Guidance Notes

For

Adopting a DMT survivor



This is Ron who he came to live with me in December 2017. He instantly became an important member of my family and I love him to pieces. He’s kind, gentle and brave. He’s doing all he can to overcome his fears and to take up his place as a happy and fulfilled member of the doggy fraternity!

It’s a journey!

Louise Trevatt x

**Thank you so very much for taking a DMT rescue dog into your home.**

Your dog will have seen, heard, smelt and felt unimaginable horrors.

Your dog will have learned to suppress their instincts, confined to horrid small cages at the meat farm, they do not know what exercise or enrichment is. They have been cold in winter, hot in summer, their food is often the guts of dogs that have been killed, so not only do they have to lose their family and friends, they often have no choice but to eat them too.

In the shelter, no matter how long they have been there, they will have seen dogs come and go, they will have connected with dogs and then seen them leave the shelter as dogs are constantly rehomed.

They will have experienced times of connection, safety and security with the dogs they are kennelled with and conversely times of insecurity as they constantly find their place in the ever-changing pack.

They will have met many people, some will have been kind, others, like vets, will have been very efficient.

The dog that you are adopting will have its own responses to the experiences of life so far and so we have put together this set of notes to help and support you in integrating your DMT rescue dog into your family.

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**A Shopping List**

Throughout this document there are things we recommend that you buy. These are tried and tested products that work well with a dog meat trade survivor.

