

About IBD Episode 100 The Snuggles Are the Thing

How do your pets help you with your IBD? I speak to Meredith Mangold, "The Bowel Battling Badass," about the role her dogs have played in her life. She became seriously ill with ulcerative colitis, which progressed into a rare complication called toxic megacolon. As her journey with IBD progressed, she eventually needed colectomy surgery, and has since been diagnosed with other immune-mediated conditions. Her two dogs, however, have become a big part of her advocacy work and they help her manage the pain and loneliness that come with chronic illness.

Concepts discussed on this episode:

- [Toxic megacolon](#)
- [CT Scan](#)
- [ileus](#)
- [Extra-intestinal Manifestations of IBD](#)
- [Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome \(POTS\)](#)
- [Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome](#)
- [Steroid-Induced Osteoporosis](#)

Find Meredith Mangold of The Bowel Battling Badass at [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Find Amber J Tresca at [AboutIBD.com](#), [Verywell](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Instagram](#).

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[MUSIC: About IBD Theme]

Amber Tresca 0:05

I'm Amber Tresca and this is About IBD. It's my mission to educate people living with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis about their disease and to bring awareness to the patient journey.

Welcome to Episode 100!

I started my show because I got angry when the results of a mouse study went mainstream, I had no plan and no idea where it was going. That's not how I normally do things, but in this case, it has obviously worked out well. I wasn't sure how to celebrate a milestone episode, let alone in the midst of a public health emergency when I'm not traveling.

Then inspiration came to me in the form of my friend Meredith Mangold. Meredith is known on Instagram and Facebook as "The Bowel Battling Badass." She lives with a j-pouch after a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis that was complicated by a rare condition called toxic megacolon. Meredith has two partners in her health journey that feature regularly in her social media: her dogs.

She tells me how dogs have enriched her life and serve as companions when she's feeling isolated, as well as how she cares for them even on the days when she's struggling.

From Maryland, let's talk to the delightful Meredith Mangold of "The Bowel Battling Badass."

Amber Tresca 1:21

Meredith, thank you so much for coming on About IBD for my 100th episode,

Meredith Mangold 1:26

I'm so excited to be here with you, Amber. And congratulations.

Amber Tresca 1:30

Thanks so much. This is going to be really special I can tell already. First off, I want to give the listeners an overview of your diagnosis story and what's going on with your disease right now. I know you have multiple conditions. So maybe we might want to touch on that a little bit to start.

Meredith Mangold 1:48

For sure. I'll focus on my IBD because that's kind of the majority of what I focus on advocacy and awareness wise. But I had a very irregular diagnosis process. I was diagnosed with severe ulcerative colitis, totally out of nowhere. In February of 2011, I had just turned 20. And I was in my sophomore year at college at Georgetown University. I had caught a 24 hour stomach bug a few weeks earlier in February. But it was like super fast I got over it. It was not fun puking in the communal dorm bathroom. But it was fine.

Meredith Mangold 2:27

I got back to my normal life, going into classes and studying for midterms. So no big deal. But about a week or so later, over the course of about 10 days, I went from being totally fine and healthy, to losing so much blood in my stool that I was admitted to the ICU.

Meredith Mangold 2:45

My GI diagnosed me with toxic megacolon after performing a colonoscopy, and thus began my first major hospitalization, which lasted for about two months.

Amber Tresca 2:57

You were in for two months. What did they do for treatments during that time? They first have to treat the toxic megacolon.

Meredith Mangold 3:04

Yeah, basically, the first thought was like, Oh, no, she probably is going to need emergency surgery. But the inflammation is so intense. And the gut is so hot that we don't want to cut because that can be you know, dangerous. So they tried all sorts of different medications, you know, as IV, steroids, and ASAs, and all that great IBD stuff. We tried Remicade. But then I built up antibodies against it after my first infusion. So when they tried it the second time, I went into anaphylactic shock. So that was super fun.

Meredith Mangold 3:39

Um, but so they were kind of running out of ideas. And so the more senior attending kind of had this like, just like breakthrough moment and was like, wait, maybe should we try cyclosporin, which is usually given to transplant patients after the transplant so that they don't reject the transplanted organ. So basically as to try and calm down my immune system. And so that worked enough basically at like, the last possible moment, things could have hopefully worked out before I would have been wheeled into the OR.

