

# What do *you* answer to the question: *“How do you give them back?”*

1. "It's truly the only bad part about being a puppy raiser and it is very hard. BUT if I hadn't agreed to give him back, I would have missed out on all the joys of raising this great dog."
2. "I always tell them that because I've known from the beginning that I have to give it back and they are going for a "higher purpose" it makes it easier. Now if you tried to take one of my keeper dogs I'd sooner kill you than let you take them.... I also tell them that it's not easy, but it's worth it."
3.
  1. Someone needs her more than me.
  2. I will get another puppy right away.  
and (ta-da) my favorite and most direct response
  3. If the hardest thing I ever do in life is turn in a puppy then I am truly blessed. Because they aren't "mine" to begin with... I am just a stop along their way. And as much as I love them and WANT them, there is someone else out there who will love them and NEED them.
4. This is never an easy one to answer, and it is difficult to have a "canned" answer for every situation / person. The one I like to use the most when asked "How do you give them up?" is to reply that I don't view it as a matter of giving them "UP", it is more a matter of giving them "TO" someone who really needs this dog to maintain/ improve their level of independence. (and I know this idea came from someone else on the list- I'm sorry I don't know who to credit with that!). I have found that any more of an explanation falls on someone with a "glazed over" expression- because they usually simply cannot relate to volunteering in this way. My original "mentor" for Puppy Raising has commented that she feels that a person who has to ask this will really never understand any explanation. And darn, if I don't get this question about 19 times the week before turn in- for me, the most emotionally raw time in the PR process! Sigh...
5. No puppies, No graduates.  
We don't give them up we give them to someone.

I have business cards that I give to the most persistent questioners with CCI information (copied directly from the website) and a picture of a locally raised dog and his partner with that quote as a caption.

I am a former first grade teacher and I had to send my students on to second grade. Sending our puppies on is much the same.

**6.** When I first started raising some 10 years ago, I would tell people that someone needed this dog to help them be more independent. I sometimes said things like someone needs him more than I. That was before my first turn in ... Now I tell people that it's one of the hardest things I've ever done. I also say in response to the question "How do you give them up?" "With a big box of Kleenex!". It doesn't get any easier but when you get to hand that leash over it's one of the most awesome feelings of pride!

**7.** I heard on the list someone say, " How could I not do it? I want the dog but the disabled person Needs the dog." I also say that I love the fact that CCI retains ownership of the dog. CCI does annual follow-ups to make sure that the dog is being used and well cared for. And I say that when I attend a Graduation and see how much the dog means to her new recipient, I feel so proud and so glad to have had a hand in providing the help.

**8.** When asked - "Isn't it hard to give them up?" my response is - "Yes, but it's not about me."

**9.** Here's one of my answers to THE question. I work with families in conflict and my spouse is a cop. For us, it's really lovely to get to do something that's just plain positive. We get a year with a great little puppy, and then hopefully he gets to go on a fulfill his doggy destiny and make someone's life better. Happy faces all around. What could be better?

**10.** Among the answers I use in easier times:  
"We know from the beginning that they aren't our dogs, we're only like foster parents for a year or so."  
"You meet the people they will work with and who need them, how could I do anything else?"  
"Sure you could give them up. How do teachers let their students graduate? How do parent allow their kids to grow up, leave for college, join the army or get married?"

**11.** I agree with most responses. They are not ours to begin with and are only with us for a short period of time, this is a very important statement.

When I am asked the question people are really interested, at least 95% are, and I will tell them about what "my" graduate dogs are doing for their companions. The dogs we raised that graduated are with a unique companion that has different needs and I explain what

the dogs do to help them in their every day life, often times is it simple needs that we take for granted. I find that people are beginning to know more about our CCI dogs because they are getting so much publicity. The person asking the questions will say to me, "They pick up things and close doors, what else can they do?" I tell them a little tid bit about one or two graduates, it may be funny or awe inspiring and by the time I'm finished they are thanking me for volunteering and either interested in volunteering themselves or want to donate money. The best part is when I see them look at "my" dog and then at me and smile, then you know you have connected and made an impact on this individual.

**12.** Excellent response to those who feel that they could never give up something they love so much. Yeah, I always get the implication. It's a drag.

I do tend to get tired of the question from those who are clueless but you do learn to discern how to respond.

If the light seems to be on and somebody's home I say:

"I know when I asked for a puppy that he would go back and yes, it hurts to give them up but how selfish it would be of me to NOT give them up". Yes, I love the dog but there's someone out there who needs him".