I’ve brought this list together here for your convenience

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Links - which of course might change over time.**  |
| Vet Bed (because they are so often used to concrete hard floors, they need time to get to trust softer beds) | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Genuine-PnH-Veterinary-Bedding-3metre/dp/B001N0E41C/ref=pd\_sbs\_199\_6/260-9997446-3930754?\_encoding=UTF8&pd\_rd\_i=B001N0E41C&pd\_rd\_r=870792a0-9adb-4579-9e62-5f46c4e6c171&pd\_rd\_w=RtKnD&pd\_rd\_wg=E8cGf&pf\_rd\_p=ab0f8dce-7f41-4f1b-a486-fa30b5d29eaa&pf\_rd\_r=TD2VPPW16PSXSCXTSQNE&psc=1&refRID=TD2VPPW16PSXSCXTSQNE](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Genuine-PnH-Veterinary-Bedding-3metre/dp/B001N0E41C/ref%3Dpd_sbs_199_6/260-9997446-3930754?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=B001N0E41C&pd_rd_r=870792a0-9adb-4579-9e62-5f46c4e6c171&pd_rd_w=RtKnD&pd_rd_wg=E8cGf&pf_rd_p=ab0f8dce-7f41-4f1b-a486-fa30b5d29eaa&pf_rd_r=TD2VPPW16PSXSCXTSQNE&psc=1&refRID=TD2VPPW16PSXSCXTSQNE) |
| Soft doggy pad or bed  |  |
| Tractive GPS Tracker – here’s a link to the classic device – this does need a monthly fee for the software and that gets activated when you link the tracker to the app on your phone | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tractive-Lightweight-waterproof-tracking-unlimited/dp/B00F8A1ZBA/ref=sr\_1\_6?dchild=1&keywords=tractive&qid=1600262526&sr=8-6](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tractive-Lightweight-waterproof-tracking-unlimited/dp/B00F8A1ZBA/ref%3Dsr_1_6?dchild=1&keywords=tractive&qid=1600262526&sr=8-6) |
| Adaptil Plug in  | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/ADAPTIL-starter-Diffuser-behavioural-challenges/dp/B0038XBOJC/ref=sr\_1\_1\_sspa?crid=2EM9TK3P3PLQH&dchild=1&keywords=adaptil+plug+in+for+dogs&qid=1600263705&s=pet-supplies&sprefix=adaptil+%2Cpets%2C171&sr=1-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEzUDE4VlVXQ09QWVRQJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMDc4NzE4M1FEM00wME5ZNVRLQyZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNzg2OTk1M0tYOVIwR01HVUhNOCZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU=](https://www.amazon.co.uk/ADAPTIL-starter-Diffuser-behavioural-challenges/dp/B0038XBOJC/ref%3Dsr_1_1_sspa?crid=2EM9TK3P3PLQH&dchild=1&keywords=adaptil+plug+in+for+dogs&qid=1600263705&s=pet-supplies&sprefix=adaptil+%2Cpets%2C171&sr=1-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEzUDE4VlVXQ09QWVRQJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMDc4NzE4M1FEM00wME5ZNVRLQyZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNzg2OTk1M0tYOVIwR01HVUhNOCZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU=) |
| Buckle collar - fitted so it cannot come over the head no matter how hard a dog pulls. Best to get a small and a medium for a jindo or shiba cross – you can always return the one that doesn’t fit  | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ancol-Padded-Eyelet-Collar-36-46cm/dp/B01INRE9Q2/ref=sr\_1\_2?dchild=1&keywords=ancol+buckle+collar&qid=1600263750&s=pet-supplies&sr=1-2](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ancol-Padded-Eyelet-Collar-36-46cm/dp/B01INRE9Q2/ref%3Dsr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=ancol+buckle+collar&qid=1600263750&s=pet-supplies&sr=1-2) |
| 2 Hounds Freedom No-pull harness – the only one we recommend whilst your dog is in the early months of being here in the UK. It’s very hard for them to wriggle out of this when it’s on snuggly (remember to keep behind your dog if it panics so it can’t pull away from you). Here’s the link | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hounds-Design-Adjustable-Comfortable-Separately/dp/B07G2T9BNT/ref=sr\_1\_4?crid=399DJ85OXWYZA&dchild=1&keywords=2+hounds+freedom+harness&qid=1600262708&sprefix=2+hounds+freedo%2Caps%2C157&sr=8-4](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hounds-Design-Adjustable-Comfortable-Separately/dp/B07G2T9BNT/ref%3Dsr_1_4?crid=399DJ85OXWYZA&dchild=1&keywords=2+hounds+freedom+harness&qid=1600262708&sprefix=2+hounds+freedo%2Caps%2C157&sr=8-4) |
| 2 x 6ft leads here’s a link to one I use – this has a chain which if your dog bites at the lead is useful because they can’t bite through the chain | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Soft-Webbing-Lead-Rein-Chain/dp/B00VV961H0/ref=sr\_1\_fkmr1\_1?dchild=1&keywords=hy+soft+6ft&qid=1600262945&sr=8-1-fkmr1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Soft-Webbing-Lead-Rein-Chain/dp/B00VV961H0/ref%3Dsr_1_fkmr1_1?dchild=1&keywords=hy+soft+6ft&qid=1600262945&sr=8-1-fkmr1)  |
| 1 x 24ft lead useful when your dog is walking well and you want to give them more freedom without being off the lead | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hy-Soft-Webbing-Lunge-Rein/dp/B00VV9311E/ref=sr\_1\_2?dchild=1&keywords=hy+soft+lunge+rein&qid=1600263114&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hy-Soft-Webbing-Lunge-Rein/dp/B00VV9311E/ref%3Dsr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=hy+soft+lunge+rein&qid=1600263114&sr=8-2)  |
| 1 x bunge lead to strap around your waist so that in the early days, weeks and months if they get spooked whilst you are out on a walk, your dog is always secured to you.  | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Barkswell-Running-Walking-Reflective-Double/dp/B00VXOX9O6/ref=sr\_1\_9?dchild=1&keywords=bungee+lead+for+round+waist&qid=1600264050&sr=8-9](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Barkswell-Running-Walking-Reflective-Double/dp/B00VXOX9O6/ref%3Dsr_1_9?dchild=1&keywords=bungee+lead+for+round+waist&qid=1600264050&sr=8-9)  |
| 1 x 50ft lead for even more freedom and great to practice recall - Silicone mitt for grooming | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B07C1L5DCN/ref=ppx\_yo\_dt\_b\_search\_asin\_image?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B07C1L5DCN/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_image?ie=UTF8&psc=1) |
| Puppy Training Pads – some dogs are used to weeing on newspaper at the shelter (some not of course) so this helps them | [https://www.amazon.co.uk/AmazonBasics-Pet-Training-Pads-Extra-Large/dp/B00MW8G62E/ref=sr\_1\_1\_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=dog%2Bpad&qid=1600263571&s=pet-supplies&sr=1-1-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEzTkRaN0FZSlg4OTNWJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNDk4NTE0MUJPQ1UyRlc5UlhPVCZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNzA0NTMwMUhFSDBBMFhWQzdXQyZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU&th=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/AmazonBasics-Pet-Training-Pads-Extra-Large/dp/B00MW8G62E/ref%3Dsr_1_1_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=dog%2Bpad&qid=1600263571&s=pet-supplies&sr=1-1-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEzTkRaN0FZSlg4OTNWJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNDk4NTE0MUJPQ1UyRlc5UlhPVCZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNzA0NTMwMUhFSDBBMFhWQzdXQyZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU&th=1) |

