

TWO WEEK SHUTDOWN – THIS IS IMPORTANT – DECOMPRESSION IS KEY!!!

TWO WEEK SHUTDOWN

“The First Two Weeks – Give’em a Break!” Why?

If we could stress one of the biggest errors people, make with new dogs and foster dogs, it is rushing the dog into the new world, too fast. This shut down gives the dog a chance to say “ahhh” take a breath and restart into its new world. From people, we’ve heard; “I introduced her to 15 people the first day I had her!”, “he was a bit leery but seems to like my other 3 dogs”, “she went everywhere with me” All in the first few days of the new home.... (!!!)

Two weeks later we hear; “I think we will have to rehome the new dog”; “the new dog barked and nipped at my kid”; “we had a dog fight”; “the new dog barked at me for moving him off the couch”

Ok, folks, here it comes, some feel this is extreme, why? We really do not know.

But when bringing in a new dog, post finding, adoption, buying, etc., Give it time to adjust to you and your family and the dogs in the new environment. Just as if it were a new baby or puppy, we wouldn’t think of rushing out with a baby or puppy, yet with older pups and dogs we just expect them to take our lives in all at once!

TWO WEEKS - "Shutdown"

For the first two weeks, (sometimes even longer) a dog takes in the new environment, who is the top person, or animal, who ARE these people!? By pushing a dog too fast, and throwing too much at the dog we look like we are not the leaders, and the dog can feel it MUST defend itself, as the leader is surely no one he has met so far! We coo, coddle, drag the dog to home to home to person to person, and the dog has NO idea who we are. We correct for things it doesn’t understand, we talk in a new human language using words he does not know.

A key thing to remember is "this is the dating period NOT the honeymoon" When you first met your "spouse or significant other", you were on your best behavior, you were not relaxed enough to be all of yourself, were you? Just think of the things you do physically once you get to KNOW a person, you wouldn’t run up to a stranger and hug them and squeeze them! Imagine, if on the first date, this new person, was all over you touching you and having their friends hug you and pat you on the head, and jostle your shoulders, looked in your mouth then he whisked you off to another stranger’s home and they did the same thing.

Would you think this person normal and SAFE? Wouldn’t you feel invaded and begin to get a bit snarky or defensive yourself? Wouldn’t you think to push these people away for obviously your date is out of their mind, as they aren’t going to save you from these weirdoes!! Yet we do this very thing to our dogs, and then get upset or worried that they aren’t relaxed and accepting of EVERYTHING instantly!

By shutting down the dog, it gives the dog TIME to see you, meet YOU, hear and take in the new sounds and smells of your home and all the people in it.

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In the 1st two weeks:

Crate the dog in a room by itself if possible. (Believe us, dogs are sensory animals, they know more than you think without seeing it). Leash the dog (so you don't have to correct it ...you don't have that right yet!), give it exercise time in the yard on long line or in fenced yard...but other than that... LEASH, (yes...leash in the house too.)

Do no training at all, just fun exercise and maybe throw some toys for fun, leash the dog if you don't have a fence outside. But DO NOT leave the yard, AT ALL.

No car rides, no other dogs, (unless crated beside them), no pet stores, no WALKS even, nothing but you and household family, your home, your yard. (Unless of course the dog needs to go to the veterinarian).

Believe us, dogs can live two weeks without walks. Walks are stressful! There is so much coming at you and your dog! And the dog has no clue who you are yet. The dog may react to something and we start correcting it with the leash and we just installed a VERY STRESSFUL moment to the dog in what should be a fun and learning walk.

TEACH the dog by doing the shutdown, that YOU are the one to look to, that you are now here for the dog! He can trust in you and look to you for guidance. Then you can venture out into new situations one at a time, the dog knows he can trust in his new humans and can relax under the fair guidance of his new leaders!

We don't expect your dog to sit in a crate nonstop these first couple weeks, but we do expect everyone to make sure they're taking extra "down time" in the beginning. A mental break for humans and dogs. The dog should ALWAYS be on a leash when in the house or in an unfenced yard. Although walks aren't part of the plan, exercise is important! Running and free time are stress relievers, but don't set your dog up for failure, make exercise and yard time fun and relaxing and tiring! If you don't have a fenced yard to throw a ball for the dog, that's okay! They will be just fine for 2 weeks. You can also give them a chew toy that keeps their mind busy.

Then PUT THE DOG AWAY. Let it absorb, think and relax. Ignore crying or barking, he must find security when you are not right there. And if you run to him each time, he will think barking and crying will get your attention. We do not introduce resident dogs for these two weeks, they can be side by side in the crates, (not nose to nose for they can feel defensive). Some dogs will bond instantly with the other dogs if we don't bond FIRST with the dog, and this can lead to some other issues, as the dog will look to the other dog(s) for guidance and not YOU! Literally in two weeks you will see a change in the dog and begin to see its honest and true personality. Just like a house guest... they are well behaved and literally shut down and "polite" themselves these first few weeks, then after this time, they relax, and the true personality begins to shine thru. So, please, if nothing else for your new dog, give it the time to LEARN YOU as you are learning who they are! This method works on shy dogs, confident dogs, abuse cases, chained dogs that come in, rowdy dogs, all temperaments!

Adapted from the Marshmallow Foundation website

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