Then I do what Marty does and explain more of what the dog can do.

If the light is on and NOBODY's home I say:

"Sure you could. That's why you would get into this program in the first place. Wouldn't you want to try to make a difference in someone's life?"

If there's not even a light on then what I would like to say but don't:

"Yeah, well I guess I'm just a cold hearted @##." <GGGGGG>

I think that's the implication Diane talked about. :)

**13.** Life is hard. It's harder for some than others; I'm grateful that I have the use of both arms and both legs (golf notwithstanding). I want Guth-Pup to soften someone else's life, and that's why I've knowing set myself up for periods of sadness, loneliness, anxiety, disappointment, loss, and some small amount of grief.

It's hard to give up a source of unconditional love. Fortunately, "our" doggies seem to get over it long before we do, and the last thing I'll know I'll be able to do for Guth-Pup is to bear the burden for both of us.

**14.** Yesterday someone who came to the house asked the inevitable question. I had the opportunity to show him pictures of Tait and Lanzner and explain how because Tait has a dog he was able to get his own apartment, go to college, work, etc.

Usually I say it's mixed feelings because we're sad to let go of our puppy, but it's such a feeling of pride when they go to work. We know before we get a puppy that we're raising it for a purpose and want it to succeed.

**15.** When asked this question, I tell them, "Yes, it is hard. It is one of the most difficult things I have ever done and also one of the most rewarding" Then if they are "truly" interested, I tell a graduate "story", some little thing that demonstrates what a

difference these dogs make. This to me, is one of the reasons, it is so nice to hear from your graduate at least once in a while.

**16.** Of course as a grad, I don't get the question on how do "I" do it, but they do ask me how the puppy raisers do it, I tell them that if someone didn't do it, I'd not have London/Bennie. I tell them it is hard, but they keep doing it and that is the part that amazes me, that the PR finds the strength and depth, and keep going because it is good. I also tell them we all cry, all for different reasons. I tell them we keep the tissue and film/camera industry in the black!

**17.** I may have to give up a dog every so often but I have gained more friends, friends that are as dear to me (and often easier to love) than family. If I didn't raise dogs I wouldn't have found them. And if I didn't give them up I wouldn't bond even closer to them when I cried because I did and celebrate with them when one graduates. What is that about with friends joys are doubled and troubles divided? I feel as though I've gotten more than I've ever given from this program.

**18.** When The Question comes up, I usually just try to take myself out of the picture as much as I can. My usual answer is along the lines of "I think he has a much bigger role in life to play than just making me happy. He and I work all the time, every day, to prepare him for that role. And when the curtain goes up for him, I'll be happy for his success, and sad that I won't see my good friend as much anymore, and delighted that he will live very happily with a person who needs his skills very much." Most people don't realize how adaptable dogs are. All dogs I've adopted or have 'gotten a job' have readily accepted their new situation in 2 or 3 days. I think as long as they get good lovin' and are treated right in their new home, they're fine (of course, that's problematic for lots of folks who get adopt a mature dog). So, yep, it hurts a bit, but The Dog will be right as rain in about 1/10th the time that I will be!

**19.** As I've said before, no matter how many puppy's you have raised it still hurts when you give them back. Last night we the "New Hampshire Contingent of CCI" held a meeting of all our PR'S, plus three potential PR's. The question they asked was "how do you give them back"? We, my wife and I, and Kathy Mandsager, said we saw what impact having an SD

had on them. Being there, you know why and it is a little easier. The others really felt the loss more than Kathy or us.

How many of you out there have spoken with a potential PR and was that question brought up? If so, how did you answer? Was it your question before you became a PR for CCI?

**20.** I am one of the privileged few to have raised pups, then receive a graduate dog. I still get asked "the question," and go through the list of answers. What seems to hit home with a lot of people is "Someone gave Ty up for me. I would never have this wonderful dog if it weren't for puppy raisers."

**21.** My reply to this question has always been - that a piece of your heart goes with the pup, but, I am preparing a gift for someone I do not know who will need this dog much more than I do.

**22.** If God could love me enough to give his own Son for me, I think I can love someone else enough to give up "my" puppy for them.

**23.** It's not like I'm never going see or hear about "my" puppy again. CCI is a wonderful program that does an excellent job of keeping us updated throughout advanced training. They give us first choice if our pup is released, and allow us the honor of handing over the leashes of "our" dogs to their new owners at graduation.