**Positive Reinforcement – Clicker Training**

You are already very likely to be using positive reinforcement without realising it! Isn’t that exciting.

Think about the things that your dog or cat already know how to do, for example sleeping on their bed, recognising the word ‘walkies’, recognising when it’s dinner time and in terms of cats, sitting on your knee, eating dinner etc.

The dogs and cats in your life watch what you are doing and recognise things like – putting on your walking boots, or your walking coat, or reaching for the food at dinner time. They love these moments and respond enthusiastically, they know what you are doing and they know what is in it for them. They stand by the door waiting to have their lead put on, or they wag their tail as you prepare their dinner.

Think about these amazing things that they have learned naturally by recognising the patterns of our behaviour. They see what is happening, make an association and happily go along with it.

So, that’s just like this process of training positive reinforcement.

PR is a kind, ethical way of communicating to your pet what you want them to do. In simple terms, we shape the behaviour we want by rewarding the things we want our dogs to do and ignore the behaviour we don’t.

In human terms, here’s an example:

We often ‘reward’ ourselves with things like a nice cup of tea/coffee, lunch with friends, an evening out, a new piece of clothing or jewellery and when we do this we often think – I deserve this because…….., so there’s a real joy in sitting with a magazine and cuppa when the house has been cleaned, or meeting friends for a night out after a really busy week at work.

With our children we often treat them when they have completed exams or achieved something that stretches them or takes courage, so as you can see you are already doing positive reinforcement.

The steps involved in training in this way are:

* Noticing the behaviour you want
* Indicating to your dog that this is the behaviour you want
* Rewarding that behaviour

**So, here’s how it goes:**

**Step 1 - Noticing the behaviour you want**

e.g. When your dog is on the lead and the lead is slack, we notice that

**Step 3 - Indicating to your dog that this is the behaviour you want**

e.g. When you have noticed the lead is slack, you immediately (timing is important) click (audible or with a clicker). This indicates to your dog (well done that’s what I want, you clever thing). I use a click from my tongue! I don’t have enough fingers or hands to carry a clicker and often the clicker sound can be harsh and too loud.

**Step 3 - Rewarding that behaviour**

There’s got to be something in it for the dog, just like you might ‘treat’ yourself to that lovely new pair of shoes, or that lunch out, your dog wants an appropriate treat and in most cases a food they love (just a tiny piece of it) will be just brilliant.

