**Home Grown Research!**

I caught myself laughing the other day as I was shopping in the latest version of our local Safeway. The giggling started when I realized that I had passed a friend six times at various ends of the store as we lapped each other trying to find all the things we needed that day. Things that used to be located at one end of the store, were now at the other. Isle signs indicating new locations of items weren’t completely telling all. It’s been an adventure, every time I shop since the expansion of our local store!  
  
I’m not here to complain, because I truly do like the newly expanded facility, it’s just that I never thought it’d be such a workout at times.  
  
What set us off, was that we were both in our workout clothes complete with a bandana sweat band and ball cap that said ‘workout hair, don’t care’ having each come from our morning workouts all sweaty and tired. After a few times passing each other, we started high-fiving each other and I made the comment that I had extended my workout into Safeway running laps trying to find everything.  
  
So, the take home message here is that you never know where you’ll find your next workout or where you might find those added steps into your day. Find the positive in new arrangements of items, because it’s making your brain cells work a little harder as you search and find what you need. Yes, it’s frustrating but worth the practice in patience as the store settles into it’s new norm.  
  
We’ve always known that Safeway is a place to meet locals and to see your friends, so cherish the frequency of seeing each other multiple times each visit because we will learn and know where our items are before too long, and we will be back to stopping in a quickly getting our things and miss all those laps and extra steps.  
  
I’ve had the conversation recently about registered ‘emotional support’ pets. In my life, I truly believe that most pets are emotional support pets. If you think about it, why else would we include domesticated pets into our lives? Even fish can be emotionally comforting and grounding when enjoyed in your home.  
  
Registering them and taking them everywhere with you (shopping, restaurants, etc.) is another story that I’m still trying to understand with regards to emotional support. I guess I could have used an ‘emotional support’ pet a few times while shopping in our new Safeway!  
  
A couple of weeks ago, my daughter came home with her magic touch at caring for our dogs. Our 10-year-old lab was diagnosed with a liver disease and was literally on her death bed, but Holli came home, and our girl turned the corner of this terrible liver problem that she is still suffering from. Some humans simply have the touch, patience and love to heal even the sickest pet.  
  
This is the dog that talks, barks and whines when no one is paying attention to her. This is the dog that gets all crazy when her world is turned up-side-down. This is the dog that needs (and has had) an ‘emotional support’ family to keep her grounded in this world. Even though we don’t have a certificate to prove it, we are a certified ‘emotional support’ family.  
  
I laughed when my daughter told me that, making us think about the reversal of our relationships with our pets. We register them as ‘emotional support’ dogs to be with us as we deal with life. Yet, we forget how important we are to them. Those burdens, those responsibilities and those tears over their health are those things that keep us grounded in our own lives.  
  
Take home message here is to recognize, accept and return that unconditional love that only a pet will teach us with and without emotional support. Show that unconditional love not only to your pets, but to everyone who you recognize as your ‘emotional support’ family.  
  
Just think about how awesome it would be if we would all consider ourselves as an ‘emotional support’ team to everyone in our lives. Now that’s a message to take home!