

## *Ten Commandments for Pet Owners*

1. My life is likely to last 10 to 15 years. Any separation from you will be very painful.
2. Give me time to understand what you want from me. Do not break my spirit with your temper, though I will always forgive you. Your patience will teach me more effectively.
3. Please have me spayed or neutered.
4. Treat me kindly, my beloved friend, for no heart in all the world is more grateful for your kindness than mine. Don't be angry with me for long, and don't lock me up as punishment. After all, you have your job, your friends, your entertainment. I have only you.
5. Speak to me often. Even if I don't understand your words, I understand your voice when it's speaking to me. Your voice is the sweetest sound I ever hear, as you must know by my enthusiasm whenever I hear your footsteps.
6. Take me in when it's cold and wet. I'm a domestic animal and am no longer accustomed to the bitter elements. I ask for little more than your gentle hands petting me. Keep my bowl filled with water. Feed me good food so that I may stay well, to romp and play and do your bidding. By your side, I stand ready willing, and able to share my life with you, for that is what I live for. I'll never forget how well you've treated me.
7. Don't hit me. Remember, I have teeth that could easily crush the bones in your hand, but I choose not to bite you.
8. Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I'm not getting the right food, I've been in the sun too long, or my heart may be getting weak.
9. Take care of me when I get old. For you will grow old too.
10. When I am old, or when I no longer enjoy good health, please do not make heroic efforts to keep me going. I am not having fun. Just see to it that my trusting life is taken gently. And be with me on that difficult journey when it's time to say goodbye. Never say, "I just can't bear to watch." Everything is easier for me when you are there. I will leave this earth knowing with my last breath that my fate was always safest in your hands. I love you.