



Moyer is my 3 year old Lab/Doberman mix. He's the epitome of "velcro dog," he'll stretch a paw out on your foot just so he can be touching you when he's lying on the floor next to you...if you can convince him to lay on the floor. As I type this now, he's laying stretched out beside me. Moyer's about 84lbs and his head comes to my hip, I'm 5'9". No one has been able to convince him he's a big, he thinks he'll fit in your lap. Surprisingly, he's pretty good at making it work, with some legs hanging out. My father likes to say that we should all try to love life as much as Moyer does, because there's no one who loves it more. He'll let me do almost anything to him without a fight, bathing, brushing his teeth, ear cleaning, play with his jowls...anything. He happily rode in a car for 2300 miles over 4 days while we moved cross-country. Moyer will do almost anything for you, if it'll make you happy. Since his diagnosis, I've spent a lot of time crying, when I'm crying the hardest he brings me a myriad of toys and holds them in my lap. He's the most giving and best dog I've ever owned.

We found each other, is the best way to put it.

I had been on a waiting list for three and a half years for a diabetic alert dog, as I have type 1 diabetes. I had gone through the interviews and the home visit and one month before I was to get my alert dog, my sister brought home a 10 month old husky. I notified the program and received a disqualification letter in the mail the next week. At the time I had been working for a doggie daycare/boarding facility and we had a puppy we were fostering for a local rescue. I began the adoption process and the day of the home visit they called and said he'd been adopted out to someone else. Devastated, went out looking for another dog to rescue. I went to 5 or 6 different rescues and none of them seemed to "fit." On my way home I decided to stop at a recently opened shelter, less than a mile from my house. They had two dogs left, London and Emma. I saw London, sitting with a woman in his room, loving all the pets and attention and assumed he'd already found a home. So I took Emma for a walk. The shelter worker worked for the federal government training dogs and had taken a leave to work with a special case the shelter had been helping with. It was her last week at the shelter before returning to work. I explained why I was looking for a dog and she said she thought London would be the best fit. Shocked he was still available, I took him for a walk next. He was giant, much bigger than I ever thought I'd have, incredibly sweet and so happy. He met the other dogs in my house and it was decided, Moyer was mine.

That was in June 2011 and we've been inseparable since. For the first two years I had him he came to work with me every day. He became friends with all my coworkers and many customers too! Moyer was always very well behaved, unless you left post-it notes out on the desk, then you'd have teeth-marked post-its to use. He LOVES post-its and other papers. After switching jobs, Moyer had to stay home and only comes into the office on occasion. As soon as I get home though, we're two peas in a pod. I think the longest we've been apart is 5 days, once for a business trip. He comes with me everywhere, camping, hiking, errands, etc.

In September Moyer and I moved from California to Tennessee. We embarked on a new adventure. I didn't know anyone, save the handful of coworkers I'd met once on the 5-day business trip where I'd left Moyer. But Moyer and I are family, he was enough for me to move 2000 miles away from any human family member.

In October he kept licking himself. His anal glands suddenly had an issue, after never being an issue before. So, off to the vet we go. I was grateful to find such a helpful vet so quickly in Tennessee. The vet explained that allergies in the Southeast are really common in dogs. The issue would kind of get better and then we'd be back to square one again. On the day following a Saturday vet visit, in November, where he'd been prescribed a new antibiotic, Moyer's neck got incredibly swollen on one side. Being a Sunday, my vet was closed. We were sent off to the emergency vet. That was the first time they mentioned cancer. I was shocked. They aspirated his lymph node and did some blood work. When everything came back they said it looked like a reaction of some sort, some elevated white blood cells, but typical of a dog fighting an infection. The following week my vet checked him out and no one could figure it out, they just thought it was an unusual reaction. With anti-inflammatories the swelling had gone down.

Then in December he got really swollen again, on the left side only, again. My vet did a biopsy. She said the tissue had looked infected when she'd removed it and sent it off to the lab. Within a week we had the results, no bacterial infection and likely no cancer, just the slight increase of white blood cells, indicating he had been fighting something. The week later, no fungal infection. It was so frustrating to not know. So we discussed it over the phone and planned to start treatment for a hard to detect bacterial infection, since that was the only thing really left to do. The day before the appointment, both sides of Moyer's neck swelled up. So, we go in and Moyer was a little grumpy and a little less cooperative than normal. (Normally the vet can stare in his mouth for a good 2 minutes before he makes a fuss) Turns out his lymph nodes in his chest were somewhat swollen too. She wanted to aspirate them as well. Moyer sat patiently as she did the procedure. We'd have the results on Monday.

In the meantime, I went home with a ton of new medications for Moyer to start.

On Monday the vet and I played a little bit of phone tag. She got in touch with me after I'd finished work for the day. Moyer's results were back. He had lymphoma. Both chest lymph nodes came back positive.

I was shocked.

The vet and I discussed options over the phone, while I was in the parking lot of an auto part store for nearly an hour. Without treatment Moyer had 4-6 weeks to live. With steroids only he had maybe 8-12 weeks. And with chemo we could introduce remission with a good chance of survival over a year.

After getting off the phone I bawled. I hyperventilated. I was speechless.

Moyer is 3 years old. We were supposed to be on this amazing, new Tennessee adventure. He was supposed to be with me when I got married or maybe even when I started having kids. He is my family. He's my best friend.

Moyer may not be an officially registered medical alert dog. But he has woken me up in the middle of the night with low blood sugars. He's saved my life. I can only hope to do the same.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for any and all help treating Moyer's lymphoma.

~ Moyer's Mom