

do anything. I am a Chesapeake.”

In the field, they are keen, and focused. There is little they would rather do than retrieve those birds, especially in the water. The flying leap into the lake can carry him yards to the mark. There's no doubt what he is saying here: “I love the water.”

Just look, and you can hear what your Chesapeake is telling you.

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Curly-Coated Retrievers

It's My Space!

Having owned Curly-Coated Retrievers for 38 years, I realize that many of them are very aware of their own body space. By that I mean that many of them appreciate not having their bodies infringed upon by another dog.

I always keep this in mind when around other dogs. My two present Curly girls are very outgoing and are not the least bit concerned about close proximity to other dogs. However, this has not always been true of some of my other bitches.

Body-space awareness was sharply brought to mind when I was at a dog show many years ago. My Curly was good-natured but somewhat reserved, and not at all the type who would dream of running up to a strange dog when out in public.

We were standing ringside when the owner of a rather rambunctious dog allowed the dog to come racing up to my girl. She “woof-growled” and told the other dog off.

The owner was miffed and acted as if I had a savage beast with me, and there was no apology from him (although he should not have allowed this behavior). By the look of shock on this handler's face, I could just tell what he was thinking—what a nasty dog I had.

From then on, I was very careful to avoid situations in which I observed a handler who might not be paying attention to his dog's actions. This taught me to be very observant when around other dogs.

Now, there is a plus side to all this. Due to what I call “body awareness,” all the Curlies whom I have met over the years are very careful to never “body slam” anyone. They appear to sincerely respect a person's space and not barge into a human being. I have asked quite a few owners of our breed whether their dogs bang into them, and they all have said that they do not. These same owners had owned other breeds and said that yes, their other breeds did sometimes barge into them.

Many years ago, one of the friends of my son came to visit with his dog. Until then I had never thought about dogs running at and into people, but on that day it happened. We were outside playing, and I was observing his young dog when he threw an object for him. The dog came barreling back to, and slammed into, his young owner.

I recall being quite surprised, and since then I have come to the conclusion that I am indeed very glad to own the breed that I own, as this body-slaming can be rather dangerous at times. I also will never allow one of mine to infringe upon others.

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Flat-Coated Retrievers

Senior Rescue

In spite of decades of experience with rescue, I found myself having to make adjustments when adopting senior dogs. Being a senior with physical limitations myself, I didn't feel that I could do justice to

raising a Flat-Coat puppy. I was disappointed to find it very difficult to find an adult Flat-Coat for sale or rescue, but at the same time I was pleased that breeders were doing such a good job of responsible breeding and placing puppies.

I always advise clients to adopt a well crate-trained dog, because the most difficult time for the adopted dog is when the new family leaves the dog home alone. Having lost at least one family and home, the dog doesn't know if the family is ever coming back to this strange place. The crate is a security blanket for the Flat-Coat, preferably with bedding and toys from the former home. The dog knows that if someone put him into the crate, someone is coming back to take him out. Having advance visits with the adopting family in their home also eases the transition.

You need to experiment with the Flat-Coat who is not crate trained, to find out where in the house the dog feels most secure when the new family is gone. Usually that is the bedroom, if that is where the dog sleeps overnight. The kitchen, the utility room, or the laundry room are possibilities, because those are the rooms most likely used by the former owner. If the new dog is fed and spends time with the family in that room, it helps the dog feel secure when the dog is in that room alone with comfortable bedding and a biscuit and toys.

In the home, do not let a new dog out of sight of an adult or responsible teenager for the first three months. It takes that long for a Flat-Coat to make an adjustment to a new home. If the new dog is always on lead and closely supervised when out of the crate or confined area, you have a chance to calm the dog when he gets restless and help him into the habit patterns you prefer.

Close supervision when not con-