



SEPARATION ANXIETY

WHAT IS IT AND HOW DO I KNOW MY DOG HAS IT?

SEPARATION ANXIETY (SA) AND SEPARATION RELATED BEHAVIOURS

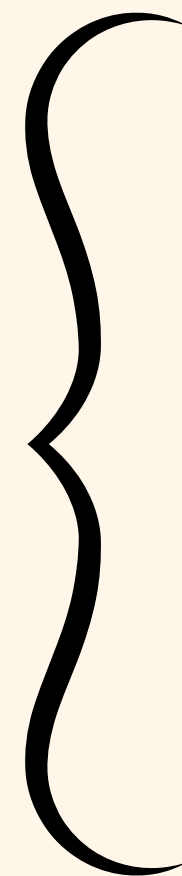
THESE ARE ANYTHING A DOG DOES WHEN LEFT ALONE OR WITH GREATER INTENSITY WHEN THE GUARDIAN IS NOT THERE



What are Separation Related Behaviours (SRB's)?



- barking
- whining
- chewing
- howling
- soiling
- crying
- urinating
- pacing
- vomiting
- destroying
- panting
- escaping
- drooling
- refusing food



Your dog doesn't need to display **all** of these behaviours, some may just howl, for example. Sometimes the first time you become aware there is a problem is because a neighbour informs you that they have heard your dog being upset.



HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE ARE SRB'S AND NOT SIMPLY FRUSTRATION OR BOREDOM?

Ask yourself do they only do it when they are alone or when **you** are not there? Look for intensity and persistence.

If your dog is barking; are they doing it **because** they have SA or **because** they can see out of the window and see all the passing traffic, people and other animals outside?



WHAT CAUSES SA?



- They are genetically predisposed - studies have shown that fear can be passed on through the genes
- Early life environment - things that DIDN'T happen, such as lack of experiences
- Maternal stress during pregnancy
- Maternal behaviour
- Bad experiences - things that DID happen

Approximately 3 male dogs develop SA to every 2 female dogs.

Look for other reasons if a dog has suddenly developed SA

- Grieving for previous guardian or other animal companion?
- Senior dog?
- Need to rule out cognitive decline?
- Failing eyesight?
- Failing hearing?
- Just moved home?
- External noise?
- Pain?



Always get a vet check if unsure

DISPELLING MYTHS



1

THEY'LL GET OVER IT

They won't 'just get over it' or 'grow out of it' – Just like we don't grow out of a fear of snakes/spiders/lifts/flying etc

2

LEAVE THEM WITH FOOD

Giving them food as you leave won't help – Just like you wouldn't be able to eat a bar of chocolate if something you were afraid of was near (however much you like chocolate)!

3

YOU NEED TO BE IN CONTROL

They are not trying to manipulate you or control you – they feel **scared and unsafe**.



DISPELLING MYTHS

4 **JUST GET THEM A COMPANION**
Getting a second dog won't help - your dog is fearful because you are not there. You may find you end up with 2 dogs with SA

