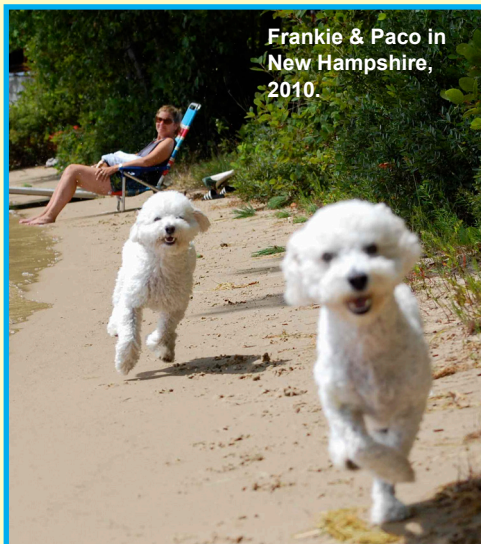


A Lesson on Loving

by Rachel Kondo

Born and raised on the island of Maui, I grew up in a small upcountry town that rests along the great slope of Haleakala. On my street, animals were everywhere, just like the sunshine. From peafowl, Jackson's chameleons, and Silkie hens, to homing pigeons, mongoose, and Nubian goats – ours was its very own suburban ecosystem. But one facet to island living remains more alive in my mind than any other: the unhappy circumstance of the poi dog (our colloquial word for "mutt"), passing its scruffy life out of doors, each day lived according to the length of its chain.

Of course this was long ago, closer to a time when animals were valued not for companionship, but for utility. Years would pass before I understood that a world of difference existed between 'animals' and 'pets'. It would take time for me to



Frankie & Paco in
New Hampshire,
2010.

learn this difference as an emotional, relational, and mutually enriching exchange. But by then, I had the very best teachers: a bonded pair of bichons named Frankie & Paco. Together they taught me the limitless capacity for – and the infinite dimensions of – abiding love, both for me and for each other.

Their story began in Bakersfield, California, where they were believed to have served the purposes of a backyard breeder. In January of 2010, Frankie, a pregnant female, and Paco, a severely undernourished male, were found roaming the dusty streets on their own, abandoned but together. I had never even heard of the bichon breed till then,

nor had I known that dogs, like people, could be "bonded." But by the end of that month, the duo – both around 5-years-old at the time – had come to live with my husband and me, two humans who were equally as scared as they were.

We had imagined a very different sort of adoption story, my husband and I, one involving the naïve notion of "love at first sight." Whereas we'd imagined feeling a certain instant and undeniable connection, what we invited into our home and lives were these two alien creatures. Due to the neglect they'd endured, it had been necessary to shave them to the skin, which rendered them pitiful-looking, like oversized rats. Moreover, Frankie had recently been spayed and vaccinated, which unfortunately terminated her pregnancy, while Paco, still on antibiotics, shook non-stop from fear. The truth was that while we were absolutely committed to their care for the rest of their lives, we did not yet know how to love them. But the other thing we didn't know happened to be the very thing that would teach us: their commitment to each other.

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Fosters Needed

To get a Foster Application, please go to the BFK website at:
<http://www.bichonfurkids.org/volunteer>

Donate to BFK

Shop at Amazon.com, and a portion of your purchase will be automatically donated to BFK.



Use GoodSearch.com, powered by Yahoo! whenever you search the Internet, and a portion of your purchase will be automatically donated to BFK. Make sure to specify BFK as your Cause!



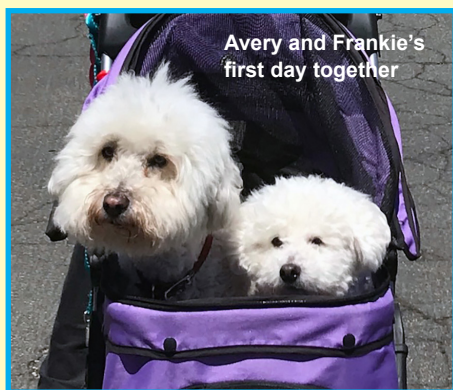
Bichon FurKids Rescue
Phone: 858-408-1937
Fax: 760-966-1702
www.BichonFurKids.org
www.facebook.com/bichonfurkids
info@bichonfurkids.org
6965 El Camino Real,
#105-425,
La Costa, CA 92009
Tax ID: 20-3652098
Marti Colwell, President



A Lesson on Loving, continued...