Meredith Mangold 4:11

So that calmed things down enough to be able to get the other meds to work. And so I could avoid emergency surgery. So that was great. But yeah, it was about two months. So just like pooping, pooping, and lots of new meds, lots of side effects. But I was so thankful when ultimately the cyclosporin helps and I didn't need to get emergency surgery because at that point, we were really trying to avoid it.

Amber Tresca 4:36

Right? Yeah, for sure. Especially with this was a first flare up of the condition and all the sudden you're being told that you might have to have life changing surgery. It's just it's totally bonkers. So other than the bloody diarrhea. Did you have any other symptoms with the toxic megacolon? Is there anything that you would say that would be like red flag that's something that patients should know about that that disease process might be happening.

Meredith Mangold 5:01

Honestly, for me, it happened so fast. I didn't know it was happening. I literally remember running from my dorm room to the communal dorm bathroom and literally like bloody poop, like escaping. And I was like, how is this happening? I was totally fine a couple of days ago. So it happened really fast.

Meredith Mangold 5:22

I remember going to my pediatrician like primary care office, because luckily, I lived close by I grew up in Maryland, went to Georgetown in DC. So my parents could come and pick me up from school. But we went to see the primary care, but I was so sick that I couldn't even like produce correct samples at the time. So they sent me to the ER, they did a CT, and that's when they saw the inflammation. So really, I think it was the inflammation that was showing the CT that pointed us in the direction of toxic megacolon. And so they sent me off to Georgetown so they could better care for me.

Meredith Mangold 5:38

So So yeah, it happens super fast. I was fine. And then I don't really remember much, because I got so sick so quickly. And I think my brain kind of turned things off to help help me cope through it. I remember being wheeled in to Georgetown, and then everything kind of goes dark. And I just remember things from a couple of weeks later after I got out of the ICU.

Amber Tresca 6:18

Has anybody sort of filled you in in those blank spots since then?

Meredith Mangold 6:22

Yeah, they're, I have some really, they're really funny stories, things. Crazy things happen when you're either in lots of pain or medicated. I have no memory of this. But the the PICU, pediatric ICU, attending doctor that I had, in the beginning, he had this very thick Israeli accent. And I guess in my like, totally, like haze doubt minds. I couldn't exactly understand what he was saying.

Meredith Mangold 6:50

But he asked me a question. And I was like, What? And then I answered, I haven't written my name in a long time, because I thought he said, how's your penmanship? And no one everyone looked at me like, What are you talking about? And my mom in the corner, like, I guess, you know, understand, so I think it was like, No, no, no, he asked, how was your pain management. so crazy stuff like that happened.

Meredith Mangold 7:17

And I had amazing, amazing nurses and techs who all I am friends with to this day in case managers who I'm still very close friends with. So I was very lucky to have a great team. And I think especially I was the oldest patient on the peds floor. And that's just because I had a peds GI going into this whole experience for like, not as critical things.

Meredith Mangold 7:42

So yeah, I was I was very lucky. But it was a scary, scary experience. My mom stayed with me in the hospital the whole time. And my dad would come back and forth. But yeah, basically after I eluded, that first emergency surgery, and then stabilized for after about two months, I got out, recovered that summer, went back to school, but then had to withdraw again go back to hospitals. So basically for the next year and a half I was in and out of school in and out of the hospital. Because ultimately the meds alone weren't enough to keep my colon healthy.

Meredith Mangold 8:16

At that point. I was also on Humira and 6-MP and I think still prednisone and other things like that. So we were trying to hold up surgery for as long as possible. But in my mind, I knew it was it was time it was more so kind of convincing...my parents were having a hard time letting go of you know, the idea of a healthy daughter who didn't need surgery.

Meredith Mangold 8:39

So I did ended up getting my total proctectomy and j-pouch surgeries in September and October of 2012, which was crazy because I think my first surgery, I'm pretty sure was the same day that Hurricane Sandy hit. So the hospital was just a wreck. Surgeries were getting pushed, there was no power, we were running a generator. So just to add to the anxiety of a surgery, just everything was a mess.

