**Personal Fitness Trainer**

 Have you ever heard the saying, “No pain, no gain?” It’s true. Getting in shape takes hard work, but not everyone has the motivation. After a long day, watching TV may sound better than exercising. That’s why many people call on personal fitness trainers. Trainers help people change their attitudes about fitness. They design fitness programs for people that are safe, yet challenging. Personal fitness trainers want to help their clients make fitness part of their lifestyle.

 Trainers need one important quality to succeed—a positive attitude. They must be able to motivate clients to work hard, even when they are having a bad day. That’s why trainers make their clients’ workouts as fun as possible. They include clients’ favorite exercises into their programs. Fitness trainers must be able to work alongside clients, too. That way they can celebrate their clients’ progress with them.

 The first step toward becoming a trainer is getting in shape. Clients expect their trainers to look fit and be fit. Otherwise, people can’t take their trainers seriously. So before they train others, student trainers head for the gym. During their workouts, they use many pieces of exercise equipment. Later, they can teach their own clients how to use them. Friendly and fit trainers-in-training may even inspire onlookers to become clients later on.

 The second step to becoming a trainer is getting certified. Two well-known international fitness associations are the ACE and the AFAA. They offer student trainers certification tests that require months of study. Although trainers don’t need college degrees, many fitness associations recommend them. And now some fitness associations are requiring trainers to have degrees before becoming certified.

 Certified trainers have two options for hiring. They can work on their own or through health clubs. Health clubs offer trainers steady clients and use of the club’s exercise equipment. These clubs usually take at least 50 percent of trainers’ fees, though. Instead, a trainer can choose to work on their own—and make more money, from US$25 to US$100 per hour. But there are drawbacks. These trainers spend a lot of time attracting clients and travelling to their homes or offices for workouts.

 When they’re not training clients, trainers must take time to keep themselves fit. Doing both can wear trainers out. But instead of stopping to rest, many trainers learn new skills or new exercises. Many trainers believe that staying active will give them energy, not take it away. That way they can stay in shape and offer their clients more training choices. As they help others live better lives, trainers enjoy living their own lives to the full. (435words)

(Adopted and adapted from Studio Classroom, May, 2000.)

**The Williams Sisters**

 The Williams sisters have made tennis a sport worth watching. Tennis has never attracted large crowds the same way some other sports do. But nobody can deny the appeal of the Williams sisters. Their super-confidence and their talent for smashing balls over a tennis net have attracted sports fans everywhere.

 These sisters have faced the game’s best players—and won. But these queens of tennis seem almost like outsiders in the game they rule. They are not the kind of people that usually rise to the top of the game. Venus, now age 40, and younger sister Serena, age 38, are African Americans. They grew up in a gang-troubled neighborhood in California. Their competitors, on the other hand, come mostly from wealthier families who live in comfortable neighborhoods.

 When the sisters first began playing, they had no costly coaches or junior tournaments. They had only their father, Richard Williams. He learned tennis by reading books and watching videos. As each sister turned 4 years old, he began showing them the basics.

 The girls practiced on cracked tennis courts in their troubled neighborhood. Their father taught them how to ace their competitors. He also taught them to lie down when they heard gunshots.

 In 1991, the family moved to Florida to find a good coach for the sisters. But their father kept them out of junior competitions, so they wouldn’t get burned out. Then in 1994, at age 14, Venus began her professional career. The following year, Serena also went professional.

 The Williams sisters make tough competitors. Both are very fast and very powerful. Few tennis balls get past them. Venus smashes the ball over the net at 189 kilometers per hour.

 The sisters are doing more than just winning games. They’re also making history. In 1999, Serena won the U.S. Open. That victory made her only the second African American woman ever to win the tournament.

 The two sisters have earned millions of dollars playing tennis. The days of cracked tennis courts and gunshots are long behind them. Nowadays, they practice on their own private tennis courts. But they haven’t forgotten the kids who still play on run-down courts in dangerous neighborhoods. Both sisters give free lessons to some of these tennis hopefuls.

 For the Williams sisters, tennis is a family matter. When one sister wins, the whole family wins, they say. If one does better than the other, there are no hard feelings.

