

Listening to Yoda

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AUGUST 24, 2009, 6:15 P.M. EDT

Yoda told me what she wanted. I recently got a pet-sitting assignment to stay with a Shiba Inu, Yoda, for a week. I've taken care of Yoda several times over the last three years and was looking forward to staying with her again. Yoda is about 12 years old now, has some kidney problems and is hard of hearing, but she loves her walks.

The first night I went over was a typical visit. As soon as I got there, I got Yoda's collar and leash out of the pantry and we went on a half-hour walk. Yoda always waits to eat her dinner until after I've eaten in case she gets a tasty morsel of chicken. Her owner encourages her to drink by adding water to the dinner plate when she is done eating and letting Yoda lick it up. I ate, gave Yoda some liquid mixed with my chicken juice, and then she ate her crunchies.

At bedtime, I went up to the guest room where I usually sleep. Yoda let me know she wasn't happy by howling. This was a new behavior for her. I called her into the guest room and she visited but didn't stay. She went into her owner's bedroom and continued howling. A little later she went downstairs and sat in her favorite chair, but still howled. I ended up going downstairs and sleeping on the couch, which stopped Yoda's noisemaking.

The next night was the same story. This time, I followed Yoda into her owner's bedroom. Yoda jumped on the bed and looked at me. She acted like she wanted me to get into bed with her. I decided to try it and sure enough, Yoda curled up next to me and slept quietly the entire night.

Yoda howled a few random times throughout the rest of the week, but each night slept next to me without a peep. All I needed to do was watch what Yoda wanted and follow her instructions. She probably wondered why it took me so long to figure it out.

What has your dog told you to do?

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