



RESPONSIBILITY OF RESCUING

By: Lana Hollenback

No better feeling than to have rescued an animal, doesn't matter if dog, cat, pet pig or farm animal, and placed it in a home. When we look into the eyes of an abused or neglected animal, our heart breaks and we only want to save that animal. Someone comes along and responds with "I want that animal." But my question today is not about the good feeling but what happens when the placement goes downhill and the animal you felt good about, now is back looking, just looking for someone who will love it, understand it, care for it, and be conscious of its needs - not just its wants. I know that feeling and I know the tears I've cried because I failed that animal. I forget the good feeling I had when I rescued and placed it. That is all forgotten. Only the pain of failure remains.

Could I have done better? If so, how? How did I fail? These are questions that go around and around in your head. You just know it was your RESPONSIBILITY.

Definition of RESPONSIBILITY

1 : the quality or state of being responsible: as

a : moral, legal, or mental accountability

b : reliability, trustworthiness

2 : something for which one is responsible : burden <has neglected his responsibilities>

Yet there are times when we actually neglect our responsibility. Maybe it's not our fault. Maybe we didn't know. But maybe we fail because we are too important to check all things for the animal that we work so hard to save. Maybe we didn't look into the whole situation enough to understand the needs of the animal. If we fail, it can cost the animal his life.

Where does that responsibility begin and end. It starts with finding out all you can about the animal. To look into its eyes if possible and know how and what he feels. Yes, we can do this. We can check out the person wanting to adopt. And when someone comes forward to adopt that animal, do we act like some of the shelters and say "here fill out these papers and you can adopt the animal." Never once to they do home checks or ask questions or after seeing the animal do we offer advice on its care and what is needed to help this animal to have and lead a full life. Do we make sure they understand the needs of the animal. Some may be first time adopters and have never owned an animal like this people. But hey, how hard can it be. Right? Wrong...it can be hard.

When we agree to help an animal and for the sake of argument let's use a pig, but remember it can be any kind of animal. Once we have agreed to help the animal, then comes responsibility to the animal. Not the one that is rehoming it, or neglecting it. We then owe the pig the responsibility of making sure the pig's needs are met and/or will be met. And it is not being mean to the person giving it up for whatever reason. It is then our responsibility to care for that pig in finding out how much the new adopter knows about pigs and if they have done their homework. Do they understand that not all veterinarians see and treat all animals. Let alone small pet pigs. They may be a large animal vet and treat farm pigs but they also need to understand the differences in

potbelly pig and farm pig. It's our responsibility to insure this for the pig. They need to understand the instincts they have and the hierarchy which will include the humans caring for them. And feeding, and how much. What do pigs need? Are they over weight? Do they know how to diet a pig. This is your responsibility to insure they know at least the very basics of the pig or any animal. Your RESPONSIBILITY is to the pig. Not the person giving it up and not to the adopter. If you fail, their death could be on you. Not always, but could be. I've been there and done that and learned the hard way that tears won't wash away the pain of knowing I failed that pig. I surely don't want you feeling that pain. I want that pig to have a long, happy, fulfilled life and it is up to you to see it happens.

Don't neglect your responsibility and know who you owe it to. That animal will always be thankful for that home and life. You may never see that animal. Or touch the animal. But you will always know that you fulfilled your responsibility.