In doggy terms we are wanting our new family member to be confident, happy and feel safe around people and animals, so here’s how we might do that!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Noticing the behaviour you want** | **Indicating to your dog that this is the behaviour you want** | **Rewarding that behaviour**  |
| Soft eyes and soft body around other dogs | Click | Tiny piece of very high value treat  |
| All four feet on the ground when someone arrives at the home | Click | Tiny Piece of very high value treat  |
| Looking relaxed and comfortable on their bed | Click  | Tiny Piece of very high value treat |
| Ignoring the cat | Click  | Tiny Piece of very high value treat  |
| If they are a barker noticing when they stop barking even for a second  | Click before they bark again | Tiny Piece of very high value treat  |
| Noticing when they are comfortable a distance away from you (perhaps in another room). This build independence and will support them being ok when you are not around | Click  | Tiny Piece of very high value treat  |

**Think about the behaviours you want and notice when you get them, click and reward!**

**Louise x**

**Introducing your dog to you and other pets**

This has been written for the dogs traumatised by their experiences. Those dogs that are so disorientated, frightened, nervous, anxious, or suspicious of people.

Remember that the journey is long. Your dog will have experienced the following:

* In the days running up to their flight they will have their microchip checked – for a dog happy to be around people and be touched this will be fine, but for a nervous dog, this is highly stressful
* The day before the flight, they are put in their travel crate and driven to the airport for their quarantine checks, then returned to the shelter
* The day of their flight they will again be asked to go into their travel crate (this is often a very scary place for dogs and if it isn’t usually, then they may have been scared by the crate
* They are again placed in a car something very unfamiliar to them
* They arrived at the airport and I believe the microchip is checked again
* They are placed on a forklift truck that beeps loudly and taken to a place to await boarding
* They are placed on the plane
* They experience take-off and landing
* The flight from South Korea to the UK is around 11 or 12 hours
* They arrive and are taken off the plane onto a vehicle and taken to the animal reception centre
* They are scanned again and their paperwork is checked
* They are then brought through to you and begin their final journey to you. At this point they have been on the been on the road and been in an uncertain state for at least 17 hours

It’s been a massive day for them and they will be disorientated and frightened.

Sit or lie down in sight of your lovely dog and it’s best to be slightly off at an angle and keep your voice soft and welcoming. Relax your mind and body, let go of any needs you might have to ‘do’ things for them. Just make sure they have food and water that can get to it. If your new dog feels safer in their crate than coming out of it then allow that to happen. Some very distressed dogs have literally taken days to feel comfortable enough to come out of their crate and some even longer.

Now is a time for lots of patience.

Your new dog will need to sleep.

You want to build a relationship based on trust with your new dog and often when a dog is particularly scared we find that lying down is non-threatening and will lead to them ‘paying attention’ to you.

Currently, they don't know anyone or anything in the world! Your focus now is to bond with your new dog on their terms right now, because your aim is simple, it is to get them to relax and soften those muscles in his body, ears, tail and eyes.

Demonstrate to them that you can be trusted, that what you do is ‘predictable’

Relax, stretch yawn and blink slowly. Dogs recognise that.

Any other dogs in your household are best on a lead or preferably separated by a baby gate. They will be able to get used to each other being around without being ‘too much pressure’ for each other.

When introducing your dogs to each other give lots of positives and lots of treats for anything at all positive and do advance and retreat (asking the dogs to move towards and then away from each other).

Whilst your new dog is still in the crate, it’s probably best to keep them near to the baby gate and then your dogs can get to know each other but still be safe.

Stroke your family dog and pet them and get them to a point where they are wagging tail and demonstrating they trust you. That will be noticed.

Keep your voices calm at all times.

Sit for a few mins away from the crate and go forward again and repeat this. It will get attention and spark curiosity!

We want to engage curiosity and 'prove' that we are trustworthy! Your new dog has just left their buddies behind and will be grieving for that loss and the loss of security that comes from being with a trusted buddy.

We want to interrupt fear patterns in different ways that will engage their brain and keep them focused on new things.

Below are some ideas to get you going. Please don't do those things for too long at a time, keep it changing. So here are some things.

1. soothing voice (actually all the time until they are relaxed and then you can be happy excited etc)
2. going to the crate and saying hi, gently and on your dogs’ level,
3. lying on the floor or sitting at his eye level and yawning, slow blinking and stretching.
4. singing
5. offer deliciously tasty food
6. dog friendly peanut butter in a Kong toy
7. squeaky toy (my dog doesn’t like the squeak so use your own judgement on this)
8. stroke your family pets so that your new dog can see and hear this
9. introduce your new dogs on neutral territory if at all possible and if not - allow your existing pets to walk towards and away from where your new dog is – please make sure that they are all on leads so that the situation can be handled well if either dogs become stressed.

