate and caring person.

Taken and adapted from: University of Victoria
English Language Centre. (1998). *Owning a Dog:*
Reading Comprehension

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/ELC/STUDYZONE/490/reading/dog2-reading.htm>