

## **Leash Laws are for Chumps: The Credo of the Dog Owning Sociopath**

**by Tia Everitt - Wednesday, May 04, 2011**

<https://politicsrespun.org/2011/05/leash-laws-are-for-chumps-the-credo-of-the-dog-owning-sociopath/>

Over the course of the last decade, I've allowed myself to become something of a chubby haus frau. I derive considerable pleasure in planting myself in front of the computer and not bothering to watch what I stuff in my face. Several times a year, something in my brain chemistry is rudely altered, and I find myself yearning to run half-marathons and participate in hellacious boot-camps. Ordinarily, I try to avoid running, as my thighs tend to rub together in such a way that the friction from the slabs of fat swinging back and forth causes me to give off smoke, and it smacks of effort. Yet this morning, still high from the heady excitement of the federal election the previous evening, I felt compelled to go for a jog before going to work. Spring has finally sprung in Winnipeg, and after being cooped up for months on end, it seemed like a really good plan to take the dog (a six pound Pomeranian) out to the Assinaboine Forest for a speed waddle.

Besides the dawning reality of running being that it actually involves movement, my forays into the land of exercise generally end badly. Those who know me, already know what always happens when I go out alone with a child or a small dog: I get attacked by a snarling, gigantic, hell hound.

These beasts are *never* leashed.

My beef is not with large dogs, specific breeds, or people who train their dogs well and are responsible owners.

My contempt and resentment is directly aimed at the selfish and irresponsible louts who cannot be bothered to think past themselves, subsequently endanger other people and their animal.

There is something disturbingly sociopathic about individuals who go about procuring large dogs, and then persist in taking them to public places and setting them loose, with zero capability to reign them in. Even more so when they do this the face of glaring signage that specifically implores them NOT to let their dogs off the leash. What twisted sense of entitlement do you have to feel, to justify allowing Cujo to charge at seniors and children, unchecked? How do you come to the conclusion that you and your snarling ball of canine terror are somehow exempt from city ordinances that are in place to protect the rest of us from you?

Today was no exception. I arrived at the park with my dog (who is more of an over-fed squirrel, really) and snapped her leash on. I grabbed a couple of poop scoop bags from the glove box, and locked the doors. I stopped to read the trail map, some of the historical notes, and was pleased to note that off-leash dogs were prohibited. The map gave directions to a nearby off-leash park, and warned of fines for those who failed to heed the leash warning. The fuzzy dog and I set off down the trail, enjoying the fresh wind, frog songs from the pond beyond, and the shrill trilling of birds from the birch trees around us. The place appeared to be devoid of other park users, although there were several vehicles at the gate, so after about

15 minutes of brisk jog-walk-running, I was starting to relax, and believed that this time would be different. This time I wouldn't have to save my purse pooch from becoming a Scooby snack for a rabid monster! No sooner had I let my guard down, did a massive, unrestrained dog appear at the trail-head, snarling and aggressively letting me know it was NOT my friend. I grabbed my yapping fool, and stomped my foot at the demon dog "Git! Go!" I yelled at it. Around the corner appeared it's owner: a woman in a down vest with sunglasses and Lululemon yoga gear. She had a leash draped, pashmina-like around her neck, but showed no inkling of desire to move to put it on her mutt. "Oh, don't worry! Charlie is FRIENDLY!" she called to me, all Tinkerbell and sunshine. I stood there, staring her down. "Please leash your dog" I said firmly. "Charlie won't hurt you!" she called. Charlie, of course, decided that this was the moment he had been waiting for, and launched himself at me, full tilt, barreling down the pathway. I screamed at her "GET YOUR FUCKING DOG" and started backing down the trail, ready to UFC smack down her dog if it dared to come closer. "Charlie! Come here boy!" she said as she stood there, meters up the trail. Meanwhile, Charlie was leaping on me, trying to get at my dog, who was now screaming. I fell over, and she had to pull the dog off of me with both hands on his collar.

Did she apologize? Did she chastise the dog?

No.

Instead, this is what she said.

"You know, you really didn't need to swear like that! My dog just wanted to play with you."

If there was a legal way that I could have decked her in the face, I would have. Redfaced and angry, I snapped "This is not an off-leash park. The signs indicate that your dog needs to be on a leash. Why isn't your dog on a leash?"

"He needs his exercise" was her reply, and she took off down the trail saying "he's never had a problem with anyone before."

Now.

I wish this was the first time I'd heard this from someone. Or even the second time. It's not. This happens to me several times a year, and the response is always the same: my dog is friendly, you have the problem, I don't give a crap about rules, screw you if you disagree.

Is it me that has the problem? I decided to see what the City of Winnipeg had to say about leashes and parks:

**Is there a by-law about my neighbours dog running around without a leash on?**

The [City of Winnipeg Pound By-law 2443/79 Section 20.\(1\)\(a\)](#) states that no owner shall permit his dog to run at large.

**What does run at large mean?**

The [City of Winnipeg Pound By-law 2443/79 Section 16](#). defines "at large" as being off the premises of the owner and not on a leash held by a person able to control the dog. The leash shall

be no longer than six (6) feet.

**Can I let my dog run off leash in the school grounds if no one is around?**

No – the [City of Winnipeg Pound by-law 2443/79 Section 20.\(1\)\(h\)](#) prohibits dogs on any school or playground, at anytime.

**Why can't I let my dog run without a leash?**

[The City of Winnipeg Pound By-law 2443/79 Section 20.\(1\)](#) clearly states that as a dog owner you must keep your dog on a leash while off its property. The leash cannot extend longer than 6 feet and the leash must be held by a person able to control the dog.

Letting your pet run loose puts them and the community in danger. Every year hundreds of dogs and cats die in traffic accidents. Motorists may be injured trying to avoid these animals. When allowed to run at large your pet can be killed or injury by another animals, they can ingest poison or come in harms way in numerous other ways.

A large playful dog may frighten seniors and children and can cause injury by jumping up on them. Dogs and cats also create conditions for disease by ripping apart garbage and by soiling property. A stray dog or cat also puts people at risk for rabies.

Pets that run free contribute to the already explosive pet population in Winnipeg.

Owners who fail to keep their dog or cat on a leash in Winnipeg are subject to fines of \$200.00.

Remember, a leash keeps your dog where it wants to be - by your side.

And that, folks, is my point. Your dog, no matter how loving and playful he is with you, was bred to protect you. Everyone and everything else is a threat, and he will do what he can to minimize that threat, even with lethal force. He's doing his job.

Your dog is a weapon.

*Would you stand idly by if someone were to drive their 4x4 through the centre of the park towards a group of children?*

*Would you feel unsafe if I ran at you with a crossbow or shotgun from a stand of trees?*

**Then why is it alright for your dog to do so?**

*If I jumped on you, and tried to bite your face, wouldn't you call the cops and have me charged with assault?*

*Why is it different for you and your dog?*

It's not. Leash the dog, or take it to the off-leash dog park.

The rest of society will thank you, and your dog will too.