In time, we learned every quirk and nuance that made them who they were, to where we could tell the difference between their footsteps or the respective sounds they made at the water bowl. Frankie, our headstrong girl, functioned as the dominant alpha and Paco, our sensitive feeler, happily played his part as beta. Frankie consumed her food with gusto while Paco needed his environmental conditions to be just right before taking a first bite. Frankie fearlessly led every charge against the enemy (squirrels). Paco, on the other hand, could be scared off by any number of things – the beep of the toaster, seeing a magazine rolled up, a buzzing fly, etc. – only to be found shaking in our bedroom closet an hour later. Despite his fears, Paco loved to travel; Frankie usually vomited from nerves. Paco loved to cuddle and give out his kisses; Frankie believed humans (their hands in particular) existed for the sole purpose of petting her. On walks, Frankie always led us out into the world, while Paco, through his impressive homing detection, never failed to lead us back home, his favorite place.

The years passed by happily in this way. We moved several times – out of state, out of the country, and back again – but wherever we lived, wherever we traveled to, home followed in the fluffy forms of Frankie & Paco. From summertime at the lake in New Hampshire to glamping in a Texas hill country yurt; from poolside sunning in Palm Springs to riding the U-Bahn throughout Berlin, we took them with us everywhere, every time, because it just never made sense to be apart. Indeed, the idea of separation was as inconceivable as the sun failing to rise.

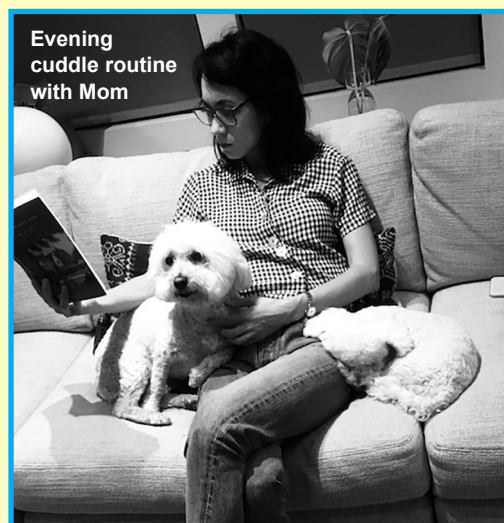


This past January marked two things: eight years with Frankie & Paco, our daily joys, but also an abrupt ending to their many adventures together. What began as a concern with his liver function ended a few days later with our having to say goodbye to Paco, who, unbeknownst to us, was dying of cancer. Together with Frankie, we were with him when he laid down his head and closed his eyes, reminding me both then and in the months to follow that our initial instincts were right: the pain of separation is indeed exquisite.

In the aftermath of losing our sweet Mr. Paco, we felt certain that nothing could fill the dark void of his absence. It felt true that the heart, once broken, must remain that way. As for me, I was beside myself with grief, and felt firmly committed to my sadness, as if staying sad was the only way to now love Paco. The question soon became this: what to do with the enormous feeling within that for eight years had enjoyed such specific expression?

Our friends and family who also loved Paco quickly came alongside us with their comfort, advice, pictures, stories. Some gently asked if we considered adopting another bichon. Our answer was always the same: Emphatically, no. Not only were we unprepared for another dog, we weren't even interested in one. If nothing else, our family, however reduced, would remain devoted to Paco's memory.

Of course, we should've known by then that everything changes, the good along with the bad. We began to notice Frankie withdrawing from life, little by little. Each morning she would routinely eat her breakfast, then slowly head back upstairs to our bed and Paco's blanket, the very one he had died on. We soon learned an expression for this behavior – "the widow's walk" – and understood our grief could not be measured next to Frankie's. We had lost our baby boy, but she had lost her security, her best friend, even the way through which she understood herself.



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A Lesson on Loving, continued...

