

An Old Dog, A New Trick

A senior citizen was walking his senior dog. Both were named Sid. Now Sid didn't name his dog after himself. Sid, the dog, was an older rescue dog and he came complete with a name, which just happened to be Sid. Sid, the old guy, thought having a namesake dog would be a hoot. When someone called their name, neither knew which one was being summoned. Sometimes you got one, sometimes the other, sometimes both, but most times neither. Sid the guy would just tell you he thought you were calling the dog. And if you were calling the dog and he didn't come, well, you might write that off as bad hearing. It can happen to dogs. You can tell when sirens don't get a response. Doorbells ring and there's no barking. Yes, there are ways you can tell. But, Sid, the guy, could relate to all the problems Sid, the dog, was going through. They shared so much. Oh, so much.

Here's where things get up close and personal. Both of our Sids had a difficult time going. For Sid the guy, this was noted when trips to the bathroom at night were mostly sleep interrupted and not much relief. At least that's the way things went until Sid manned up and visited his urologist. It seems the old prostate was making things difficult, but Sid, the guy, could take some pills and things improved. Man's best friend couldn't pick up the phone and call the vet for an appointment. Sid the dog moaned, but Sid the guy didn't understand. Sid, the guy, still took his dog for daily strolls. But Sid, the guy, had poor vision and was easily distracted by anything along the walk. What Sid the guy was not taking note of was how many things Sid, the dog, was trying in vain to mark. Sid would lift his leg, but no marking was taking place. A dog with an old man's problem. This pattern was repeated over and over. Sid, the guy, just figured Sid the dog, was doing a masterful job of relieving himself. So many stops. So many leg lifts. Sid the guy figured Sid the dog had really strong leg muscles. All that time balancing on one leg and stretching the other skyward. Yep, really strong legs. That those leg lifts were all in vain was something that went right over Sid the guy's head.

What's a dog to do? Sid the dog did meet other dogs on those daily walks. They would either pass or fail the sniff test. If they passed the test, Sid would ask for advice. Do you know of anything for those times when your marker won't mark? Most dogs said they'd never heard of such a thing. But they were young, so what did they know. One day Sid encountered St. Pugnacious, a very proper Pug, and rumored to be connected to higher authorities. That's how he got the Saint designation. St. Pugnacious had heard of the problem when hearing confessions from other elderly dogs, but all St. Pug offered in the way of advice was to stay hydrated. Sid knew that was not the problem. It was getting that hydration to recycle. That's where the problem was. St. Pugnacious was sympathetic and suggested that when his advice failed, he suggested consulting Butch, the junkyard dog.

Sid the dog knew about Butch. He knew it was usually best to avoid Butch. He wasn't in a good mood very often and he was the neighborhood bully. If you had a bone, Butch would take it. He wouldn't ask, he'd just take. But Butch was street smart and that is why St. Pugnacious suggested Sid seek him out.

The junkyard wasn't on the normal path that Sid the guy took Sid the dog on when they did their daily constitutional. So, Sid the dog had to take control and lead the way. Sid the guy wasn't used to Sid the dog putting up resistance along their usual path, but when he did, Sid the guy figured, what the heck. And so, Sid the dog managed to lead Sid the guy past the junkyard and Sid begged Butch for help. As luck would have it, Butch was in a good mood. The delivery van for Mad Max Meats had finally broken down and had been taken to the junkyard just that morning. Not only was the aroma great, but a few wonderful scraps were left in the back of the van. Butch had made short work of those.

Sid said, "Butch, my marker won't mark. I try and try, but my stream seems to have dried up faster than the Colorado River. Is there anything you know of that can help?" Butch had been around the block so to speak. He'd heard it all before. "Seein' as how you caught me in a good mood, I'll give ya some free advice. When ya goin' through the park, just past the second fire hydrant there's a patch of [saw grass palmetto](#). It looks like a patch a weeds. Eat ya fill of that every day. Word on the street is ya'll be marking like a kid again."

The trip home wouldn't take the Sids through the park. But with a tug here and a nudge there, Sid the guy found himself on the scenic route home. He didn't mind that his dog had insisted on this route, as it was a nice change. Sid the guy decided he liked this route and would take it from now on. He wasn't sure why his dog stopped by a patch of what Sid the guy took for weeds, but he indulged his dog and enjoyed the pause. It was a chance to catch his breath and take in the view. He took little notice of the fact that his dog was munching on those weeds. Why Sid the guy didn't even realize that Sid the dog was once again marking fire hydrants and other spots. It seems only one old dog managed to learn a new trick, but that was sufficient. Sid the guy just figured that pep in the step of his old dog must be due to all those leg lifts he'd noticed. Some old dogs learn new tricks, others, not so much.

Submitted by Robert Rietschel, April 27,2023
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