

Ten Commandments for Pet Owners

1. My life is likely to last 10 to 15 years. Any separation from you will be very painful.
2. Give me time to understand what you want from me. Do not break my spirit with your temper, though I will always forgive you. Your patience and understanding will teach me more quickly those things you want me to learn.
3. Treat me kindly, my beloved friend, for no heart in all the world is more grateful for your kindness than mine. Don't be angry with me for long, and don't lock me up as punishment. After all, you have your job, your friends, your entertainment. I have only you.
4. Speak to me often. Even if I don't understand all your words, I understand your voice when it's speaking to me. Your voice is the sweetest sound I ever hear, as you must know by my enthusiastic excitement when your footsteps fall upon my waiting ear.
5. Please take me inside when it's cold and wet. I'm a domestic animal and no longer am accustomed to the bitter elements. I ask for little more than your gentle hands petting me.
6. Keep my bowl filled with clean water; I cannot tell you when I'm thirsty. Feed me good food so that I may stay well, to romp and play and do your bidding, to be by your side, and stand ready, willing and able to share with you my life, for that is what I live for. However you treat me, I'll never forget it.
7. Don't hit me. Remember, I have teeth that could easily crush the bones in your hand, but I choose not to bite you.
8. Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I am not getting the right food, I've been out in the sun too long, or my heart is getting old and weak.
9. Take care of me when I get old. You will grow old, too.
10. When I am very old, when I no longer enjoy good health, please do not make heroic efforts to keep me going. I am not having fun. Just see to it that my trusting life is taken gently. And be with me on that difficult journey when it is time to say "goodbye". Never say, "I can't bear to watch." Everything is easier for me when you are there. I will leave this earth knowing with my last breath that my fate was always safest in your hands. Remember - I love you.

-- Author Unknown