

The Remarkable Story, Example and Lessons of Barney's Last Days

Barney: September 22, 2007 – November 15, 2021

According to the Internet, in human-equivalent days, Barney was 79:

Age of Dog (dog's age according to the calendar)	
Small	<i>Medium</i>
64	69
68	74
72	<u>78</u>

And we know this is true because:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DZbSlkFoSU>

Astonishing coincidences or miracles (depending on a person's viewpoint) of Barney's following end-day circumstances:

∞ His human "mother" sold and moved from her prior home to a new home that, before she wanted to move in, a contractor was making changes that were planned for about 60 days – in the end it took almost 90 days https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TnkJ8_BmSI.

I have a separate full apartment on the first floor of his regular "vacation" home that they moved into while the construction was taking place.

∞ I (his human "uncle") – kept Barney a few times a year (over the last 14 years) for a day or two here and there – the maximum being probably 7 days at a time every year or so – this last visit was 10 times longer than any prior visit!

∞ At age 78, when Barney moved in to my place on August 13, 2001, the plan was to walk him as normal for the pattern at my place, but at his real home he got little exercise, just going outside a few times a day twice a day, morning and night.

As a result, like most sedentary older people, he was showing signs of "Groundhog Day Syndrome" – significant physical and mental decline, boredom . . . He still looked forward to his meals, "snacks" (normally only provided by me), sleeping, welcoming anyone and everyone and especially walks – but he most loved to explore and smell, smell, smells! These walks provided both physical and mental stimulation.

∞ Again, the plan was to give his normal vacation home, 2–times a day, walks while realistically understanding his physical condition had declined. So, maybe several smaller walks a day would be better to work him back into some level of stamina.

The following are "real–time" emails for Barney's last 93 days:

Fri 8/13/2021 12:12 PM – A Theory and Experiment

I have wondered if Barn's decline (eyes?, hearing?, "clinging" . . .) might be the result of being too sedentary with the result of general physical decline and dementia setting in.

Since he will be here for an extended period I am interested in seeing if some of this decline can be reversed with "physical therapy" – 2 30–minute walks a day plus 2 - 4 shorter walks giving him time not only to walk, but explore (use his mind).

While few older people, as they age, take advantage of what increased exercise can do for them, it can have a major impact on their physical AND mental health – let's see if we can do the same for the Angel – I think we are going

to see a significant change (his “seeing” and “hearing” may return since these may not be physical issues as much as mental/dementia related).

B

PS I also expect his sleeping to improve (a lot of time he now seems to be laying down, but not in a deep sleep like he did years ago) – better sleep should also help him physically and mentally.

Sat 8/14/2021 8:01 AM – Re: A Theory and Experiment

When you are testing new theories you have to be flexible – and the sooner the better. Barn’s PT routine is going to change to 2 longer walks a day, giving him equal time of walking and stopping for prolonged smelling – the walking for his physical improvement and the smelling for mental improvement – he is not meant to live his whole life in sterile atmospheres.

After eating, smelling is his next great delight – then walking, treats and sleeping – he has been deprived of 3 of the 5 so he exhibits signs of depression (much like old people’s common depression resulting in negative physical conditions) – I think, in a relatively short period of time, we may be able to correct and reverse this!

B

Sat 8/14/2021 8:05 AM

6:30 – 7:45 this morning

B

Sat 8/14/2021 9:13 AM – E-mail from His human “sister”

Wow! I’m sure he feels he is already in doggie heaven!

Sat 8/14/2021 9:44 AM – A Theory and Experiment

well, he is napping better – snoring some!

One issue in getting older (without adequate exercise) is that sleeping is not as good and sound so you never feel really rested – leads to more waking (or half awake) time which results in boredom . . . depression . . . other physical ailments.