All of these things are to be done gently, calmly and consistently so that your new dog gets to recognise all of those things and he knows he can trust them all!

Hope that helps!!

Thank you once again for being so amazing and giving this frightened soul a wonderful warm loving home that!

Louise xx

**Hints and Tips for building a strong relationship**

**Thinking and moving ‘towards’ you**

Set things up so that your dog can ‘think’ towards you – so simple things like have your hands smelling of something interesting like dog friendly peanut butter, or chicken. Dogs’ sense of smell is way more powerful than ours, so set things up so that hey can come towards you either with their body or their mind.

If Ron ever backs away from me, I do one test to see if I can get him to move forwards again and If I can’t then I walk away and return with something more interesting to smell.

**Dogs don’t generalise**

As I write this (Spring 2018) Ron loves his walks. He was scared at first, of everything, he didn’t want to have the lead on, he didn’t want to go out of the garden gate, he was terrified of the driveway and everything that moved and made a noise. He then learned very quickly that he cold sniff to his heart’s content and that he could smell the grass, the soil, the water in puddles.

He looked at the sky as though he’d never seen the sky. He watched the birds fly, he just stood watching them. So, looked to his big sister Dilly to know what to do and he just had the best time. So, very soon, he learned to love being out and about on walks. He was like a made thing though, wildly running about (running into the end of the lead all the time) but that didn’t matter, he was experiencing something completely new and he loved it.

So that’s great right?

Well you would think wouldn’t you that being in the garden is being ‘outside’ (like being on a walk), but it quite clearly isn’t.

So, in the garden, a place that I set up for him to be calm (because I was worried about him leaping the fences if he got worried and frightened) has become a place where he relies on my to guide him, but he’s also wary of me. He doesn’t take treats and is generally suspicious of me in the garden. This has not been helped by it being a bad winter and I’ve not spent any ‘relaxing’ time out in the garden with Ron. We have literally put on the lead, he’s gone to the toilet and we’ve come back in the house.

I worked for a long time on Ron feeling confident enough to come into the house. Doorways are frightening to Ron. They trigger a ‘claustrophobic’ response for Ron (very much like how a horse who is frightened of going into a trailer might behave, or a horse might rush through gateways. The ‘Squeeze’ is worrying.

So, we take nothing for granted. Logically we can be forgiven for thinking that Ron would be as happy ‘outside’ in the garden, as he is out on a walk, but he isn’t, so he hasn’t generalised feeling safe around me (always) or feeling safe outside. Fascinating!

**Dealing with scary and things!**

In a matter of 8 weeks Ron had gone from being suspicious of people to being intrigued by them, curious and thinking towards them. By week 12 Ron was sniffing people consistently and confidently. A few weeks later he was actually happy to see people and moving enthusiastically towards them, sniffing them with confidence.

This is a wonderful thing and shows just how brave he is and how successful it can be to create a confident ‘win’ situation (no-one has frightened him). I was careful to say, ‘is it ok if Ron sniffs you, he’s just getting used to people but hasn’t been touched yet.’ Without exception, every single person I met said yes, put out their hands and allowed Ron to sniff and didn’t try to touch him. Great conditions for building confidence.

I was careful to allow Ron all the time he wanted, to stand and watch things. He’s turned into a very nosey doggy and now loves people watching! Whenever Ron showed an interest, even if he was afraid by what he was seeing or hearing, we would stop and watch what was happening. Then we would take just a step or two towards it/them and then move off in the direction we were originally headed.

Ron became really confident very quickly, it was amazing to see that happen.

**Meeting people and dogs out on walks**

Ron was surprisingly wary of the dogs we met out on walks. I had thought that as a long term resident of the rescue shelter, that he would be comfortable when meeting dogs.

