



Emily Martin and Miara



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I was living up life in my 20's, working seasonal jobs, summers as an animal trainer presenting shows, and winters in Mammoth Lakes, CA as a snowboard bum. I wasn't just a snowboard bum, I worked 2 jobs at all times, one being a dog musher. After my 3rd and hardest mushing season (I ran sleds for 28 days straight), I decided I was ready for the commitment of a dog. I expressed this interest to my boss and a few short months later, he told me to come pick out my puppy. Miara was



from an accidental litter, but she is no accident to my life! Miara is a Malamute Husky mix and I have been part of her life since day one, however, it wasn't until around 6 weeks old that she chose me to be her mom.

When I brought Miara home I had a lot of mixed emotions, like all new parents do. I wanted her to turn out perfect but was also a new dog owner (did not have family dogs until I was 17yrs old). I knew that people would have high expectations of me since I have a degree in Exotic Animal Training and Management and working with animals was my jam. I thought to myself "Can I transfer my skills to this adorable fluff-ball puppy? Her name does mean wise after all....who will be the wiser one, dog or owner?"



Miara came everywhere with me and instantly melted the hearts of everyone she met. For the first few years of her life, I had jobs that she could join me at, either with the sled dogs or at dog training jobs in Oregon. We were also doing a lot of pet sitting; my dad always said Miara was my "nomad" dog, not knowing where to call home. This can be tough on most dogs and is not the right lifestyle for many, but with Miara it made her shine and taught her much resilience. She has dog and human

friends that love her like their own in California, Oregon and now Colorado.

Miara is so much more than my best friend, she is my companion, my adventure buddy, and my business partner for my dog training business. She brings me daily laughs, and even holds conversations with me (so helpful to get me through Covid times). If you have met

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her, you too have probably had a conversation with her. Husky sass is one of my favorite things about her! However, it has also been the most challenging aspect of her being a therapy dog.

Miara and I moved to Denver in 2015 for a job at the Denver Zoo. Once we got settled it was time to finally check off my goal of becoming a therapy team. As Miara entered her senior years, I knew that therapy work would be a great job for her as she retires from being my business partner. She would prefer to get loved on by people, rather than help naughty dogs learn manners.



We began our journey to be a Pet Partners team with the goal to work with kids. As we started training for the CGC test, I learned that my years of trying to make Miara “perfect” paid off--Miara was at the top of the class and passed on our first try! I did not tell the trainer that I was also a trainer until the end of class. She laughed and said, “Oh that makes so much more sense.” Northern breeds are a challenging breed, yet Miara gets compliments on her good behavior on a regular. I guess I did transfer my training skill to that little fluff-ball puppy!

Passing the PP evaluation test was the easy part for us. The challenge I had and still have is discouraging Miara from having conversations with people of her pack. As we all know, barking is not allowed during testing and visits. I always joke with Linda F that you can’t take the happy wooooo wooooo woos out of a Husky. When Miara sees someone that has become part of her pack, she loves to welcome them with her wooooo wooooo woos and then leans in for pets. We have worked hard on this and I can often get her to shut it off, but sometimes it still sneaks out. At our first evaluation, Miara had previously met one of the evaluators Linda F and after we passed Linda laughed and said “I could see Miara’s mouth quiver every time she looked at me, she was holding back her hellos.” So much sass and intelligence my girl has!

Miara and I have been volunteering at Rocky Vista University for 2.5 years and were sad to not go this past year, due to Covid closures. Miara loves seeing the students and doing visits with Willy and Linda and other DPP teams. One of Miara’s biggest fans at RVU, a student that she shares a birthday with, found Miara on Instagram and reached out to us during Covid to ask how Miara was doing and to let me know that she misses their visits. Miara makes a lasting impression and has lots of shedding husky hair to go around, so that students will remember her even after their



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visit, despite a lint roller. We would still like to work with children but are not sure that is the best fit as Miara gets extra chatty with kids. So, unless I can find some kids so that Miara can practice being quiet around, we will probably stick to our RVU visits. Miara is also



showing more signs of her old lady age, she is 12 ½ and is more nervous on slick floors in unfamiliar places as her arthritis progresses. We are doing water physical therapy and pain med management to make her as comfortable as possible. I often get told she does not look her age and she is overall healthy, so I have a few more years with her. She still LOVES her daily walks and seeing her favorite humans. She also got a bratty sister in 2020 and is teaching her the ropes (well kind of).

To wrap this up and share a few training tips of how Miara became the dog she is today. When training your dog think about what you want your dog to do versus not do. Train the positive behavior instead of always correcting behavior. Dogs learn by doing, they cannot do the right thing if they have not been taught. Patience and consistency are critical to successful learning. Miara is 12 and I still brush up on her recall manners on a regular basis. The relationship between owner and dog is a beautiful thing and is even more enjoyable when you have a well-trained dog that can bring joy to others via therapy work. This bond is extra special!

Learn more about us at:

Instagram: @adventruessofmiara and pawsitivelypetstraining (www.pawsitivelypets.org)