Meredith Mangold 9:05

But I made it through it was tough. I had a lot of post surgical complications, an ileus mainly, it was very uncomfortable. But since then my j-pouch has been pretty good to me. I'm very lucky that I had a very skilled colorectal surgeon. He was the chair of colorectal surgery for the whole hospital system here.

Meredith Mangold 9:29

So right now I basically deal with chronic pouchitis and so this is now what like 10 years removed. I deal with chronic pouchitis and other extra-intestinal manifestations. Eating is still really hard for me. But I'm alive and stable. I'm not in the hospital. So these are all good things.

Meredith Mangold 9:50

And I think also that some of the other conditions that I've been diagnosed with since then probably also contribute to my GI upset but yeah, the main issues. I'm still dealing with our severe chronic abdominal pain that's been really hard to figure out exactly the exact source of and to treat among with managing those other chronic conditions like postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome and Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, and things like that. And then just mentally dealing with being a chronically ill person these past 10 years, it takes a lot.

Meredith Mangold 10:24

But yeah, so overall, it's been...it was like a crazy, really acute journey in the beginning, and now it's just kind of been about like the marathon that is spoonie life, and, and kind of, in just getting through that and keep keeping up hope and resilience in the urge to continue to, like advocate for myself,

Amber Tresca 10:42

Right. Something that I think about a lot. And I'd love to get your take on this is how when you've been sick like this, and then you have something like a j-pouch surgery, which is better, but not perfect. And we live with certain things that I think a healthy person who, on Monday had a functional colon and then on Tuesday had a j-pouch would be like, this is wild, what's going on with this, but we're like, wow, our lives are so much better.

Amber Tresca 11:10

Yet, there is a concern that perhaps people with ulcerative colitis, or maybe Crohn's disease to I don't I don't know, I think I'm more familiar with ulcerative colitis. And their physicians might hang on to their colon for longer than they should. Keeping, you know, trying different things and just trying to avoid that surgery. And it sounds like you were ready to go, your family

members weren't ready. I don't know where your doctors fell on the spectrum of this. But what are your thoughts about trying to hold on to your colon, versus making the decision to have the surgery before it becomes a critical or an emergency situation,

Meredith Mangold 11:50

My perspective has probably changed from who I was at that point, and who I am now with what I've learned from not only my own experience, but the experience of other IBD patients, I feel like the majority of them try to hold on to their colon in the hopes that okay, a med will work.

Meredith Mangold 12:07

But the thing you have to understand is that a lot of these meds have a lot of side effects. And I'm dealing with them now, you know, I just found out I've asked you osteopenia and osteoporosis from long term steroid use. That's not to say, you know, you shouldn't use meds, of course, you should medicate your IBD, if that's helping you and keeping your disease under control.

Meredith Mangold 12:25

But I would say that the idea of surgery is scarier than actually just like committing doing it. And then you will have to learn kind of a new way of life without your colon. You know, after I got my j-pouch, I was basically...I'm on the toilet all day long. But that's just because I'm adjusting to new plumbing, like my body is doing something that it never had to do before. And the fact that I can actually adapt to this change is pretty amazing.

Meredith Mangold 12:55

So I would say I also though, in my experience, I felt like I was being told and I think a lot of people hear this, that this surgery would be curative for me. And so when I still had all this abdominal pain and difficulty eating, I felt like a failure. And I think even my parents were like, Well, why is this happening?

Meredith Mangold 12:07

So I went back to my colorectal surgeon did all the tests I had, you know, second, third and fourth opinion consults with other g eyes. And no, we're still figuring it out. But there are extra intestinal manifestations of IBD. Removing the organ isn't a total cure. But you know, it can't help. But every everyone's situation is different.

Meredith Mangold

I would say, advocate for yourself as a patient by doing the research talking to other patients. If you don't feel like you can really trust and be connected to your GI or your surgeon. Look for someone else. You never have to feel obligated to go along with that person's like care plan. If you feel something's not right, but yeah, I would say for the most part, there is a tendency to try and like there's the idea of oh my gosh, like an ileostomy or colostomy is the worst thing ever. And I had my temporary ileostomy for six weeks between my surgeries before they did the takedown reconnected me. And I still actually sometimes wonder like, oh, should I have

stuck with a permanent ileostomy and you know, maybe that's something I'll consider down the line. But at least for now, things are good. But everyone has to make their own decision and given you know, the circumstances and also what kind of care they have access to.