 Neither sister wants to play tennis forever. Venus has thought of studying architecture. Serena has talked about being a vet. No matter what they choose to do, to their fans, the Williams sisters will always be champions. (441words)

(Adopted and adapted from Studio Classroom, June, 2000.)

**Do Dogs Cry?**

If you’ve ever looked into your dog’s eyes while he’s done something wrong, after he’s stepped on a sharp thorn, or when he’s watching as you leave for the day, then you know that dogs can feel sad—and show it. But do dogs cry?

Dogs experience many emotions including happiness, love, boredom, and, yes, sadness, says Linda Simon, a vet for ThePets. “And they have ways of showing each of those feelings.” For example, this is how your pet is trying to say “I love you.” But crying probably isn’t one of those expressions of sadness, according to Dr. Simon.

The bottom line is that dogs do not show sadness the same way we do. “People love to ‘humanize’ our four-legged friends, but while it is fun to assume dogs think the way we do, that’s just not the case,” says dog trainer Jen Jones. “Dogs are less complicated than humans are, especially when it comes to their emotions.” In case you were wondering, here’s what dogs think about.

Dogs feel sad for many of the same reasons we do, like pain, loneliness, loss, and grief, Dr. Simon says. While most doggy sadness is brief, sometimes they can experience very deep and long-lasting sadness. For example, there have been true reports about some dogs who lost their owners and have waited loyally by gravesites day in and day out, longing for their dead owners to return.

Those aren’t the only reasons, though. Another possible reason of sadness is your dog’s compassion for you. When their human is sad, a dog will often express sadness as well, even if they don’t understand why you are upset, Jones says.

Dogs are more emotionally intelligent than we give them credit for, especially when it comes to reading the feelings of their people. “They are incredibly cued into our feelings, emotions, facial expressions, and even our health,” Jones says. “So, while dogs can’t express sadness or think about it in the same way humans do, they surely do understand and feel much more than we might realize.”

The important thing isn’t how he’s showing his sadness but rather that you understand it—and give him extra love. Getting to know your dog’s communication style is one of the things great pet owners do. (380words)

(By Charlotte Hilton Andersen from Reader’s Digest, Dec. 30, 2020.)

**Who did Patrick’s Homework?**

Patrick never did homework. “Too boring,” he said. He played football, basketball and video games instead. His teachers told him, “Patrick! Do your homework or you won’t learn a thing?” And it was true, sometimes he didn’t feel quite smart.

But what could he do? He hated homework.

Then one day he saw his cat playing with a little doll. To his surprise, it wasn’t a doll at all, but a man of the tiniest size. He had a little woolen shirt with old-fashioned trousers and a tall hat much like a witch’s. He yelled, “Save me! Don’t give me back to that cat. I’ll grant you a wish, I promise you that.”

Patrick couldn’t believe how lucky he was! Here was the answer to all of his problems. So he said, “Only if you do all my homework throughout the year.”

The little man frowned and looked angrily at Patrick, “Oh, am I cursed? But I’ll do it.”

And true to his word, that little elf began to do Patrick’s homework. Except, there was one problem. The elf didn’t always know what to do and he needed help. “Help me! Help me!” he would say. And Patrick would have to help – in whatever way.

“I don’t know this word,” the elf squeaked while reading Patrick’s homework. “Get me a dictionary. No, what’s even better? Look up the word and spell it, too.”

When it came to math, Patrick was out of luck. “What are multiplication tables?” the elf asked. “We elves never need addition, subtraction, division or fractions. Here, sit down beside me, you simply must guide me.”

Elves know nothing of human history. To them it’s a mystery. So the little elf kept shouting, “Go to the library, I need books. More and more books. And you can help me read them, too.”

Patrick was working harder than ever and it was tough! He was staying up nights and had never felt so tired. He was going to school with his eyes puffed.

Finally, the last day of school arrived and the elf was free to go. As for homework, there was no more. So the elf quietly slipped out the back door.

Patrick got good grades. His classmates were amazed and his teachers smiled with full of praise. And his parents wondered what had happened to Patrick. He was now a good boy.

You see, in the end, Patrick still thought he had made that tiny man do all his homework. But I’ll share a secret, just between you and me. It wasn’t the elf; Patrick had done it himself! (436words)

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