

Shannon and Biscuit's Story



Oh wow where do we begin our story? Since we are a team there are two sides to our tale. Biscuit had his calling and I also had mine. I did not realize what mine was until I got Biscuit as a puppy. He has guided me through life more than anything else that I have encountered. It is crazy how they truly are "Man's Best Friend". I could not picture my life without him and I wonder what had filled the space that he so consumes in my heart now.

I will first start with my need and want to do something great and wonderful. I was not sure what this was until Biscuit came into my life. But like I said there are two sides to a team and my

story started way before Biscuit was born. First off, I am so honored to be recognized as the team of the month for March. I have been with DPP and AHA for over 2 years and am glad that we get to shine at this moment. March is a very special month for me as well. It is the month of my anniversary, 1 year on the 2nd, Biscuit's birthday is on the 14, he will be 4, it is the month of my brother's birthday, who is also my best friend, and it is also the month of the anniversary of my mother's death. I was sixteen years old when I found my mother dead after she committed suicide. I was the only person there and so I called 911. It was too late and a few days later I had to bury her. I say I was the only person there but not the



only one. My mother's dog, Charlie a Maltese, was by my side and discovered the horror with me as well. That night when I could not sleep he was by my side to soothe me. When I was lonely and felt like I had no one to talk to he was there. If I needed to cry or just laugh at a memory that I was looking back on he would listen and not judge me. A few months later my father made me get rid of Charlie because he did not want a dog in the house. I found a really nice couple and they took him in with open arms. I have not seen him since that day.

It has been 14 years since she died and my brother and I finally have closure. We just got back from a trip to Tahiti and Moorea and spread her ashes. We had been through all the stages of loss, and joy or celebration was the last one. It took us 14 years but we got there and decided that this trip together was the best way to express those emotions. And it was, it was an amazing trip and bonding experience for the both of us. I am telling you this because I feel that Biscuit has helped me see the joy and happiness in little things. For so long I held anger and a grudge that I realized that I was not gaining anything from this. Biscuit, like most animals, is so simple and sincere. He finds his happiness in the smallest of things; whether it is a new stick that fell from the tree into the yard or just a stranger that bends down to pet him. Over the past 3 ½ years that I have had Biscuit I think of my most memorable times and he is in every one of them. When I got engaged he was by my side on that mountainside when I said yes, when we bought our first house he was the first one through the door of our new home, and when I found out I was pregnant and I screamed with joy he shoved open the bathroom door. Every time I have something to share he is always there.



I never realized what an impact Charlie had on me after my mother's death until I got Biscuit 11 years later. I thought maybe if Charlie was around longer after she died I wouldn't have performed poorly in school, I would have been more social and had more friends, I would have had someone to talk to and listen to me, or I would have found the joy in simple things even though I was so sad. After having Biscuit I just knew I wanted to share the joy of an animal's love and help someone else get through whatever rough times they were having, make them smile or just make it a little easier for them.



Biscuit's story started on Memorial Day 2006. I was on crutches and hobbled into the kennel. I saw all the barking and jumping puppies everywhere. I looked directly in front of me to find the dog that I had been waiting for for years looking back at me. He was the only dog that was not barking or jumping and he was the only dog sitting all by himself in a little pen. I dropped my crutches and picked him up immediately and have not let go since. Well I had to put him down eventually so I could call

me husband, boyfriend at the time, and convince him that I found the most amazing thing in the world. I told Jared it was his fault, it all started with him actually. He is the one that convinced me to go to the kennels to cheer up. Who doesn't get that warm and fuzzy feeling looking at puppies?

