

Roscoe the Coonhound mix

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Antoine de Saint-Exupery writes about life and human nature in the *Little Prince*. The story of the rose is woven through the pages as the Little Prince learns about many meaningful things. He first encounters the rose growing on a single bush. The only one of its kind on his planet. The rose turns out to be quite beautiful and a tad demanding flower. He complies with her demands and accommodates her moods. One day he decides to leave his planet and the rose. She will have to get along without him. In his travels to another planet he meets up with a fox and strikes up a conversation about the art of friendship. On the fox's planet he sees a field of roses, all beautiful and identical to the one he left on his planet. Suddenly, he figures out all roses are not the same. None of the beauties in that field are like his rose at all. His rose is special because he watered her, protected her, put a clear bell on her against the cold at night, kept her from harm from caterpillars, and took pains not to hurt her feelings when she was vainglorious. She put much stock in her four little thorns to protect her and appear fierce, but he knew she was vulnerable. His flower's bravado moved him. Now, he understood—she was his rose, and for that reason special and unlike any other rose. The fox tells him, “Yes, you are responsible for those you tame, you are responsible for your rose”, “I am responsible for my rose” repeats the Little Prince after the fox.

Dogs and cats of every color, shape and size cast away by someone and left in a shelter remind me of the story of the Little Prince's rose. It only takes one person to make an

ordinary animal extraordinary and restore his world into one of goodness and love through their heart to heart connection. May all dogs find themselves as fortunate as Roscoe, an exuberant, lanky, black and tan Coonhound mix spotted and adopted by Roe in a shelter in Orange County when he was around a year old. Shortly after Roscoe came into her life, Roe met Rahul.

When I met Roe, Rahul and Roscoe they had been together six and half years and were extremely bonded. At that time, Roe who now is a “people” therapist, worked in a doggie deli. Her dog got the best quality food and care. Recently Roscoe had symptoms of lethargy, weight loss, vomiting, and diarrhea. When the vets could not determine what was wrong with him, they assumed it was some GI issue. He had been given antibiotics and meds for the vomiting, but they couldn’t trace the source of the problem. Western medicine had gone as far as it could go. The dog was scheduled for consultation with a holistic veterinarian soon. Roe brought him to me so we could check on how he felt and find out how she could help him. He threw up in Rahul’s car on the way to my office and I sensed that Roscoe, in addition to being weakened by illness, was also a very sensitive fellow prone to motion sickness.

At first glance Roscoe looked like a large hound dog, with long legs (the kind that hunts critters in the South). He appeared shy and a bit overwhelmed in my office. As he revealed himself in his consult, a beautiful, sensitive soul emerged and his appearance in my eyes took on a whole different bearing. That essence is what Roe saw in that young dog at the shelter and how her love and devotion over time made Roscoe, Roscoe. Roe, Rahul and I would like to share this dog’s spirit with all of you.

Here is Roscoe's first transcript from 3/9/2011:

BN: Hello Roscoe,

Roscoe: Where is Rahul, I need Rahul.

BN: Rahul is clearing up the car (throw-up all over his back seat!). He will be up later.

Would you like to share with me?

Roscoe: I am worried, I am always worried.

BN I see that. What concerns you?

Roscoe: Rahul, I want Rahul to be here.

BN: He will come when he is done. All is okay I'll explain your concern to Roe and she will share it with Rahul.

Roscoe: I am a very happy, happy dog. I am SO, SO, SO H-A-P-P-Y all all the time. All the time. I am happy. I ADORE MY HOME. I AM SO SO LUCKY TO HAVE ROE AND RAHUL. I AM A VERY LUCKY DOG. I am.

BN: What have you come to do?

Roscoe: I have come to be a gentle giant. A gentle giant. I have no need to fight, I have no need to assert. I just want my people. I ADORE people, I do. I adore people, they have been so, so, good to me. I adore people.

BN: What are you teaching?

Roscoe: I teach special and sensitive. I am in tune with EVERYTHING, everything and that is a big task. It rests heavy on my shoulders to be so aware. Most dogs aren't this AWARE. I am very AWARE.

BN: You mean to humans?

Roscoe: Yes.

BN: Emotions?

Roscoe: Yes, everything my people go through, I go through. I am aware. Please let them know how aware I am, I am very aware.

BN: I will. What happened when you got sick? (With abdominal viral (?) infection.)