I really think we are going to see a change in him in the 6 weeks he is here – it should give other older people WITH PLENTY OF TIME incentive to start exercising 2 hours a day, 6 days a week for their own health – physical and mental. NO, they don’t need a personal trainer (a waste of money), they don’t need to go to a gym (a waste of 30 minutes or more going and coming) . . . JUST start moving! Search Interval Training on the internet for how/why it is so effective – Google Good Exercises for Seniors . . . Key: START, DEVELOP STRICT DISCIPLINE (stop looking for excuses not to do it “just today”) . . . learn and hone what is done over time, make sure getting adequate protein (even in powder form, if necessary, to supplement), do some exercises where you “breathe hard – but NOT to the point of it being hard to breathe,” breathe through nose NOT through mouth . . .

I just started my 23rd year of CONTINUOUS exercise and I am still learning, getting better at it – it is physically harder than ever, but (because of the developed discipline) much easier – the reason? Exercise, developed to a discipline (at which point it mostly does itself mentally and physically), is 90% mental and 10% physical – if people don’t understand this they may exercise for a while, but will eventually give in to the mental challenge, while if they focus on “making” themselves develop and follow a strict routine the developing harder physical will actually become easier as the mental weaknesses are overcome – an exercise discipline requires we mature past the immature-point (“I don’t like to . . .”) where we just look at the effort without any thought about the consequences of doing/not doing something – developing a discipline. This is understandable at the early age and level (it is not as we age) but, nonetheless it is the reality for most people in most things – a lack of physical activity in older

people being one of the more apparent. By the time we are in our early teens we need to stop hearing, out of our mouths, “I don’t like . . .” whining (unless in matter of personal tastes – as in taste buds).

B

Wed 8/18/2021 11:10 AM – Barn

is holding up better than I thought he would to his new MPT (Mental & Physical Therapy) routine – over 1 1/2 hours in the morning – about 1 hour evening walking and smelling (about half walking and half smelling). The walking is helping him both physically and mentally and the smelling is good mental exercise. Combine this with his thinking about his breakfast, lunch and dinner treats (for 30 minutes are so before each he is thinking about them) – and 30 minutes before our walks he does the same – all giving him mental stimulation he doesn’t normally get – in effect reawakening his little dormant brain. I think, after his 60 or so days here, he should be in much better shape.

And I think, if this works out as planned, it will provide a model for old people vegging away in nursing home and assisted living facilities (modern day nursing homes). There is no reason for old people living health declining lives FOR YEARS – AT MOST the average person should live with no more than a few days, weeks or month of an unsatisfying, purposeless, miserable . . . life! Which it what I want for the Barn.

B

Aug 27, 2021, at 9:27 AM, – I know you are

sitting on pins and needles to know how your brother’s M & P T is going – today another **BIG** milestone – a normal attribute of dementia is “clinginess” – I leave my porch door cracked so B can go out there on his own while I am exercising. He hasn’t done it for over a couple of minutes (if I go out there first he will follow, but in a minute or two when I came in he would) – today, I did not even go out, but he later went on his own for probably 30 minutes. **HUGE** progress after only a couple of weeks – plus he is much steadier on his feet in general. Coming back to life slowly but surely!

B

On September 6th, Barney took his normal morning walk, but a couple of hours, when it was time for him to go outside to #1, he literally could not walk, he just slumped down on the ground – had to be taken back upstairs.

Tue 9/7/2021 7:55 AM – under observation

went 2, 1, drinking water . . . we are taking it easy today, but he did have a good 15 walk/smell session.

B

Tue 9/7/2021 7:56 AM – Barn under observation (from another person)

sounds like he is feeling better – maybe he got dehydrated yesterday

Tue 9/7/2021 8:02 AM – Re: Barn under observation

could have been – we invented whipped cream floating on water to start him drinking yesterday – he has forgotten about that so he is drinking regular water today.

B

Wed 9/8/2021 4:57 PM – Re: Barn under observation

he is at 110%

B

Mon 10/25/2021 12:57 PM – Good Morning

Not really working on anything – I have just been taking care of Barney – trying to revive him from almost death (mental and physical) since he has been mostly laying around for years without much physical activity or mental stimulation – almost 2 hour walk in the morning for the last, almost 2 1/2 months, and an hour at night – he is almost back to normal. It wouldn't take much longer than that to revive an old sedentary person IF they would do the work – which very few will!