[Music: About IBD Piano]

Amber Tresca 14:51

Meredith you have some online platforms that you use to tell your story and to help other people who are living with IBD and j-pouches and the other condition that you're dealing with now, what made you start this? And what are you looking to achieve through your advocacy?

Meredith Mangold 15:07

It was really my husband to Ryan who encouraged me to like really focus on advocacy...full time. I went to undergrad for Arabic language and literature. So I had a totally different future plan for myself. But when I graduated from undergrad, I realized that given the whole medical experience I just gone through, I really wanted to support other patients like me in their health journeys and to try and fix problems that I experienced within the health care system.

Meredith Mangold 15:39

So once I graduated, I worked in a primary care practice and at a hospital before I decided to focus on patient advocacy exclusively for about the past four years, since I've been working at home. I really hope that by sharing my IBD in chronic illness journey with other patients that they realize that even on their worst days when they're stuck on the toilet, or they can't get out of bed, that they are so strong and accomplished for living this life that we didn't choose and for taking the energy to care for themselves and for finding ways to thrive and to still find joy and fulfillment in their life.

Meredith Mangold 16:18

Because it is it's very hard, especially if you're not diagnosed as a young child, like you have expectations for your life. And now, my life is totally different. So I think I especially just like to let other patients know that it's okay to not be okay. But also you can you can find joy and fulfillment in ways that maybe you hadn't expected before. I also really tried to be transparent about my experiences as a chronic pain patient, as well, because I think that the whole way we currently treat chronic pain for IBD is is bonkers. And we need patients and clinicians to be learning from each other and looking for solutions to improve patient care. And to make it more multidisciplinary.

Meredith Mangold 17:03

I'm just now after 10 years of being chronically ill seeing the right pain management, multi disciplinary teams that I need to, and it's taken a lot, a lot of work and blood, sweat and tears. So I just try and be open with people about that, especially there's a lot of stigma about pain, medication use, and what that means. You know, I've been accused of being a drug addict behind my back by someone who I thought was a friend. But another big part of my pre surgical story is I was on so many opiates that I had to go through a medical detox because my surgeon

was going to have to put me into a coma after my surgery to deal with the post operative pain. So pain management, and the obstacles that patients face is a really big focus of my patient advocacy. I just think it's important for us to talk about that more.

Amber Tresca 17:52

I totally agree with you completely the way that we treat or I should say, the way that pain and IBD is to sort of not treated, they tell you narcotics are bad, but then it's like okay, but what else do we have? Like I don't even understand. It's really, and I've been watching your journey this whole time. And you've you've educated me so much about that. So I really appreciate everything that you're doing in that.

Amber Tresca 18:19

And also I think that you have found another way to relieve pain, which doesn't have anything to do with physicians or pain management or anything. And that's with your pets.

Meredith Mangold 18:31

Yeah.

Amber Tresca 18:31

And your pets are like a huge part of your journey, a huge part of your advocacy. Tell me about your dogs and I don't know if you have any other pets actually I just know about your dogs.

Meredith Mangold 18:42

So I just have my two puppies. I...we have Josie who is our five year old and change black lab and pittie mix. And then we have her little little sister Maisie who is a little pandemic pup. She is a Basenji and probably pittie mix. They're both rescues though, so we can't know for sure.

Meredith Mangold 19:05

But we adopted them both from to love a canine rescue in Pennsylvania. So TLC Rescue. They have been amazing. We love, we love both of our pups so much. And especially now we're at the point, you know, I'm 30 we, you know, we're probably like to have kids my husband definitely wants to have kids, but I'm in a point where you know, I can barely take care of myself some days. And so I love our dogs and they're fantastic pets are family, but also, you know, can I take care of these dogs? If I can't take care of dogs then why are we even thinking about children type thing. So but they're, they're such a big part of also my like mental health therapy. I'm not doing talk therapy right now. I feel like I do it with my dogs. Sometimes sufficient.

Meredith Mangold 19:51

But yeah, they're a huge part of helping me get through each and every day with you know, the uncertainty that chronic illness throws at us.

