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# Don't touch my doggie woggie

Encased meats be damned! Chicago's best known for the dogs that run this town: man's best friend. A proud pooch owner since birth, and the current owner of a mutt named Chompers, I've run into a few pleasant and some not-so-pleasant scenarios in our daily adventures. Which is why I've come up with a few tips and tricks to help make your next dog encounter a pleasant one.

- » Just assume my dog will eat you. When I've got a 95-pound half-lab, half-horse of a dog at the end of a leash, you'd think people would shy away from such a large species. You'd be wrong. Perhaps it's Chompers' goofy grin that makes people run up to him with glee, but that's not always the safest bet. When approaching a dog, ask its owner if the dog would like to be petted. If the answer is no, perhaps you can pet the owner instead.
- » For the love of Fido, don't talk to us in a "doggie" voice. You know the voice — that cutesy, woosy, annoying voice that is almost as gross as what the dog is about to do on the grass. Since he can't speak for himself, I'll say it: Chompers most certainly would not care to "have a wittle doggie tweek" and kindly asks that you stop referring to him as "a wittle doggie woggie" lest he pee on your leg.
- » Don't worry, I'm going to pick it up. I see you there, eyeing me, as if to say, "So help me if you don't pick that poop up, I'm going to stare you down until you explode into smithereens!" Do you think I walk around with an empty Target bag for fun? Trust me, I'm not having an enjoyable time either, so let's all just get through this as quickly as possible and we'll all be on our way.
- » Keep YOUR dog on a leash. Although I've been around dogs my entire life and am quite comfortable around them, I will not hesitate to drop-kick a strange dog who is off a leash and bolting toward me. The truth is you don't know what a strange dog will do. So while you might know your shitzu-pomer-wiler just wants to play, Chompers and I are thinking, "Incoming! Destroy now!"
- » Feel free to smile. Smiling at a person with a dog is a great way to say, "Hey, I like nice things like dogs, and I'm not a creep." It brings faith back into humanity when people kindly smile at a dog walker. Perhaps they're commiserating in the fact that they too have to lug their canine around multiple times a day, or maybe they just think it's funny seeing dogs chewing their own leashes while the owners are scolding them. Nonetheless, it's a nice thing to do. So do it.

Hopefully these tips make your next canine encounter an enjoyable one. And if all else fails, roll over.

CONNIE REYES IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

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