

Interview with Blodwen: Benefits of owning a dog

Key: Interviewer in bold ; Interviewee (Blodwen) in plain font			
	1	Do you have any questions before we begin?	
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	3	Nope not at the moment.	
	4		
	5	Great. I'd also like to reiterate that anything that you mention today that	
	6	could be traced back to identify you will be replaced with some	
	7	unidentifiable context - so for example if you say your dog's names I will	
	8	just replace those with different names when writing up this interview. Is	
	9	that ok?	
	10		
	11	Yep that's fine.	
	12		
	13	So first of all, can you please just tell me a little bit about your dogs?	
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	15	[pause]	
	16		
	17	So how many do you have?	
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	19	I have three dogs and they are all Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. The oldest of	

20	my dogs is called <i>Charlie</i> and she is nearly 13 now, going on strong she is! One is	
21	called <i>Hatchi</i> and she is nearly six. She runs the house that one! [laughter]. And	
22	my baby boy <i>Levi</i> is nearly five.	
23		
24	That's lovely, thank you. And how long have you been a dog owner?	
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26	Well for nearly six years now.	
27		
28	So is it only since then you've owned dogs or were you an owner of a dog	
29	previously before that?	
30		
31	I always had dogs when I was a child and I always remember the fun I used to	
32	have with them. We got a dog for my daughter when she was about three - <i>Bette</i>	
33	she was called. She was great fun. But she got a bit too big so we have to send	
34	her to a farm. Literally had to send her to a farm. <i>Selena</i> was heartbroken I think -	
35	she was only a kid don't get me wrong but I think she bonded with the dog you	
36	know?	
37		
38	Can you tell me a little bit more about how she bonded with the dog?	
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40	You could always tell, you know, she was happy playing with the dog. My son was	
41	just a baby then so she only had <i>Bette</i> to play with her. She was lush, so gentle	
42	with <i>Selena</i> . After she went I didn't really ever want another dog. It hurts, you	

43	know, when a dog leaves. Do you get me?	
44		
45	Of course, I can completely understand that feeling.	
46		
47	You've obviously got a dog now, or you've had three dogs in the last six	
48	years - so can you tell me why or how you decided to get a dog again?	
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50	Actually I've had four dogs in the last six years. Another King Charles - <i>Rocky</i> . He	
51	was the ugliest little thing you've ever seen [laughter] but by god was he a darling.	
52	He was only eight months when he died. Well had to be put down. That was	
53	devastating, literally devastated us all. He had this disease - no idea what, they	
54	didn't even know themselves! We started to call him Benjamin Button towards to	
55	end [sigh]. It was like he was an old old dog in a baby dog's body, you know?	
56		
57	That sounds really horrible, I'm so sorry for your loss but thank you so	
58	much for sharing that. Please only share things that you are comfortable	
59	with though.	
60		
61	No it's fine, I like to talk about my dogs [laughs]. All of them! Sorry I've gone off	
62	into my own little world - you asked me why I decided to get a dog didn't you?	
63		
64	Yes that's right, but please take your time.	
65		

66	Well I said after <i>Bette</i> that I didn't want any more dogs. My husband has always	
67	loved dogs and always nagged me to get one - he's good at that [laughs]. It was	
68	basically down to me that we got <i>Hatchi</i> in the first place - not intentionally but I fell	
69	ill and had to stop working. Basically, I had a mini heart attack just over six years	
70	ago now and I had physio and stuff and had to take the time off work to recover.	
71		
72	Please only share stuff you're happy about Blodwen.	
73		
74	No no it's fine. My husband and I decided then that we would get a dog for	
75	company for me more than anything. Because I couldn't go to work I was stuck in	
76	a lot and I needed to get regular exercise, with the heart and that. He thought, well	
77	we both thought that owning a dog would be a good way to get me out and get the	
78	exercise that I needed and obviously the companionship then for when my	
79	husband was in work.	
80		
81	Lovely, thank you for that. So can you please just explain a little bit now	
82	about what your dogs mean to you?	
83		
84	Umm well my dogs mean the world to me, I absolutely adore them. They, they're	
85	just such lovely company and it's just nice to have a lovely welcome when I come	
86	home from work now. I never used to get that from my kids! [laughs]. And like I	
87	said they get me out and about. Definitely more than I used to be out and about.	
88	It's nice to meet other people as well when you're walking the dogs. And, you	

