

Austin/Aussie
By Rebecca Walsh

My dog died on Christmas.

He was the greatest companion a person could have. He was ideal company on long walks in the woods, and kept my feet warm at night. When I got scared or lonely, or felt the weight of the world bearing down, he stayed present with me, offering comfort and love in an endless and effortless way. Aussie looked at me as if I were the greatest human on earth.

If ever there was a true caregiver it was Austin. I think he felt his job in life was to love me. He couldn't have done a better job. A few days before he passed, I had the chance to thank him for the eleven years of love, comfort, and healing that he provided.

Here's what I learned from Austin.

1. We all need to be seen, truly seen for who we are. We need to know that others are happy to see us.
2. We need to be trusted. Aussie always reminded me of my own inner goodness.
3. Caregivers go the extra mile. They show they care by going out of their way to do the right thing, not to prove anything but because it is a privilege to love.
4. Taking space when we need it is a good thing, it allows us to come back and be present, being present is the main ingredient of true caregiving.
5. Take lots of long walks, there is healing in the woods.

Mostly Aussie taught me this. Love is the essence of what we are, by loving him, I became more of who I am. What more is there to say? What more is there to do but pass it on.

Thanks Aussie. I will never forget you buddy.

Author Bio: Rebecca Walsh is a therapist and special education teacher living in Lenox, Massachusetts. She is the mother of two grown children and is looking forward to being a foster parent in the near future. Also a professional cook, and budding artist, Rebecca sees her work as an

opportunity to pass on to others the abundance of well-being, healing and wisdom others have shown her. Rebecca's Email: rbblastoff@yahoo.com