

THE HANDING DOWN

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It would be useful if more adoption groups and their representatives, stressed the importance of understanding the nurturing of greyhounds, as done by other greyhounds---the handing down.

This is the essence of the canine culture by which all performance greyhounds have been deeply informed and affected. It is highly unlikely that your adopted pet, prior to your having adopted him/her, was ever without the company of other greyhounds for even a few seconds.

The impacts of this pack-oriented and colonial culture upon the greyhound, are as indelible to them, as are the circumstances of our own upbringing, growth and development, within a family unit, a culture, and a segment of society.

So the experience of being adopted, and suddenly finding themselves without everyone and everything they have ever known--- the "lone wolf", for the first time in their lives--- is a form of culture shock, if not an outright trauma for some of them. Acting independently, outside the dynamic of the pack or colony, is a concept unfamiliar to them.

Much has been said and done, as it regards the adopters' perception of "separation anxiety" and coping with it, should a newly adopted greyhound exhibit signs of stress when they are left alone. It is a wonder that we often fail to perceive the first instance of separation anxiety---that being, when the newly adopted greyhound is suddenly separated, or perhaps in his mind, expelled, from the colony to which he belonged--- only to be confronted with a virtual universe of novelty and uncertainty, much of which is beyond his understanding.

We will never fully appreciate or understand the greyhounds we adopt, unless we can begin to wrap minds around the unique experience they all share, as purpose-bred canines-- the effects of a nurturing canine culture, and the handing down of collective consciousness, which is predicated upon their co-existence within the pack or colony unit, and the supports, securities and bonding it affords them.