89	know, there's it's that social aspect which I find quite nice really, speaking to other	
90	dog owners and... plus you know my daughters got dogs so we walk our dogs	
91	regularly together and [pause] yeah I couldn't imagine my life without them now	
92	really.	
93		
94	So it sounds like your dogs have really provided you with a lot of benefits	
95	over the years that you've had them, as well as providing with a social	
96	avenue, sort of, to get involved with other people. Would you say that's an	
97	accurate reflection?	
98		
99	I think so, yeah.	
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101	That's great. Can I please ask you now just to explain how your dogs	
102	actually make you feel? So you've sort of answered this question already in	
103	what you said about what they mean to you - but can you tell me how they	
104	make you feel when you go for walks and meet other people, for example?	
105		
106	Umm, I feel Proud because they're very beautiful my dogs! [Laughs]. I feel...	
107	well not so much when I'm out but when I'm in, at home, I feel loved I feel its	
108	unconditional love that comes from them. And I feel as if I'm not alone. I tend to be	
109	at home on my own a lot... and I feel as if, you know, my dogs are like.. Because	
110	my children are grown up and doing their own stuff now, they're my new babies.	
111		

112	That's brilliant - you've mentioned that your children are grown up: have	
113	they moved out?	
114		
115	My daughter has. The cow has left me [laughs]. But my son is still here, though I	
116	don't see him very much to be honest. He sort of comes and goes as he pleases!	
117		
118	So do you feel then that the role that your dogs now play in your family are	
119	sort of like surrogate children, if you like?	
120		
121	Yes I do actually to be honest. I've never thought about it like that but I really do	
122	think that's what they are. Because like I said my children being grown up they	
123	don't need me to do things for them whereas my dogs need me to feed them and	
124	fuss them and exercise them and.. it makes me feel needed again.	
125		
126	So would you say then that they provide you with comfort in your family	
127	home?	
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129	Most definitely yes. They comfort me more than any person could I think [laughs]	
130	that might sound stupid but they're just so loving and, like I said, it's like	
131	unconditional love.	
132		
133	So what do you feel, in your own opinion - so you've mentioned a lot of the	
134	good things about owning a dog - but what do you think is the best thing	

135	about owning a dog?	
136		
137	It's definitely the companionship and the unconditional love. I felt that from <i>Hatchi</i>	
138	when we got here, then we decided to get <i>Rocky</i> .. after he died <i>Hatchi</i> couldn't	
139	take the grief. They don't only help me but they have a way of touching other dogs	
140	too, you know? Then it was <i>Levi</i> that stole my heart again and our old bird <i>Charlie</i>	
141	came to us because her owners didn't want her. Who on earth would do that? It	
142	makes me feel sick that someone would not want a dog. And she is lush, honestly	
143	lush... well now she is. She was a mess when she came here.	
144		
145	It sounds like your love for <i>Charlie</i> then actually helped her as much as she	
146	helps you?	
147		
148	Yeah I guess it did - again, she needed me and I loved that. She's little stumpy	
149	grandma now [laughs].	
150		
151	So I'm just going to start to wrap things up soon but I just want to ask you,	
152	to what extent do you feel your dogs have an impact on you	
153	psychologically? So do you feel they have any impact at all? Or for example,	
154	how do they best help you if you feel down?	
155		
156	Well when I'm feeling down, they definitely help me psychologically because I talk	
157	to them as if they are human beings. Although they can't answer me .. but I swear	

158	sometimes they do [laughs]... umm it's just the thought that somebody is actually	
159	listening to me you know? And if I'm upset I feel like my dogs can tell. They'll	
160	come up and they'll give me a big sloppy kiss and a snuggle and want me to pat	
161	them and it seems to help with those kind of issues. They're like therapy, they	
162	really are [laughs].	
163		
164	That's lovely, thank you. Now finally just one last question to wrap this all	
165	up - if I was to ask you to give one piece of advice to someone who is	
166	thinking of becoming a dog owner, what would it be?	
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168	Firstly the practical reasons, research the dogs. But definitely think about it	
169	because of like I said the companionship and the unconditional love. I know they	
170	take a lot of time but to me personally it's time well spent. I'd probably also say as	
171	well on the flip side don't even think of getting a dog if you don't have the time or	
172	the love to give to the dog.	
173		
174	Ok that's great - thank you so much for your time Blodwen... is there	
175	anything else that you would like to ask me or tell me about before we end	
176	the interview?	
177		
178	No I don't think so...	
179		
180	Ok, great. Thank you again.	

