

## Ellen's Positive Note #6

The goal of *Ellen's Positive Notes* is to lighten the mood during these difficult times of Covid-19 and to provide you with tools to help you. If you have colleagues in the financial services industry, who do not subscribe to my e-alerts, please pass this along and ask them to email me so we can add them to our list: ([ebessner@babinbessnerspry.com](mailto:ebessner@babinbessnerspry.com)) or Kim ([kmcpeake@babinbessnerspry.com](mailto:kmcpeake@babinbessnerspry.com)). I invite any feedback or questions or comments or other ideas you have for this new weekly column. Here it is... and **stay safe – please!**

### Our giant dog



Nathan Bessner, Ellen's son, with Bogie, our giant dog

**By Ellen Bessner, BABIN BESSNER SPRY LLP**

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In my previous [Positive Notes](#), I provided tips and tools to help you de-stress and communicate with your clients. This week, I'd like to share a personal story you might want to read before bed. Don't be surprised if you want to go to your nearest animal shelter to adopt a new pet after reading this. Here is my true story.

I love dogs so much, but I never thought I would get one. With my demanding career and young family, I didn't think I had the time to give a dog the attention it deserves. I was always committed to the belief that our lifestyle just didn't suit having a dog.

That all changed when I received an urgent call from my brother about fifteen years ago. His problems are my problems, and vice versa — that's how we roll. At the time he had not one, but three dogs. He called me to say that his personal circumstances had suddenly changed, requiring him to immediately find permanent, suitable care for all of them. This meant he had to give the dogs up.

"Bring them over," I told him. "I have a household full of people. We will look after them until we find a solution."

And with that, my 1,200-square-foot, pet-less home changed overnight. The first dog was Asta, the smallest, oldest, and of course, the one in charge — the alpha. She was the runt of a Kerry Blue Terrier litter, weighing in at 25 pounds. Asta was followed by Moxie, a mix between a poodle and a golden retriever (a golden doodle).

And then there was Bogie. Bogie was also a golden doodle. However, unlike Moxie, who was average size for the breed, Bogie was easily double her size. He was 90 pounds, lean and all legs with a massive poodle chest. Bogie was so tall that when he was up on his hind legs he was almost as tall as I am (5'6"). His head was so massive that when we took photos with his head next to ours, the size ratio was nearly three-to-one. When I walked him, I constantly feared that we might cause a car accident, as drivers' eyes were glued to Bogie's pony-sized body instead of the road.

While we came to adore all three dogs, there was something special about Bogie. When it came time to find adopted homes for the dogs, my son, aged 13 at the time (he is 23 in the photo in this story), asked if we could keep Bogie. My son had diligently been walking all three dogs twice per day. Against my better judgment, I agreed, on the condition that my son continue his walking schedule and take responsibility for the care of this fabulous creature, which he promised to do.

Needless to say, my son's undying love for his dog and the bond the two of them shared was never shaken, and as a result, Bogie never left our side.

I was so happy, as were my children. We all thought our dog was the best dog ever, as most dog owners do, but our Bogie really was. He was the warmest, most loving and obedient dog—well, except for the occasional small dead animal we discovered he'd killed in our backyard.

Bogie had an insatiable appetite for just about anything. The new rule was to make sure no food was left on the counters or anywhere else within Bogie's reach — and he had a long reach! Bogie would grab a dozen bagels if we accidentally left them on the counter, which we did on more than one occasion, and eat the entire lot, plastic bag and all.

While I didn't do much for Bogie during the week, I stepped up on weekends, as did my brother, who remained in Bogie's life. I will never forget tiptoeing past the security guard of my high-rise office building on weekends with Bogie so he could keep me company while I worked. I took Bogie with me to hairdresser appointments, on errands and even to clothing stores, where he squeezed into the change room with me. When I had to dash into the grocery store to get a few ingredients, Bogie waited patiently outside.

Everywhere Bogie went, he wagged his long, hairy tail and gave everyone a huge smile, bearing his pearly whites. He snuggled up to anyone who was willing to pat him, and when he settled down, he would lay in the middle of the floor and spread out as far as he could, making sure no one could go anywhere without stepping over him. He didn't want to miss anything and we all accommodated him.

Bogie loved going to the cottage, where he roamed free and drank from the lake. He was the perfect bowman for my canoe. He didn't like to be left behind, so we had to take him fishing every night in our tin boat. My job was to hold Bogie back from grabbing the fish on the lure because for some crazy reason he wanted to lick the fish before throwing them back into the lake. He would bark, hump the air and try to grab the fish (see "Big Dog Goes Fishing," which has about 50 views on YouTube, of which at least 45 are mine).

As my children grew older, so did our Bogie and instead of Bogie being our family dog, he now became my responsibility. With my son off to university, I knew it was my turn to take responsibility for Bogie, which I did without any of the second thoughts I had before he came into our lives.

While my brother continued to assist with Bogie's care, I began to feel that Bogie deserved better while I contemplated my next career move. I decided that I would leave my big law firm and continue my practice at home, so I could be with Bogie on days when I didn't have court or regulatory hearings. As I considered this move, I was approached by Ed Babin to join him. I said that I would join him and Cynthia Spry to form Babin Bessner Spry LLP only if my dog could come with me to work. They agreed, and so it went: Bogie jumped into my car most days to go with me to the office, getting more love and access to more garbage cans. He loved the leftovers in my office manager's garbage the best!

As Bogie became older, his health began to decline. I found it increasingly difficult to give Bogie the medical attention he deserved so my brother and I decided to reverse our situations, with my brother stepping back in as Bogie's primary caregiver. Bogie passed away in January 2020, at almost 15 years old, making him over 100 in dog years.

When my brother called me all those years ago, I never could have imagined that this amazing creature would come into our lives, just when we needed him most. He became an important member of our family, and my closest companion — even though he was the size of a small pony.