B

Wed 10/27/2021 4:28 PM – I think I figured out

what we thought almost killed Barn weeks ago – I think he picked up and ate a discarded small marijuana cigarette – we were walking by the University that morning and I think he picked it up – you know how he is!

Mon 11/8/2021 1:17 PM – May need to take Barn to vet

From the internet: “Dribbling can be a result of an issue with your dog’s salivary glands, such as infection or blockage, but in some cases, drooling can also be a sign of Liver disease or sadly Kidney failure. In older pets, it is also possible that a growth inside the mouth – which may be cancerous – can also cause excessive drooling.”^{Jan 10, 2020}

B

Tue 11/9/2021 2:36 PM – Vet

The vet called just a report that all of Barney’s lab works yesterday were fine. They are sending off a urine specimen today and will keep me posted about that.

Note: He had an abscessed tooth or 2 that required surgery on the morning of the 11th

Thu 11/11/2021 1:50 PM – Did you get my message?

Barney did great with his teeth! I’ll pick him up at 4:45. Regular food softened with warm water.

Limited walks for 2 weeks...he needs to recover from surgery.

Fri 11/12/2021 4:50 AM (The end of his 3 month visit here) – Great Achievement! Proving He is Not ONLY a Genius



*Bow Wow Boot Camp
Completion Certificate
Top 5% Achievement Award!*

Bernard T (Barney) Harrison

August 13, 2021 – November 12, 2021

*For 180 Walk/Sniff Sessions
Average length 1 1/2 hours – 1.75 miles*

*Completed with enthusiasm, endurance
and great attitude!*



Fri 11/12/2021 7:30 AM – Re: Great Achievement! Proving He is Not ONLY a Genius

A Champ for sure – he had dental work yesterday but bouncing back



Sat 11/13/2021 8:53 AM – New voicemail

Barn has to go to the Animal Emergency Hospital

Sun 11/14/2021 9:31 AM – Barn a barn

Barney had a good night. He was resting when I called earlier; still receiving fluids. They will try to give him meds orally later today and see if he can hold them down. Possible release late today....👉

Sun 11/14/2021 10:41 AM – Barney

The doctor just called me to touch base. She said Barney's doing great and they just took him off his IV. They're going to give him some meds and see how he does, but she said to come at 5 o'clock and take him home unless something changes and she calls me back.

Note – Sunday night @ 9 (last time I saw him): He did make it home – could walk around, but not hungry (he is ALWAYS ready to eat)

Mon 11/15/2021 4:02 AM – Barney is in doggy heaven



Mon 11/15/2021 6:10 AM – Re: Barney is in doggy heaven

He had a great and happy life and thankfully it ended easy! Amazing that he earned his certificate only days ago – what a Champ!



Mon 11/15/2021 6:28 AM – I DO believe in miracles!

On reflection:

It is amazing Barney spent his last 3 months here so you and I shared him in his last months

He got to take literally years of great walk/sniff sessions in this short period

He returned mentally/physically to years younger in these 3 months so that he left here with (as termed in the good old days “the old man’s friend” – when they generally understood life/death better than people do today) pneumonia called that for “carrying the old and infirm to a swift and relatively painless death.”

All in all, a stunning way to end a great life here and enter into the peace and rest of Doggie Heaven! Barney loves his sleep!

B

Mon 11/15/2021 7:08 AM – Fwd: In Spite of the World

The following is just what I was writing last night – before we expected or I knew about Barney passing over

B

Begin forwarded message:

Date: November 14, 2021 at 9:59:13 PM EST – Subject: In Spite of the World

I am thankful for every Grace God gives me – even the many temporal blessings. But, that said, I can still identify with the following:

1 John 2:15–16 — The New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

In other words, AT BEST, the world stinks! And no amount of money or other limited temporal blessings can change this reality. In fact, maybe the more we have of the world the more it stinks!