It was in this context that I happened to send a casual email to Marti at Bichon Furkids Rescue. We were interested in possibly fostering a pup or two, is what I'd said, but nothing more. It's much too soon, is what I thought. One thing led to another and before we knew it, we'd surprised ourselves by taking the leap again and bringing home a little boy named Avery.



Avery keeping Frankie warm, or vice versa?

As of today, we are about three weeks in with him and our hearts have already begun to beat in that familiar way again. Waking up to Avery's eager tail-wagging and the look of adoration in his one functioning eye is enough to get anyone out of bed each morning, but especially me. My husband, who relented more than chose to adopt again, hurries home from work in the evening just to be with Frankie & Avery on their evening strolls. As for Frankie, though initially unsure of Avery the newcomer, she has since begun to engage once more with the world. Simply put, she has more to do – namely, guarding her bones from Avery and making sure he doesn't receive more petting than she does.

It goes without saying that we couldn't be more grateful to Bichon Furkids Rescue, especially to Marti and Lauren, for walking us through the process of learning to trust the heart again, as well as its incredible ability to regenerate. We're equally as grateful to everyone who so generously

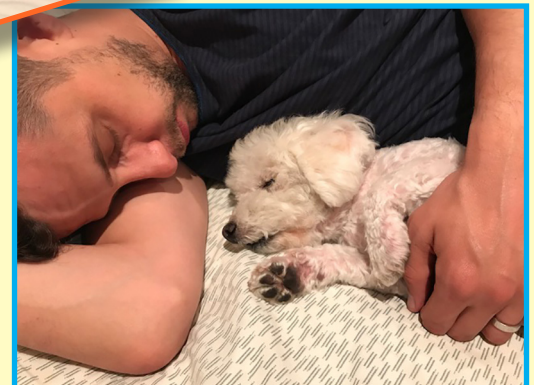
gave on behalf of Avery's eye surgery, which has broadened his already enormous capacity for joy, as well as our own to witness it.

What brings us peace, too, is the knowledge that Paco would have loved Avery, the brother he never knew. When I think of Paco now, the ache is still there, the tears still flow. If only he could know all that has transpired since he left us. I would say to him the words of J.D. Salinger, which sums up the exact sentiment: "I have so much I want to tell you, and nowhere to begin..."

For now, I have my memories of Paco. As if linking hands, each memory comes together to manifest that precise feeling I had when Paco lived. Like each decision we make to extend love and receive it, the memories have begun to accumulate, allowing me a new context for yet another intimacy, this time with Avery. To love again is simply to love more, or so it seems. Love upon more love, or so I've learned. It is the same way light and sky and rain come together to give us not only a rainbow, but also delight.



Avery bonding with Dad



My Mitzvah Project

by Samantha Munitz

Editor's Note: We and our FurKids are always so grateful for the wonderful no-sew blankets that are part of their adoption kits. Sometimes these blankets appear to be the first ones they have ever had—and they toss, tumble, sleep, drag, play with and enjoy them. Samantha Munitz's family has fostered a number of FurKids over the past several years (and yes! they adopted two of them.) As a project before her Bat Mitzvah, Samantha chose to make blankets for future furkids.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony marks the passage of a child into Jewish adulthood. By Jewish standards this means we become responsible for carrying out mitzvot-commandments. In many congregations that means taking on a 'service project' as part of our preparation - and the service project can take many forms.

Loving animals is something that I and my family understand. When it became time to select my mitzvah or service project I knew what I wanted to do.

I asked friends and family to come together and help me make blankets for FurKids! I created a 'cutting station' where the fabric could be sized before it was put together. Our friends and family contributed money for the fabric then gathered together to make blankets for FurKids. Each person that made a blanket got to write a note to the new family whose pup would be receiving the blanket, then attach that note to the blanket.

Of course we had to have the FurKid seal of approval for my project. We had a couple of pups who agreed that these blankets would make a wonderful soft landing for future rescues—and we had a wonderful time making the blankets.

Thanks to my Mom and Dad, family and friends for joining me in this project. It was a lot of fun and we also raised money for BFK!