I was wrong, he was very nervous and once again I learned to never take anything for granted.

I made sure that when we saw dogs in the distance I reassured him with my voice. I realised that I could not get his focus on me in such circumstances, so I organised things in such a way that I could keep him out of the physical reach of the dog. He would and still does, dance around a lot showing his athleticism, leaping and twirling. As they pass us, I ask the people if it’s ok with them that I follow them for a few yards (otherwise they might think I’m being rude or predatory). We would follow and then turn around and walk in our original direction.

I was very careful to never pull him or move away from anything that was frightening. I want him to know that he can face anything and that we can also let it go.

This approach has really helped Ron to build his confidence around dogs and people.

Louise x

**Keeping your DMT survivor safe!**

As I write this I am 3.5 months into having my lovely DMT survivor Ron in my life. One of the biggest fears I have had is that he will bolt through the front door and run away, or that I will trip and drop his leads and he will run away.

The fear is getting less now as I build a trust with him and as he begins to demonstrate that actually he likes and is curious about people he meets.

At first, if he had escaped the house there is no way that he would have come anywhere near a person, now 3.5 months later, he is incredibly nosey and is really happy to go and investigate people.

Even so, I’m not complacent, so I still have a very snug collar on my boy and a harness too. The harness is a ‘2 Hounds Freedom No Pull Harness’. I researched a lot of harnesses and this one doesn’t require the dog to put his leg through a loop which in the early days of Ron living with me, there is no way I could have accomplished. So, it’s a useful harness and it has a D-ring on the front and the back and that means I can put two leads on it.

Here's a link to a youtube video showing the ‘2 Hounds Freedom No Pull Harness’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtNU_Tes68U>

I therefore have 3 leads on Ron one on his collar, one on the front of the harness and one on the back.



Ron is so very athletic, he can do somersaults in a heartbeat, he can twizzle faster than a tornado and he can leap like a gazelle. So, 3 leads, means he can’t wriggle out of his harness.

I would advocate that you have a lead on your dog in the house because if anything happens you can reach for the lead, rather than reaching for the dog (in my case if I reached out to grab Ron, he would be terrified and it would set him back).

Good luck with keeping your dog safe and sound!

Louise x

**Cats and your new DMT doggy!**

The dogs at the shelter in South Korea have never come into contact with cats, so we have no way of knowing ‘how’ they are with them. In light of this I have put these notes together that will help you to decide if you would/should/could adopt or foster a DMT dog if you have a cat.

Cats with any dogs needs careful management, you cannot just assume that your dog or cat will be ok living with each other.

So, keep your cat safe from your new dog. Ensure they have a safe place to go to – including full access to an open cat flap to leave the home. Place a baby gate up at a doorway (assuming your dog will not jump the babies gate) or at the bottom of the stairs so that your cat can go to a place of safety should the need arise.

The good thing about a dog that has not been exposed to a cat is that you can give clear signals to the dog about how to behave with the cat. You need to be aware and you need to be prepared for this.

I found that Ron noticed my cat Roxy, and just accepted her being around, she sleeps on his bed and he likes to get close to her.



I positively rewarded him by using my voice (because he was not interested in treats in the early days).

Having Roxy around was great for Ron.

**Play Drive**

Cats can ignite the predator instinct in a dog, in the same way that a dog just loves chasing a squirrel up a tree!

When the dogs that have lived for long periods of time in a kennel environment get released, sometimes they can find they can play for the first time in their lives.

Sometimes that ‘play drive’ can be something they don’t understand or know what to do with. They have never been taught or guided in what’s an appropriate thing to do.

So, managing your dog’s play drive is key. You want your dogs to play, but don’t choose ‘tug’ games, as these teach the dog that tugging and pulling is fun and this is not the best lesson to learn if there are cats about.

Use a ball to play with – the action of running back to you with a ball reinforces their recall. You are instigating play and this means they are more likely to look to you for they play experience.