Amber Tresca 20:00

I think that's definitely a big point that some people may think about before they adopt a pet. I mean, hopefully people think about caring for their pet before they adopt one. Because you know, once you have them you, you have to take care of them.

Amber Tresca 20:13

So do you think that there are things that they should consider before adopting a pet? And then specifically about caring for your pets? What are some things that chronically ill people should think about in terms of the long term aspects of having pets and especially dogs, since they do sometimes need walking? And then there's that whole poop situation?

Meredith Mangold 20:35

Yes, exactly. If that's a very real concern, I...Ryan wanted to get Josie a little sister for the longest time. And I kept kind of pushing it off, because I'm like, the rational, hyper rational one who's like, well, what if we can't, you know, what if they don't get along, or what if it's too much to take care of them, bla bla, bla, you know, he Ryan travels a lot for work.

Meredith Mangold 20:56

But then finally, it was just like, listen to my heart. And I was like, Oh, I need another little cute little baby who can snuggle with me so, so we went for it. But it is a real concern, I feel especially anxious about worrying about whether I can take care of them when my husband's away for business trips. So it's a real concern. I would say that they're just some good, good types of preparation that you can you can do so you know, once you have your your pet your pup: ask for help and don't feel bad about receiving it.

Meredith Mangold 21:31

My husband does most of the physically intensive tasks like walking them when he's in town. Because the our pit bull is pretty strong. So she she pulls and gets excited. And then my mother in law helps me mind them kind of during the day, while Ryan's at work, especially, that's especially helpful if like pain insomnia kept kept me up at night. Because usually I want to get some good makeup sleep and like the late morning, but that's right when they're like running around being little knuckleheads. So it's helpful to just have someone else that you can call on to be like, Hey, I feel like poop today. Can you just help me make sure everything's okay with them.

Meredith Mangold 22:08

I'd say also to find a friend close by or someone that you can hire that you can trust to watch your pets if you unexpectedly have to go into the hospital. Because you don't want to be worrying about that, well, you're in the hospital, nobody has time to worry about other things while you're in the hospital. In terms of like logistical things like simple everyday things.

Meredith Mangold 22:30

We get our dog food delivered. And that's much easier than having to schlep a huge big bag of dog food from, you know, the grocery store the pet store back home. So even just those little things can make a huge difference. We also have a little doggie door, so they can go outside on

their own to go potty in our backyard. And that's been super helpful. Because for me right now, I'm still spending about 90% of my day in bed. And like, it's hard for me to be upright. And especially not kind of like at the exact whim of my pup. It's like, Okay, I need to go now. And I'm like, Well, I'm sorry, I'm in like 210 pain, like instead of right now. So we've trained them to be able to just like, pop out there, go potty and come back in. So if that's possible, I would recommend that but obviously, I know that's not possible for everyone.

Meredith Mangold 23:20

And most of all, just don't punish yourself for thinking you're not being a good enough pet parent, if you're unable to take them on walks or things like that as often as you'd like to just just love them and give them the best life you can. That's all they want. You know, they do so much for us. And there's so many other ways that they helped me on a daily basis that I could get into but you know, just do the best you can. They love you don't put any more pressure on yourself.

Amber Tresca 23:50

I think that's all really really good advice and some things that I never would have thought of. When you were adopting your pets because they were both rescues. What types of personality traits did you look for? And do they have particular personality traits that are especially suited to you or to your life with chronic illness or, you know, anything else that that you found that you were sort of a perfect match for your dogs?

Meredith Mangold 24:13

Yes, I grew up with a lab. So I I knew that I wanted to get like a lab mix of some kind first and we met Josie and she was just so like social and wanting to get to know us so she wasn't easy pick right off the bat in 2015. And then when we went to go visit Maisie, we were trying to pick between her and her sister so we met both of them and the little like play area. And we met her sister first and her sister was very, very skittish and, like ran away from us and was hiding and stuff like that.

Meredith Mangold 24:54

And so we thought, okay, just have the feeling that that's probably not a good, a good connection. I'm feeling wanted a smaller dog who could like snuggle up and be my tummy heating pad pillow. So as soon as Maisie came in, she ran right up to us. And it was like, snuggling. She also ran around eating all the dog hair that was on the floor, so.