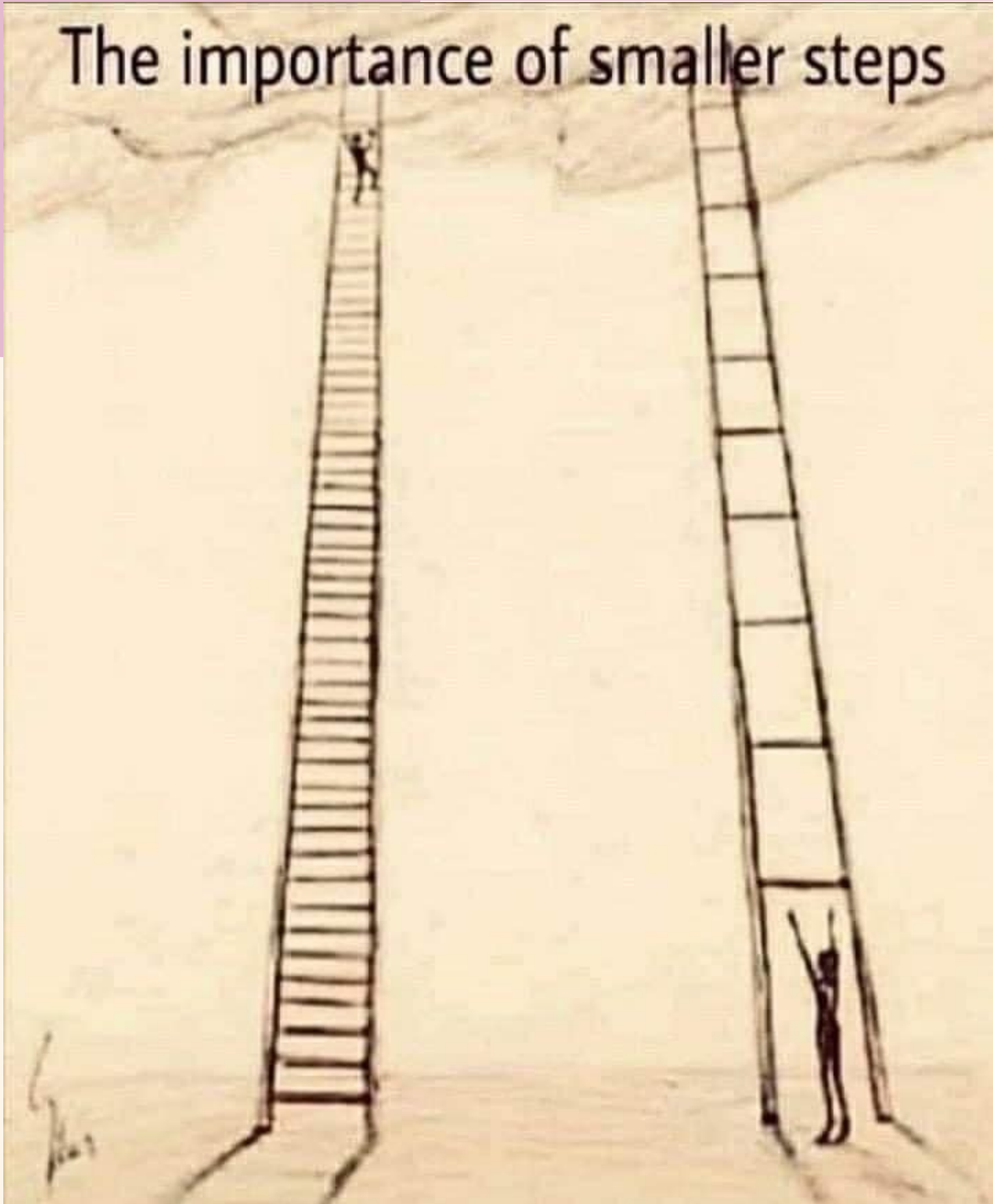
5 **USE A CRATE**
Putting them in a crate won't help - this can often make it worse. A small number of dogs may be suffering from confinement anxiety, not SA and be ok if they have more space.

6 **JUST LET THEM CRY**
Leaving them to 'cry it out' won't help - it will just increase their fear and stress and make things harder to resolve.





The importance of smaller steps



Dogs are sociable animals and are never going to feel **HAPPY** about being left alone, but a desensitisation programme can help them to feel more content and safe.

TAKING THAT FIRST STEP TO HELP YOUR DOG FEEL MORE CONTENT

A desensitisation programme involves incredibly small steps that start with getting your dog used to you just approaching the door, but not actually leaving. (Email me for a free copy of my door desensitisation handout).

Living with a dog with SA is challenging, isolating and stressful for you too!

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

When working through any behaviour modification programme remember progress is never a straight line and you **will** have setbacks, think about starting a diary to help you identify patterns.



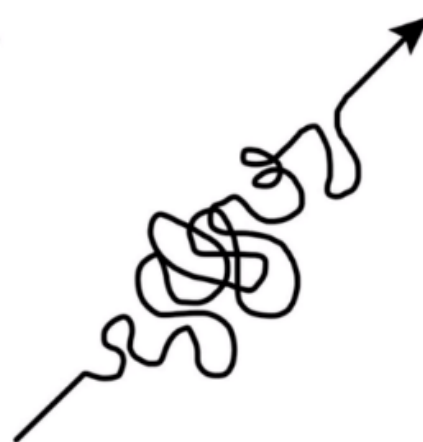
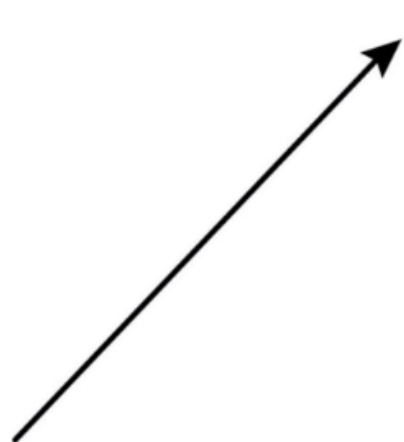
Please reach out if you would like more support with your dog with SA

I can help you reach your goal

07818 942141

PROGRESS

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what people think it looks like

what it really looks like