

In 2015, I Resolve....

'Tis the season to make New Year's resolutions and I have ideas for some really good ones. I'm not intruding into the realm of your behavior but rather I'm proposing that you make some resolutions for your Weimaraner. After all, as the human you're in charge of fostering good health, shaping behavior and "civilizing" your canine partner, kicking the year off with a plan will benefit both your dog and your own feeling of accomplishment.

Let's make 2015 a better year for your Weimaraner; here are ten resolutions that will do just that:

1. Get more exercise. Any description of a Weimaraner stresses that they are energetic, active dogs that crave exercise. Get out there with your dog and both you and your dog will profit.
2. Work on shortening toe nails. Set up a regular "manicure" schedule and try to give your dog a healthy nail length. Long nails set your dog up for potential injury, splayed feet and skeletal alignment problems.
3. Improve your dog's behavior. Pick one behavior that needs improvement and take action to change your dog for the better. Train at home or take a class but take the time to make a change.
4. Challenge their mental ability. Mental stimulation is vital for an intelligent breed. Invent a game that makes them think, take them into new exciting environments, or give them something to do that tickles their insatiable curiosity.
5. Regularly brush your dog. Smooth coated dogs need brushing just like our long-haired friends. Tired of those grey, little tumbleweeds of hair that collect under the furniture? Regular brushing works wonders and besides brushing is much more fun than vacuuming.
6. Get to a good weight. Isn't it amazing how this one shows up for both human and canine New Year's resolution lists? Enough said on that one; you know I'm right.
7. Work toward cleaner teeth. Whether you scale your dog's teeth, or have them professionally cleaned, good dental hygiene is important for your dog's overall health.
8. Get an annual "well dog" checkup. A regular vet visit will put your mind at ease and make sure you find small medical problems before they become big ones. (It's also a great time to check your dog's weight, so you can take steps to stop slow, insidiously creeping weight gain.)

9. Replace some of your dog's old equipment. Spruce up your dog with a new collar, splurge on a great toy, or fix up some of the old stuff that your dog regularly uses. It's amazing how painting my old Agility equipment makes me use it more.
10. Teach your dog one good trick. Your dog may be brilliant in the field or conformation ring but what do you do when a non-dog person asks, "What kind of tricks can he do?" They won't understand how your pride swells when his point is staunch or that he can hold a stack for "forever." Take the time to teach one generic trick that shows how intelligent and talented your dog is in any situation. Need an idea for a trick to teach? There are lots of dog training books and tips on the Internet about easy tricks that will dazzle.

I hope that my resolution list will inspire you to take some positive actions in the coming year. While some resolutions don't make it past New Year's Day, others imbed themselves into lifelong changes. Pick out a few good ones and make it a better future for you and your Weimaraner.

Carole Lee Richards

PO Box 516, Collingswood, NJ08108

ymar_column@yahoo.com