Meredith Mangold 25:17

So we pretty much were, she...we could tell that she was engaged and wanting to be, you know, like, a central part of our family. But she was also a really good snuggler. It was funny, though, on the way home when we bought put them both in the car, Josie finally realized, like, Oh, wait, she's coming home with us. I don't know how I feel about that. Like, Mom, Dad, you didn't tell me I was getting a sister today. So it took a while for them to get along with each other. Just Josie was kind of standoffish, and it was actually heartbreaking. My husband was so so sad for like a solid week, because he was thinking like, Oh, god, what did we do? Like, do we

ruin our relationship with Josie and I had those fears too, but I just, I knew that it would work out eventually. And that is just, you know, growing pains.

Meredith Mangold 26:10

But yes, I would say Josie is very smart and can understand that intuit situations very easily. Like she knows when I'm not feeling well. She knows when she just needs to calm down. And maybe she's a little snuggle muffin who just wants to be held and snuggled. So those are both great things. In my mind as a chronic illness, person.

Meredith Mangold 26:34

Chronic illness, life is so lonely, and isolating. And so just so nice to have a little fuzzy friend who's there with you. They're great moral support in the bathroom, when you're in the bathroom for long periods of time. You know, someone who won't judge you. Josie likes to headbutt the door open when I'm in bathroom, and just be like, Hello, okay, I'm glad you're happy and everything's okay. And here, you've been in here for a while, just want to make sure. And they bring me so much physical comfort, especially when it might be hard to accept the touch of like another human because of like medical PTSD and stuff like that. They'll just snuggle right up to me.

Meredith Mangold 27:12

And their favorite thing to do is to lick away my tears because they're also so I start crying like I since tears must look away. So they're big tear liquid layers. And then I also taught Josie how to like some mobility task things like I she can go get my pills for me, and bring them to me. So I wish that I had more time and more mental bandwidth to invest in those kind of training things more with my daughter's because I feel like that, especially Josie could she's a very quick learner, really the snuggles the snuggles are the main thing and making me laugh because I feel like joy and laughter and humor is kind of one of the things that can go away. Easiest when you're depressed and anxious. And sometimes we'll just do the stupidest funny things, and it'll just make me burst out laughing. So they're definitely my number one source of of humor, and comedy and light heartedness.

Amber Tresca 28:11

So you didn't really train them to do any of the things that are helpful to you as a chronic illness patient, they just intuitively understood. I'm thinking of my cat that I had, when I was having my j-pouch surgeries. I did train her to not jump up on my stomach. Yeah, during my recovery period, but she knew not to do that, you know? Is that the kind of thing that you found that they just understand it sort of instinctively?

Meredith Mangold 28:36

Yes. It's, they just sense how you're feeling. You don't have to explain yourself to them. Like we feel like we have to with other humans. They can Intuit like, I just got actually, some skin biopsies, dogs, I have three chunks out of my leg. And as soon as I walked in the door a couple days ago, after getting it done, they both like came to a halt, and just started sniffing my leg.

And we're like, Okay, you got some boo boos, we'll be calm, we won't drop on you and get all excited. They, they totally just understand things without us having to explain them.

Meredith Mangold 29:09

And sometimes when I'm in like a really dark place that makes me cry, because I'm just so happy that they're there for me. And I'm like, Oh my god, you don't have to be this wonderful. Like, thank you so much. But yeah, they don't judge you. They don't have unfair expectations of us. They just want to make us happy. They have no agenda or ulterior motives. Or, you know, if you say like, sorry, I can't take you for a walk right now. They're not gonna be like, take me for a walk right now. I'm gonna remember this tomorrow. You know? They just want to love us. Maybe their only agenda is trying to get us to feed them more treats, but like, they're Yeah, they don't require any explanation. If they don't judge us.

[MUSIC: About IBD Transition]

Amber Tresca 29:54

Meredith if your dogs could understand English for a couple of minutes, what would you want them to understand? Or what would you say to them?

Meredith Mangold 30:03

This is a legitimate dog mom question are just like pet parents that I think we have all considered, you know those days where you think you can understand what they're saying with their eyes, but you really wish, like, I just want to get my point across. If they could only understand me, and not like speak back, I probably say, the kind of you so much, it'll be so much and like, thank you. Thank you for all you do to bring joy and laughter into my life when I feel like crap.