Furkid Sponsorship Program



For the past twelve (12) years we have rescued and rehomed an amazing 3000+ furkids, many of whom have needed special services or treatments. This amazing breed that we love is also somewhat pre-disposed to having dental issues, juvenile cataracts and luxating patellas (knee caps that move in and out.) We have

also seen an increasing number of mammary masses that need to be removed.

Even the precious pups we rescue who have no "special needs" incur basic costs. A 'typical' furkid's spay or neuter, non anesthetic dental, shots, grooming, microchip and flea/tick preventative, as well as basic medication for spay/neuter, costs Bichon FurKids \$360. Our adoption fee for pups over 1 year of age remains \$350, which has been the fee for nine (9) years. The adoption fee for our

puppies, who require three rounds of shots, de-worming, spay/neuter etc. remains at \$500.

To offset the costs of the care they receive, we are establishing a new sponsorship program that provides an opportunity for our amazing bichon-loving community to help us continue to make a difference!

There are five different sponsorship opportunities:

Puppy Love...FurKiddo...Hipsters...Golden Oldies...and Snowflakes (our once or twice in a million FurKids). See the descriptions below.

You can sponsor a FurKid for an open-ended amount of time (cancel any time) or you can sponsor for a dog only while he or she is in foster care, up to the day of adoption.

We are creating a new web page for those sponsors who want to be acknowledged publicly however we are grateful for those that want to contribute anonymously as well. Please reach out for any questions to:

finance@bichonfurkids.org or joyce@bichonfurkids.org.

Many thanks from the FurKids!



Puppy Love

A puppy under seven months of age whose regimen includes shots, de-worming, spay/neuter and basic care. **Monthly commitment: \$25**



FurKiddo

A pup who is 1-5 years old. **Monthly commitment: \$30**



Hipsters

These furkids are generally in good health but have not had their booster shots nor their yearly dentals. They are typically 6-9 years old and their dentals/shots typically cost an average of \$480. **Monthly commitment: \$40**



Golden Oldies

Many bichon owners are not aware of the need for bloodwork and dental as their dogs age. When these dogs are then surrendered at a shelter, they often need extensive dental work including extractions, blood work, and often mass removals. Our 'typical' costs for the basic services averages \$600-\$800. The furkids are often 10 years or older, although we are also seeing a lot of mammary masses in younger females. **Monthly commitment: \$50**



Snowflakes

All dogs are special – and furkids with special needs are even more special. Juvenile cataracts (that start at the age of 4) are becoming more frequent due to in-breeding, likewise with luxating patellas. We are also seeing more juvenile diabetes, the youngest being a five month old pup named Chipper that we rescued this year. There are also the pups who are in the wrong place at the wrong time – and are hit by a car, requiring medical intervention to save their lives. The surgeries required for our Snowflakes are extensive and start at \$1800. They often reach \$5,000, yet we cannot put a price on the life of a deserving furkid. These unique needs are part of the Snowflake program.

Monthly commitment: starts at \$75

FurKids and Fireworks...

Keeping Your FurKids Safe and Sane

The 4th of July is a time of celebration. It's all about food, family, fun — and fireworks. As much fun as the 4th can be for us humans, it can be a dangerous and frightening time for our dogs.

First, there's the heat.

July 4th in the U.S. is also one of the hottest times of the year, even here in California. While many celebrations are held outdoors, we humans have the benefit of going in and out of the house as needed. We can also cool ourselves with sweat or a dip in a pool.

Unfortunately, our dogs do not have it so easy. Because they can only cool themselves through their mouths and feet, they are more prone to heat stroke. If your dog is outside for the party all day, and you get caught up in the festivities, you may easily forget that your dog might be too hot.

Practice summer safety: Always keep plenty of fresh, cool water available and be sure there are shady spots for your dog. When in doubt, let her go back in the house.

Then there's the pool.

We all know that dogs are natural swimmers, but they can drown in a swimming pool if there is no means (such as steps in the shallow end) for them to exit the pool when they tire out — or if they don't know where those steps are. Unlike humans, who can swim to the edge and just hang on, dogs have no way to relax in a pool. They must keep swimming or drown. Please keep an eye on your dog when near a pool, especially if it's one your dog is not familiar with.

