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My Golden Gym

By Marcia Passos Duffy

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by: **Marcia Passos Duffy**

"Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful." --- Ann Landers

A year ago, almost to the day, I had an epiphany while exercising at my local gym. I was on a treadmill sweating along with about 30 other people, glued to the latest CNN horrors on the big-screen, when I glanced outside at the absolutely gorgeous spring day.

That was the precise moment when I decided to get a dog.

Okay, it wasn't the "precise" moment...because I had been toying with the idea for almost a year. But up until that moment last year on the treadmill, I felt there was really no good reason to get a dog other than to complicate my already busy life and to add another mouth to feed along with our 2 children, 4 guinea pigs, 3 cats, 3 fish, and a then-leased horse for our daughter.

But the more I looked outside that day, the more I wanted to be out there, walking, maybe even jogging, alongside a furry devoted friend. Yes, the dog would have a purpose - it would be my walking dog! An exercise dog. A reason to get out of that stuffy gym and into the great outdoors! After all, what was the point of living in scenic New England if I rarely got outside to enjoy it? And I never walked in the woods alone - my New York mentality and paranoia would not allow it --- my heart raced with every squirrel or bird that snapped a twig or rustled a leaf. My dog would be my protector - at least a deterrent --- against any would-be assassin/rapist/kidnapper lurking in the woods.

Suddenly, the reason to get a dog made perfect sense.

In his insightful book, "The New Work of Dogs" John Katz makes the case for the new role of dogs. Once herders, guard and hunting dogs, now our canine friends have a new work: tending to life, love and family. Dogs need a job, and they will adapt to whatever circumstances their human companions give them. What I wanted from my dog was simple: security while walking in the woods and a reason

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to walk everyday.

A survey done a few years ago in Australia showed that dog owners walked an average of 18 minutes more per week than non-dog owners. Studies abound extolling the psychological benefits of dog. Plus...dogs are not afraid of the dark, are excellent listeners, they're never critical and never gossip, they follow you everywhere, and no matter what - your dog will always love you.

Last August we got a golden retriever puppy. Much like when I became a new mother, I vastly underestimated how much work goes into raising a small being. By the 2nd week of night-crying (me and the puppy) I was beginning to rethink the merits of having a dog. I was going outside more times than I wanted to be outside. (Uh, like, 8-10 times a day). Long walks were out of the question as Sadie would plop down for a nap at the most inconvenient times (halfway through our walks). But as she grew, so did her seriousness about her "job" to take me into the woods and keep me fit. We were soon up to 3 miles a day by the winter. She also was housebroken and down to 3-4 "business walks" a day. I

enjoyed our walks, and by the looks of her smile (yes, dogs do smile!) she was loving every minute of it too.

There is nothing like a dog to keep you in touch with nature. I don't think I would voluntarily go outside in sub-freezing weather. Or take a walk around the block at night before bedtime. But I do with Sadie. And I'm grateful for that. I'm also grateful for the stars that I see most nights. For the phases of the moon, which I now notice. For the changing seasons that I witness first hand with each familiar tree around the bend. Grateful for the ever-changing Ashuelot River near our home, with its pattern of freezing and thawing. For the birds, who rarely sing in the dead of winter and who return with happy songs in April. It is an interesting world, one which I have in the past avoided due to the inconvenience of being outside in the rain, sleet, cold or snow.

Now, at 10 months old, Sadie is officially my walking dog. And thanks to a Puppy Kindergarten class she can also sit, stay, come and heel on command. She is also unbelievably devoted not only to me - but to everyone in the family, even the cats and the guinea pig. She lets me know when the mail has arrived. She keeps my feet warm when I'm at writing at the computer. She looks at me with those warm loving eyes like...she thinks I'm just wonderful! She has become more than my walking dog --- she's my, well, co-worker here at my home office. I can't imagine life without her.

The two of us, walk --- a lot. I feel good, healthy. And I no longer go to the gym. No need for that anymore --- now that I have my "golden" gym.

You have permission to publish this article electronically or in print, free of charge, as long as the byline is included. A courtesy copy of your publication would be appreciated --- please send to editor@theheartofnewengland.com. A .jpeg photo of the author and her dog are available upon request.

Marcia Passos Duffy is a freelance writer and the publisher and editor of The Heart of New England

My Golden Gym

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No More Guilt...

By Kim Klaver

"Every time I come home from the gym, my husband is waiting for me and goes, 'Well did you talk to anyone about the business?'

It's getting to the point where I don't want to go to the gym anymore. I don't want to accost people there, I just want to work out. I don't know what to do, really. I've told him I don't want to talk about the business at the gym, but he's waiting to ask me each time I come home.

I'm thinking of just quitting the business. I hate this. What should I do?"

Many people do not want to accost people wherever they go. The "three foot" rule is fine for some, but is distasteful for others. Don't use that rule if it doesn't go with your personal style.

In my last business, my first (and best) recruit said "I'll only consider this if you don't ask me to accost everyone I know. I like to keep my social life separate from the business, and if I can't do that, I'd rather not get involved."

And that, 15 years ago, is what started my quest to find methods of reaching out that did NOT rely on going to friends, family or neighbors. Or gym pals. My friend and many others have made gangster money with cold market, their way.

So reps: no more guilt. Don't do the business at the expense of your social life, your friends or family. It's not worth it.

Decide when and how you WILL do your reaching out, and do it. Tell you upline what you are doing, and to please accept that and be supportive of your working style.

If they don't accept the way you'd like to do your business, you can unplug and just carry on yourself. After all, you are in business for yourself, yes? There are many other resources you can find to support your working style.

Kim Klaver is Harvard & Stanford educated. Her 20 years experience in network marketing have resulted in a popular blog,

, a podcast,

and a

giant resource site,

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