Meredith Mangold 30:33

But also things like you do not need to bark at the mailman are the delivery people outside every day at 10am when they arrive, I appreciate you protecting our house, but it's cool, I'm fine. I get it. I know they're out there.

Meredith Mangold 30:47

But if they could respond to and I could have like an actual conversation with them. First of all, I feel like I would kind of want to get like, I don't think I could do this and only a minute. But I want to get kind of an understanding of how they perceive themselves and their identities because I kind of have an idea of how I imagine each of their little identities in their minds being. But I would also just like practically try and lay out some ground rules. And they come to common like understanding to better clarify like communication, like okay, when you want your water you come sit here, when you want your food, you come sit here when you pee, you go out there, you don't just want to walk around the house aimlessly. Josie loves to do that. And like yes, you want something be clear.

Meredith Mangold 31:31

But But yes, so if they could just understand, I would convey my love. But if they could respond, I would like sort of to establish, like some communication things so that my studio life could be even easier. What about you and your cats? Do you have any ideas?

Amber Tresca 31:47

That was such a comprehensive answer. I don't even know what to say.

Meredith Mangold 31:52

I was talking, I was talking to my friend who's about this the other day, cuz we were having a very deep conversation about dogs. And she said it to the same thing. Like, I love you so much. I love you so much. And okay, ground rules.

Amber Tresca 32:05

I feel like I wouldn't have to use my words to convey love. I mean, hopefully not, hopefully your pets understand that you love them, even though I call one of my pets a name all of the time, but I won't say on my show.

Meredith Mangold 32:22

We have so many names for them, don't worry. It's not...

Amber Tresca 32:27

Yeah, but I but I do think that the ground rules thing probably would take precedence for me, I have to say, you know, I don't mind that you're always in the bathroom, I guess but maybe find somewhere else to lay once in a while. Maybe? And also, could you please just poop in the right spot like these, just the you know, would make our lives go so much better. So.

Meredith Mangold 32:54

I agree 100%. Maybe we'll see that day. But I don't know technology will help us to like interface and communicate with their pets somehow. That'd be pretty cool. But I feel like they can communicate pretty well enough without without words.

Amber Tresca 33:09

I think we do pretty well, most of the time. Meredith, thank you so much for coming on about IBD for telling me about how your dogs are enriching your life and also forgiving tips for people who live with chronic illness because I think it might be something that weighs on a lot of people's minds, but I don't know that they actually bring it forward and discuss it in that. They're not sure how they can take care of a pet while they're living with a chronic illness. But I think it's possible. And you know, you've you've helped me to understand even better, how it's a really important part of our lives. And it's something that can bring us so much joy, pet ownership, and that we shouldn't turn ourselves off to that. Because we feel as though we might not be the best dog mom or the best cat mom that ever could be. You know, we're just all doing the best that we can and the benefits are, you know, absolutely worth the trade offs. So thank you so much. Thank you.

Meredith Mangold 34:05

This is a really fun conversation and I hope, more chronic illness people out there feel empowered to maybe adopt that pet. So thanks for having me, Amber

Amber Tresca 34:19

Hey super listener! Thanks to Meredith Mangold of "The Bowel Battling Badass" for sharing her disease journey and her tips on being a pet owner while living with chronic illness. You can follow her on Instagram and Facebook as The Bowel Battling Badass. I will put all her social media information in the show notes and on my Episode 100 page on AboutIBD.com.

Thanks also to Maesie and Josie for taking good care of my friend.

You can follow me across all social media as AboutIBD. If you and your pet want to be featured on this podcast, leave me a voice message at speakpipe.com/aboutIBD.

Thanks for listening, and remember, until next time, I want you to know more about IBD.

About IBD is a production of Mal and Tal Enterprises.

It is written, produced and directed by me, Amber Tresca.

Mix and sound design is by Mac Cooney.

Theme music is from Cooney Studio.

Amber Tresca 35:19

Coming up on the next About IBD.

Coming Up 35:21

We haven't established dietary guidelines for patients with inflammatory bowel disease and I want to give people hope for improvements