Then the fireworks start.

Fireworks and furkids generally do not mix. Imagine how painful those thunderous booms are to a dog, whose hearing is many times better than your own. If you plan to go somewhere to see fireworks, it's best to leave your dog at home — *indoors* with a safe place to curl up. If you must allow your pup to use a doggie door to your yard, make certain that fence gates are secured and there are no possible escape routes. Please don't let your furkid become one of the hundreds of dogs who escape their yards and wind up, terrified, in a shelter. Each year BFK rescues dogs who have escaped to get away from fireworks and are never found or claimed by their families. As a final precaution, please make sure your dog is wearing her collar with tags that contain your contact information.

You can desensitize your furkid to fireworks.

1. Find a recording of fireworks, and play it at the lowest possible volume a few times each day.
2. At the same time, pair the sound of the fireworks with things your dog likes, such as treats, meals, cuddle time, or a game of tug-of-war.
3. Slowly begin to raise the volume of the recording over the course of several days, while continuing to pair the sound of fireworks with good things for your dog. If at any point your dog begins to show signs of fear, turn the volume down to a point where he feels more comfortable.
4. Repeat this several times each day until your dog can hear the sounds of the fireworks at a fairly high volume without becoming fearful.

If you don't have time to prepare for the fireworks, or if desensitization hasn't ended your dog's fear of fireworks



Continued on next page...

FurKids and Fireworks, continued...

completely, here are other things you can do to ease his fears.

- Don't change your behavior. Many people feel compelled to baby their dogs when the dog is showing signs of fear. We pet them more than usual, cuddle them, and talk to them in soft voices. Rather than easing a dog's fears, however, this often reinforces the dog's fearful behaviors.
- Try not to react to the fireworks yourself. If you jump or tense up when you hear fireworks because you are anticipating your dog's fear, you may make his fear worse. Your body language can tell a dog that there is a reason to be afraid.
- Drown out the sound of the fireworks. Try to turn up the radio or television and keep your windows closed during the fireworks. If the weather permits, a fan or air conditioner (if your dog isn't afraid of those sounds) can help, too.
- Don't push your dog past his comfort zone. Allow him to hide if he feels more comfortable in his crate or under a bed. Don't pull him out or try to force him closer to the fireworks in an attempt to get him used to the sounds. This may result in an increase in fear, and a frightened dog may become aggressive if pushed past his comfort level.

How to handle severe fireworks phobia

In the case of a severe phobia, none of these suggestions may work to ease your dog's fear. You may want to talk to your veterinarian about medication. Your vet may be able to prescribe an anti-anxiety medication or sedative to keep your dog calm during the fireworks.

Medication may be the only answer to get through the fireworks this season however once the fireworks stop, you can begin preparing for the next one with a program of desensitization. A trainer or behaviorist may also be helpful.

Tools to relieve anxiety

- Thundershirt vests (and similar products): While meant to calm dogs during storms, the vest, which fits snugly around a dog, has been proven to help with anxiety-related issue. We have seen many fearful dogs calm down instantly when enveloped in this warm blanket-like comfort. (Think about an infant wrapped tightly but comfortably in a blanket.)
- Pheromone therapy: Adaptil is an analog of the naturally-occurring calming pheromone found in the milk of mother dogs. One format is a plug-in, which diffuses Adaptil into the room, and the other is a collar.
- Anxtiane: A chewable medication that contains L-Theanine, an amino acid that acts neurologically to help keep dogs calm.



**The 4th of July is a time of celebration.
Please keep it a safe and calm time for your FurKids.**

FurKids and Fashion at Chico's

Please join Bichon FurKids at Chico's on Saturday, July 28, 2018.

Meet some of our adorable and adoptable bichons – and enjoy a memorable shopping experience at Chico's!

We look forward to greeting you with Bichon wags and doggy kisses.

Saturday, July 28th
11:00–3:00

chico's

The Forum at Carlsbad
1925 Calle Barcelona
Suite 161
Carlsbad, CA 92009
Phone: (760) 635-1034
www.chicos.com

