



March 2024 Update

The Whole Story

Thanks to my understanding boss & coworkers, from September last year until recently, Addie was accompanying me to work. Then, a few weeks ago, she attacked the back of our SUV. I was angry ... and devastated! Since I had an appointment to get to, I cleaned up as best I could. But, I couldn't even look at Addie in the backseat for the entire 1-1/2 hour trip. Addie accompanied me into the cosmetology school for my haircut. Four hairdressers crowded the front, asking to pet her. Addie soaked it in, then laid obediently at my feet. While with Addie in the automotive store next door, the store clerk told me how pretty she was and how much he loved Staffies. Later, the attendants at the chiropractor doted on Addie while I used the bathroom. They commented on what a good girl she was!

"Elohim does not see as humans see. Humans look at outward appearances, but Yahweh looks into the heart."

—Samuel 16:7 NOG



All I could think was, "You don't know the whole story!" "On the outside, Addie's beautiful and adores attention. On the inside, she's a mess!" "If you only saw the shredded ceiling above our rear SUV door. Or the teeth marks in the plastic door panel." The destructive, wrestler persona of Addie 'the Mouth' Plog seems completely opposed to the friendly, magnetic Adelia Mae that I know & love! But, the truth is, my girl is all these things. When she's anxious or worked-up, she mars the world around her. When she's calm and secure, she's a creative force like no other! Whether our life looks perfect on the outside, or not, each of us have things we hide. God, though, knows the whole story.

Words of Life

And how we interact with the world around us depends on our inner dialogue. What kind of words do I speak to myself? Words of life & strength? Or words of struggle & condemnation? Lately, much of my self-talk has been: "I can't do this [live with my dog's destruction] any more." "I can't afford it [putting Addie into a 3-week training program]." "I'm not strong enough [to deal with her anxiety]." And "I'm not a good [dog] mom."

"The Holy Spirit gives life. ... The words I have spoken to you are full of the Spirit. They give life."

—John 6:63 NIRV

"Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to [H]im and what is perfect."

—Romans 12:2 NCV

I want to trust that Creator is leading my every step. But, I'm realizing that I often discard options *before* I'm sure where God wants me to walk. I tend to lean too much into reason and not enough into the unknown. I'm usually kind to others but hard on myself. On our own, there are many paths that are closed to us. But, in community we can come alongside each other and find new ways. Consider different possibilities. Make better outcomes. Together we can share hope!

Rescuing the Discouraged

Through these long months, I'd all but lost hope. I couldn't find a local dog trainer, plus I didn't think I had the budget. Honestly, the morning after her most recent panic attack, I was *days* away from dropping Addie at the shelter. But, I didn't have peace in that! This is why I'm so grateful a coworker asked how I was. I replied, "I can't talk about it right now." Later that morning, he asked again—and it all came spilling out! He simply said, "I think I can help." He made a few calls, wrote down a phone number and gave it to me. I called and later that afternoon, a local trainer & his wife dropped by and met Addie & me. Her text to me soon after: "Hang in there. It'll be OK. We're here to help." And they are, with a way that makes it affordable for me! Including texts when I need encouragement or follow-up visits when I'm confused or make mistakes.



**"The Lord is there to rescue all who are discouraged and have given up hope."
—Psalm 34:18 CEV**

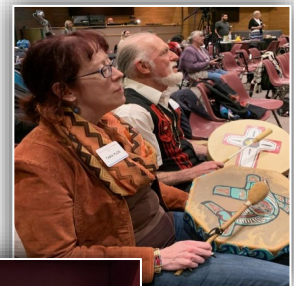
Just days ago, Addie's training program was completed—and mine has begun. As I've rearranged our home to accommodate Addie's new crate & elevated cot, God has given me time to reevaluate what's important. I love how Addie makes connections with people when I'm too introverted to do so! I love how being a dog mom starts conversations with other animal lovers. And I love how taking care of her gives me a reason to get up in the morning. Every time her eyes dance & ears perk up when we're playing, I smile. In different ways—forgiveness, pure joy, unconditional love—Addie reflects our Creator! Much like the song *GoD & DoG* by Wendy Francisco (just look it up online). Clearly, there's still a long road ahead of us. But, with the help of God and the community around both me and Addie, we'll take it one step at a time.

Praises and Prayer Requests

TRIBAL MINISTRY CONFERENCE REQUEST This year's TMC is **April 12th & 13th** in Tacoma, WA. I would love to go and renew relationships begun last year! Please ask God for provision, including a dog-sitter, if this is on His calendar for me.

NAIM COMBINED STAFF RETREAT PRAISE! All details are set for NAIM staff to come together for a time of refreshing & professional development. **REQUEST** Please pray for our gathering **May 7th though 10th** in Lindell Beach, BC!

FIRST STEPS REQUEST Please continue to pray for Addie, as we follow training to relieve her anxiety and encourage her to self-soothe in her new crate—especially when I'm away at work. And for me to renew my thinking, so we can both heal.



Tara Plog

NAIM staff and the ministries they represent are solely funded through and fully accountable to North America Indigenous Ministries.

Give online at www.naim.ca. Or, make checks out to NAIM and send to:
PO Box 499, Sumas, WA 98295.

To be a financial Ministry Partner, please designate donations to NAIM **Project #771**.