I was a waitress at the time and had to have corrective bone surgery on my foot. The doctor said I would have to be on crutches for a few months. All I could think was what am I going to do. I can't work, drive

or do anything fun this summer, but I needed it done. So I went in the end of May and got my cast and crutches. I laid on the couch for about a week and a half before I started getting stir crazy. Jared was working and I was invited to a barbeque at his parent's house. I did not want to go, I guess I just wanted to mope around the house instead. Jared told his brother and sister in law to come pick me up and take me to the puppy kennels and then to the barbeque to cheer me up and get me out of the house. Jared had taken me to these kennels before just to make me smile. We never really had intentions of buying a puppy, it was just for smiles. I had loved Bulldogs and thought about getting one on and off for a couple years but never followed through and looked at breeders. I had never seen Bulldog puppies at this place until that day. Biscuit was the last one left and like I said, all by himself. They had received the whole litter from a breeder in Kansas and all the other puppies sold quickly. Biscuit had been sick so they kept him in back and just put him out a few hours earlier when he felt better. So after I called Jared and begged like a little kid I went to the barbeque. Jared arrived a few hours later and told me to get in the car we are going to get him. I said that he probably wasn't still available and Jared told me he already went by and looked at him and told the owner's of the kennel to hold him and that he would be right back.



From that day on Biscuit has taught me so much. The first thing he taught me is patience. When you have a cast and two crutches to hobble on and a puppy that is afraid of the stairs in your 3 story townhome you get very patient. Jared would be working all day so I had to potty train Biscuit. We did not have our own yard so I had to take him out myself. I would have to sit down on the first step, shove my crutches down the stairs, scoot on my bottom and hold Biscuit in one arm like a football. This went on for a couple days, several times a day.

Biscuit was always so patient and calm with me. He never made a mess in the house and eventually we got a system down.

The next thing he taught me was to have courage. About two weeks after I had Biscuit my doctor gave me a walking cast and told me I needed to try walking on it with one crutch. Biscuit was getting bigger now but he was still not sure about the stairs inside or outside the townhome. I got home and was still using 2 crutches. Jared told me I needed to try and I said I was too afraid to walk on it. He left for work the next morning and I woke to Biscuit whining, he had to go outside. I let him out of his crate and started to sit down and get ready to do my



regular routine of getting down the stairs when all of a sudden Biscuit was down to the 3rd step and looking back at me. He was looking at me with this face like, "Come on mom, if I can do it you can too". He gave me the courage to try to use one crutch and I did. I made it all the way to the bottom with no problems. He walked each step with me along the way. This went on several times that day and each time I got more courage and my leg felt stronger each time. I still had the railings for support and would not stray far from them but I was making progress.

The next thing Biscuit taught me was to not lose your sense of direction and to keep your balance, in a literal and physical sense. I wanted to get him enrolled in puppy training but first I had to get myself off crutches completely and get him on a leash. I went back to the doctor and they said I had made real progress and had most of the strength back in my leg and foot. He said I was now ready to get rid of the



other crutch and just use the walking cast, however I was so nervous. I wasn't sure how I would balance myself without the crutch. Again Biscuit must have known and he went to the door on this beautiful summer day and looked at me with that determined look. I grabbed his collar and leash and went out the front door and down the steps with my one crutch. I put the collar and leash on him and he just waited for me. I put my crutch down and took my first step without any support. I was afraid that Biscuit would pull on the leash and I would lose my balance but he just waited patiently until I was ready for the next step. I would take a step and he would take a step too. Finally we were walking, slowly but moving. We had been walking for about 20 minutes and I realized I had been looking down the whole time at my foot and cast and not paying any attention to where I was going. I was really tired and ready to get back home. We had not lived in this neighborhood long so I really did not know what direction our townhome was in. Once more Biscuit must have sensed my

hesitation on going further and he started walking me towards a familiar path that we were just on and I recognized the way. Once we got home I realized I had got my balance back and I was not afraid to just try using my sense for direction.

Of course Biscuit taught me many other things along the way but all I know is that I wanted to share this gift with others. It also made me realize what an impact Charlie had on me after my mother's death. I thought how wonderful this would be to give the same amount of joy, happiness and love that I got from Biscuit to other people. So here I am over two years into the best thing I ever did in my life. Thank you to all the people at DPP and AHA for all the support and guidance. And especially a thank you to Charlie, wherever he may be, for guiding me years later to something so wonder and to Biscuit for giving me the courage and patience to pursue his mission and my passion as well.