Roscoe: I am still sick. I am still sick. Nausea, fatigue, dizzy.

BN: I see, I'll explain that to Roe. She is going to take you to a gentle vet with gentle medicine to help complete the healing. This will be in so many days. (BN flashed the # of days telepathically.) The vet will also add something to the food that will help the tummy settle. What does Roe need to know she doesn't already know?

Roscoe: I am so devoted, so. I am so devoted and that I am still feeling sick.

BN: What does Rahul need to know he doesn't already know?

Roscoe: I'm too tired to run. Too tired to run. (Takes him out on walks and runs.)

BN: What were you before you came in as this beautiful Roscoe dog?

Roscoe: I was a bird. A very beautiful and gentle BIRD. I love, love, love birds. I do.

BN: Interesting. Why did you pick dog (incarnation)?

Roscoe: Because I wanted to be with people. I loved people.

BN: How does the raw food feel for your digestion?

Roscoe: Okay. I need simple, everything simple. One thing at a time. Simple.

BN: Roscoe are you ever bored? (Roe and Rahul were concerned because he is an only dog and they both work during the day.)

Roscoe: No.

Roe and Rahul took Roscoe to the Animal Healing Center in San Diego. There it was determined he had cancerous tumors and the removal of a kidney was advised. He came through the surgery and made a good recovery.

Here is Roe's account of what followed in her own words.

~~When we booked our original appointment with Brigitte we were also awaiting our initial appointment at the Animal Healing Center (AHC) since the traditional vets had failed us and Roscoe remained ill. Shortly after we finally met Dr. Katy Kangas at AHC. She took tremendous time to get to know Roscoe, listen to our concerns, and did a very thorough exam. Whereas the other vets dismissed Roscoe as simply having a sensitive stomach, Katy did a thorough body exam and right away found the dreaded lump in his kidney. She then called her peers and spent the next several days advocating for us to get Roscoe an emergency surgery to remove the kidney with the tumor. She went above and beyond to help us and this began an important relationship for Roscoe and for us because we finally had a vet that understood Roscoe and our commitment to him.~~

Personally, after seeing how ill Roscoe had been at the time of our consult, I was amazed at his recovery. At the age of seven and a half, seemingly, like a cat, he had lives to spare and his people made the most of their time together.

Two and a half years later Roe and Rahul made a second appointment with me. Roscoe's time of remission was over. A cancerous tumor in his mouth had been partially removed and a recent chest x-ray revealed tumors in his lungs. They needed to know how Roscoe, now ten years old, felt and were looking

for support and clarity from him on how to proceed. In addition, Roe had a few questions written out:

What were his food preferences: raw, home cooked, canned?
Did he like to go to the dog park or simply go on walks?
Did he have pain or discomfort?
How did the construction in their home affect him?
What can they do to stop him from barking at skunks and getting sprayed?

Roscoe walked into my office with confidence, and it was obvious his car ride had not been difficult. He had made tremendous headway. By this time Roe and Rahul were married and were expecting a baby.

Second visit of 12/26/2014:

BN: Hello Roscoe, This is Brigitte the One Who Listens. Would you like to share with me for your people Roe and Rahul?

Roscoe: I am happy here. It is such a good fun place to be. I love it here. Very happy. Very happy. Very.

BN: Great. Roe and Rahul would like to know a few things. How do you feel?

Roscoe: I feel great, great, great. I AM SO SO SO HAPPY, SO HAPPY.

(I sensed he enjoyed the company of the contractors in his home.)

BN: Excellent. What can Roe do to make you happy at home?

Roscoe: Be with me. The most important for me is to be WITH. I value being with above all else, all else.

BN: And what can Rahul do to make you happy at home?

Roscoe: I LOVE RAHUL, I LOVE RAHUL. HE CAN PLAY WITH ME. LOVE TO PLAY WITH RAHUL.

BN: What do you like best: To go to the park? or go on walks?

Roscoe: I love being with, I just want to be with.

BN: Is the park with the other dogs enjoyable?

Roscoe: I don't know. (Remember in the previous transcript Roscoe said he liked people more than other dogs...)

BN: Okay, I'll discuss this with your people.

Roscoe: I just want to be with, I love to be with. I want to be with. (His people.)

BN: They would like to know what food you prefer?

Raw: *okay*

Home cooked: *okay*

Canned: *less okay.*

(Reader you will notice he isn't enthusiastic about any food really, okay in dog speak means, okay. Not great, not bad.)

