

### One Cardigan's Adventures in Herding, Part III

I have been hearing long time herding people say that the 5<sup>th</sup> herding lesson is where the dog goes “woo hooo!” and starts running amok with the sheep. Right on schedule, Brynnie has decided at our second herding clinic that he knows way more about this herding thing than I do (true) and that he is going to take charge and do things his way (false). The weekend was rather a blur with Bryn and the sheep running this way and that, with the dog on a long line with me standing on part of it most of the time. I had the devil of a time getting him to stop, lie down, and come back to me. Not our strong point up to now anyway, he is completely ignoring me. In fact, he is giving me raw looks that seem to be trying to convey contempt!

So, Kelly tells me that I need to get stronger with my corrections for now, in accordance with my dog's drive and natural talent. I spend the whole clinic slapping the ground in front of him to get him to move out to the side rather than directly toward the sheep. Also, slapping the ground in front of him and using the rake to push his body or head down when he refuses to lie down (every time). Finally, during the last lesson of the clinic, I have Brynnie arcing around the sheep and lying down after going only a few feet. We end on a positive note, “that'll do”...

I also got run over by the sheep when we actually did have them moving (much anticipated and expected). They only just knocked me to my knees, I didn't actually get trampled. Kelly says that it's extra if I want to ride the sheep, so I offer her \$20. Later, the sheep have me boxed into a corner, and Kelly says now the sheep are riding me. I ask for my \$20 back!

So, we are using the two weeks until our next lesson training down and recall in the yard with the long line and Bryn's “herding ball” – a big plastic ball that he loves to roll around. He gets quite intense with this ball so it is a very good tool to crank him up in order to be able to train him while he is in drive.

Kelly also says that I need to work on building respect. I will admit that my Cardigans have tended to run wild for the most part. Maybe it's like children, where your first ones get all the discipline and with later ones you are far too lax. It doesn't help that there is very little positive feedback in training Cardigans. Grandma Ruby never did learn a reliable recall. Our one and only time in the obedience ring was quite interesting, with Ruby actually running out during the fast heeling, grabbing the treat she saw me throw on the ground, and then returning to heel position. A special term was invented to describe her agility runs - “going Ruby”. Auntie Sophia is a real PITA (and I DON'T mean an animal rights activist), tugging on her lead before every walk and every time she sees a dog she wants to control.

So, Kelly gives me exercises to do. She says that I need to start in the house. I move Bryn out of my way for no reason or if he really is in my way. I try that in the middle of the night, and he jumps onto MY side of the bed. I lay on him, which does eventually get

on his nerves enough to make him jump off. He has to sit or down to get his meals and also before going out the door, through any doorway or gate. We'll see next weekend at our lesson how much of an impression this is making. All three dogs do seem better behaved so far, so I am hoping he will be back to the "lesson 4" Brynnie.

Nancy Willoughby  
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