B

Nov 15, 2021, at 7:24 AM – Re: I DO believe in miracles!

Do you think removing his teeth had anything to do with it?

Mon 11/15/2021 7:36 AM – Re: I DO believe in miracles!

yes/no – they had to come out because they were bothering him real bad. If they had not been taken out he would have lived somewhat longer IN MISERY. When they took the teeth out the infection set in worse and even with one night in the hospital (the only night of his life he was “kenneled”) he was not able into overcome it – but, again, he went with the good old “old people’s friend” so we went VERY relatively easy – one reason at 72 I don’t go to doctors – at our age they are only really of use for pain management or correction of short-term acute illnesses, meaning those that cause real pain that can be corrected relatively quickly and easily.

B

Barney's last days certainly provide an example and lessons that can be learned:

- God did NOT design life (for man or animal) to end poorly!

He gives Grace, if ONLY we reach out and take it!

“If we consider, seize and use the advantages age, experience, added knowledge, and hopefully the ensuing wisdom and Better understanding and know-how these give us, there is NO reason we cannot largely control and protect our post-money-making and position-focused lives more than fully against the natural forces working against us. Especially if we factor in the added great benefit of 50-60 extra hours a week we now have! We are our own worst enemies if we do not give thought to “Why not Better?” often and in multiple ways.” Overcoming the Obstacles to Successful Retirement

Sadly, few older people mature. Instead, most revert and slip into greater immaturity – they “immature” into less and less hope, disciplines and progress! Barney was at his peak within days of “passing over” – few people can say that!

- Contrary to what the Word of God tells us, most people think they will “slip” seamlessly into heaven in spite of not valuing, seeking or taking God's offered Grace – Grace EXPLICITLY and SIMPLY detailed in His Word – but few read or *really* believe what He says!
- We can and should (indeed must!) see God's miracles if we are to grow in the “Grace and knowledge of Christ” ^{2 Peter 3:18}, the meaning and sign of God's sanctification leading to eternal salvation. Barney certainly saw and experienced God's blessings in his last days on earth. Sadly, relatively few people can say the same for themselves – instead they follow the world and its “wisdom” (just depend on the “miracles of modern medicine” for your hope and help) while ignoring the Words and Wisdom of God – both are not correct! If we are not SEEING God now, what should make us think we will see it when we die a probable long, Godless, pitiful death?
- We are told (again in God's Word) “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” ^{James 4:3} Beyond our superficial, too often simply childish desires (physical pleasures), the unbelieving (i.e. “nominal believing”) seldom, if ever, experience or acknowledge the greater intangible blessings God offers in and through His Grace.
“You receive not . . .” could also rightly be said as: “We see not if we do not look and consider God, His Word and Grace.”

Interesting that just today I listened to the beginning of a podcast with an obviously very smart, world-renowned, mathematician. Yet, you have to listen to less than 20 minutes of the following podcast to see the stark contrast between the intelligence of brilliant (but not God-wise) non-Christians, those who credit to evolution and nature the many wonders we see that surround us.

The alternative? The “simple” Christian attributing of frequent and untold numbers of miracles to God – His Grace and “natural” design. Not only are the evolutionary theories without any real merit, they end in no hope.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/freakonomics-radio/id354668519?i=1000542293024>

The remarkable story, example and lessons of Barney's last days – astonishing coincidences or miracles? I might say "Either" EXCEPT similar, as unlikely "good fortune" happens commonly to those who expect, look for and thus see that which God promises to HIS saved:

Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. ^{John 3:21}

- "Whoever" meaning EVERYONE WHO
- "Lives by the truth" – "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This is THE truth and grace God offers – not what we think or even the very smart dream up! And ONLY those who "live by" THIS truth do
- "Comes into the light" – this light must get brighter and brighter as we age and come closer and closer to life earthly end when darkness or light awaits every person.
- "So that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God." This being the ultimate test of salvation – are we PLAINLY seeing remarkable stories, examples and lessons only God can orchestrate – chance, evolution, nature can't!