BN: They told me you chased skunks in the yard, and that can be a problem.

Roscoe: It is my space. No other animals are allowed on my space.

BN: I understand...but skunks will spray you!

Roscoe: I BARK, BARK, BARK AND THEN THEY SPRAY.

BN: Can you leave them be?

Roscoe: Why? Doesn't make sense. They are INTRUDERS, INTRUDERS, INTRUDERS.

BN: Do you mind the construction at home?

Roscoe: Company, love the company. Don't really like to be home alone.

(In the previous transcript we asked if he got bored, and he replied, "no". However, he now shows that if he isn't bored he does get lonely when left alone, but that doesn't mean he wants a dog companion.)

BN: What do I need to know I don't already know about you?

Roscoe: I'm SO SO SO H-A-P-P-Y.

Then we had a question about John, a longtime friend who often visited and took care of Roscoe. They always shared a special bond from the time he was adopted.

BN: What does John need to know he doesn't already know?

Roscoe: He knows EVERYTHING. He knows. I so so so appreciate him He is so UPBEAT. So UPBEAT. Adore him. CAN TRUST HIIM. He is trustworthy. I trust him.

Roscoe, like most animals lives mostly in the present moment. Undoubtedly, he has health issues and they impact his daily life, but he is so well supported and nurtured that he focuses on how happy his relationship with his people make him feel. At this point in time, the happiness outweighs any physical setbacks.

Here is the second part of Roe's account in her words:

~~Roscoe maintained regular appointments with Katy over the next 3 years and received acupuncture, massage, and Chinese herbs. Katy also taught us how to home cook for Roscoe and educated us on an anti-cancer diet. You may not believe it but Roscoe LOVED going to each appointment! He never minded the

needles because Katy would distract him with delicious treats. For those three years, AHC and Katy became a refuge to help us through the ups and downs of his cancer. Each time he walked in he felt like a rock star. All the staff knew him by name and greeted him with love and treats. His masseuse Ann even dubbed him "The Miracle Dog" because he remained so healthy and happy through it all. For the majority of his treatment, Roscoe remained full of life and energy. None of the other patients even suspected he was ill. And yet cancer has a way of sneaking up on you and we had a few close calls. Each time we thought it would be the end, Roscoe would suddenly make another recovery and pull through. His initial kidney cancer went into remission but later returned as salivary cancer and then finally lung cancer. Through all his different specialists and medical providers, we maintained his treatment with Katy because it was his second home and we truly felt her care and treatment helped to improve the quality of his life. Katy always kept a positive attitude and hope for Roscoe's recovery. Katy was one of the only calls I needed to make to discuss the eventual decision to end his pain. I could hear the sadness in her voice when we agreed it was time. She remained a champion for Roscoe and an ally for us. Without her, I have no doubt Roscoe would have suffered needlessly and likely passed away before his time.~~

Roe, like Roscoe, was a highly sensitive individual and they were well matched for their journey together. It is important to remember he had a bird past life. It gave him an unusual sensitivity and would set him up a bit differently for this lifetime. A dog that feels everything has a lot of processing to do because he would register a lot of complex people feelings and emotions that most other dogs ignore. Roe would sense when he was overwhelmed and be able to manage a situation for him. For example, if he didn't particularly like the dog park, they didn't go that often and took him on walks. They learned by his behavior he preferred to stay inside rather than be out in the yard while they were away, and let

him do so. Their good friend John played a big role in Roscoe's life, because even though he was prone to worry, he found he could trust this person at a deep level. He would not be exposed to uncomfortable situations and if it did happen, John would know how to protect Roscoe. In the last year of Roscoe's life John even made special visits weekly on his lunch break to give him extra TLC. Roscoe, who started out as a typical 'diamond in the rough' big dog learned, bloomed and flourished. Unlike the Little Prince's rose, he never again had to fend for himself in a big, unfriendly world. Even though it was quite a challenge at the beginning, his people whole heartedly took responsibility for his wellbeing, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Roscoe passed away with assistance at home on July 3, 2014. He was eleven years old. He lived his life to the fullest with the assistance of his people. When the time came, Roscoe let them know very clearly he was ready to go. Roe wrote "As tired as he was on his final day, when the veterinarian came to the house to put him down, he actually wagged his tail when he saw her. He knew exactly what was going to happen and he embraced it."

Next blog: Roscoe on the Otherside.