



The Earth Dog continued...

Earth dogs are not always quick thinkers. It takes patience to teach them so short quick lessons are best. However, their memory is excellent and once they learn and master something, they will never forget it. They love praise and recognition but they love FOOD even more. They are major foodies. If you lengthen lessons when training or ask too much they can become stubborn, not just a little stubborn, but *persistently* stubborn! High value treats like bacon can definitely extend the lesson time but there will come a point when the Earth Dog's mental clock runs out.

Earth Dogs are "easy keepers." In other words, they gain weight just by looking at food. Food is one of their greatest motivators in life, so it is important to watch *what and how much* you feed them and be sure to count their treats into your calorie count. No fun, I know. Regular exercise will help with their propensity for chubbiness.

Earth Dogs have incredible clocks and will always remind you if you are late for a meal or a walk. They are very "routine-based" and will do best with regular routines. This gives them a sense of security. The emotion associated with the Earth Element is worry. Any form of change or household imbalance (new puppy, packing a suitcase...) reflexes them into worry. This can create stomach issues and all sorts of digestive upsets. Having a gentle awareness and understanding of their propensity for worry goes a long way towards keeping them balanced and healthy, especially in the elder dog. Earth Dogs can also have stifle issues, fatty tumors, and other growths. Consult your veterinarian when needed.

Wilbur has managed to make many friends. He is the Grand Greeter. As with the Fire Element, he attracts people, but for a different reason. It is not magnetic charisma but the gentleness and friendliness that reels them in. Everyone who walks by my car has to greet Wilbur and this creates all sorts of magical conversations that would never have happened if it weren't for his full-bodied smile and wildly wagging tail. I suspect he knows more people in town than I do! I've only had him for little over a year and everywhere I go someone remembers Wilbur. Embrace the Earth Dog's slower pace and gentle spirit and it will open up your world.