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IG Writing Group

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Topic: Alone or Choices

### **A Dog's Choice – Jimmy's Story**



It was a cold, wintry Monday morning in February of 1981. I was rushing out of the door to go to work – late as usual! As soon as I flung open the front door, and was about to step outside – my path was blocked by 2 black dogs. One, the spokesdog for the duo, was the larger of the two, while the other one, was a little, long haired shrimp. As the cartoonist Bud Fisher described his cartoon creations Mutt and Jeff back in 1907, my two Monday morning visitors came across as "two mismatched tin horns". The larger dog barked as soon as I stepped out – not threateningly – but just as if to say, "we're looking for a handout". Accordingly, I ran inside, grabbed some Sunday dinner leftovers from the fridge, and handed the food to my two canine panhandlers. And then I

wondered – *why did they **choose** me?* This behavior was so atypical of stray dogs, who normally run away from strangers rather than seek them out!

This visitation repeated itself in the days that followed. Then, one day, the dogs failed to appear. I became anxious! Then I learned from a neighbor that the dog catchers, responding to a complaint about stray dogs, had picked them up. I contacted the Humane Society, which, in those days, euthanized dogs that had not been adopted or retrieved by their owners within a week or two. They informed me that someone had adopted the little dog. But the big one remained unclaimed. The big guy's days were clearly numbered – he was on canine death row!

In those days, my plate was full! I was working 14 hour days, attending classes in the evening for an MBA, and serving as caregiver to a very dependent 70 year old mother. Did I really need more responsibilities taking care of a dog? Yet, I couldn't push the urge aside – I had to do something for this dog! When I arrived at the Pound, my canine visitor was huddled in a ball in the back of the kennel. As I approached, he didn't look up. His body language shrieked: I know I'm finished! I give up! Leave me alone! The sight of this muddy, crumpled body on the floor - a stark contrast to the proud dog who appeared on my front doorstep weeks before - crushed me! What I had to do was clear! Regardless of my full plate – Jimmy was coming home with me!

In the months and years that followed, Jimmy and I shared many adventures, hilarious experiences and, inevitably, a few heartaches. But those are other stories yet to come! In the end, Jimmy and I travelled life's tortuous path together for the next 12 years as a result of his fateful choice on that wintry day in February, 1981.