

Ichi

Category: Animals

written by Ruth Harimoto | September 18, 2018

My dog Ichi (rhymes with Peachy) reminds me of God, and I mean no disrespect to God. The willingness to love each person totally, in the moment, completely and sincerely, is the defining trademark of both Ichi and God.

We take a walk, Ichi and I, down the long, winding green path in my urban neighborhood. We greet our mutual friends: other dog owners, other women my age, etc.

But Ichi has a few, special friends of his own: the socially awkward, pudgy person of indeterminate gender and age; the rail-thin woman, with a bent-over frame, who speaks in a quiet mumble as she pulls weeds; the reticent, retired gentleman who, I learn later, was deathly afraid of dogs and had never, before Ichi, voluntarily touched a dog in his life. When Ichi sights one of his special friends, his whole backside begins to wag in joyful recognition, and with eyes and toes dancing with delight, he pulls at the leash. Reaching the friend, Ichi leans in, doggy body to human legs, almost toppling the recipient of his "hug." As I say a polite "Hello," Ichi, with his eyes, his tail and the weight of his whole body, shows that he is absolutely delighted to see this very person, right now, right here. His message is as clear as if he had a word-bubble above his head: "I am so SO happy to see you. I love it when I meet you like this! I love it when you pet me! I am so happy that you are my friend!"

The friend crouches down, arms open wide, to receive the doggy-greeting. I watch the friend bury her face in the fur of Ichi's neck, pressing a long kiss on the top of his head. A kiss! Then, several minutes of hugging, rubbing, petting my silly mutt. What kind of gift is this that my dog so freely gives to these slightly odd, socially awkward individuals in my neighborhood?

Ichi does not discriminate or worry. He lives each day and walks each walk, believing that there is no limit to the love that he can give and receive.

Ichi has a well-defined purpose in life: to give and receive love, with your whole heart, to and from every person who is willing.

Ichi, my dear and silly mutt, is my mentor.

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