**Be aware, be prepared and manage the situation well.**

I have rehomed a greyhound who was a ‘hunter’ in Spain and also a lurcher (greyhound cross) who was quite clearly part of a pack of dogs that hunted.

Both of my dogs showed me immediately that they wanted to kill the cat. I got her to a place of safety in both instances and made sure that the dogs and the cats were separated constantly until they were more comfortable around each other. The dogs became fully rehabilitated, but it did take a lot of careful thought, careful management and time.

1. I demonstrated to the dogs that the cat was a member of the household by (from a safe distance – behind the babies gate) stroking her and cuddling her when they were around.
2. At first, I rewarded them for looking away from the cat even momentarily – a nano second of shifting their gaze was rewarded.
3. As time progressed and I could see that they were less alert to the cat’s presence. I positively reinforced the dogs each time they looked at the cat with a ‘softness’ (rather than an alertness) – treating the dogs, speaking gently to them and stroking them.
4. I kept the dogs on leads when we were working on the dogs and cats being close, so the babies gate was positioned at the bottom of the stairs and if the cat was sat on the stairs, I put the lead on the dog and walked them towards the stairs (rewarding them each time the dogs was soft) and then walking the dogs away again, repeating that several times over.
5. I had my wits about me the whole time. With Izzy my greyhound it took a full 12 months to rehab her.

Louise x

**Getting Used To Men**

What happens if you find that you have adopted a dog and they are afraid of you?

Often, men can be a trigger to the dogs who have survived the Dog Meat Trade because often it is men who treated them very badly.

If this is the case, then it can be very upsetting. Obviously, the dogs have no idea of the steps you have taken to make a home for them, the love you feel for them, the emotional decision to adopt, the time and effort and the cost involved too.

They don’t understand that you have to work hard to pay your bills to put a roof over their head, they have no knowledge of that at all.

Their world is about survival – all they have ever known are the basic fundamental survival skills of having enough water and food and keeping safe. Keeping cool in the heat of the summer or warm in the freezing temperatures of the winter.

They have seen their kennel mates leave and some have seen their kennel mates killed before their eyes.

I’m also aware that they don’t understand the difference between a kennel mate leaving and going to slaughter or going to a loving home! They just know that they leave and don’t come back!

They then have to make new allegiances with new personalities and find their position in that pack. Then they settle in to live their life as safely as possible.

So, although their life is simple, every moment of everyday they have lived, their focus has been about survival and managing to keep safe.

The triggers that they experience in your home will flood their minds and bodies with memories of their need to survive. If cowering has worked for them so far, then they will cower, if moving away has worked for them, then they will move away etc.

We found that working with the dogs in South Korea was so rewarding because we used ‘positive reinforcement’ and the principles of this are:

* Shape the behaviour you want by rewarding it when you see it
* Ignore the behaviour you don’t want
* Create the conditions where the dog can do what you want them to do e.g. When getting the dog to feel comfortable with collars, the first thing I might do is put the collar on the floor and put some treats around or inside the collar, therefore I create the opportunity for the dog to go near the collar whilst doing something else

We do not engage with any aversive (something that causes avoidance) training means at all.

Louise x

**Think about the process of lead training**

Positive Reinforcement would involve waiting until the dog naturally creates a slack in the lead, then this would be marked immediately by a ‘click’ sound and then you will follow up with a reward. The dog gets this pattern quickly and looks for the opportunity to gain a reward by doing the ‘right’ thing.

In the ‘old style’ of lead training, a person would ‘check’ the dog by snapping the lead towards them. The dog would then ‘avoid’ the experience of being hurt or shocked by the movement. It would cause stress to the dog, but the dog would eventually comply and then get the picture that this is how to walk. This is using aversive means.

With a dog brutally handled in the dog meat trade, any pressure to the neck at all could cause a memory of the slaughter house and so the dog might go immediately into a fear response.

To help your new dog to trust you, there are some straightforward things you can do. I hope you find these useful:

Notice your dog’s behaviour, where are they most comfortable? If your dog is really comfortable sitting on their comfy bed, then I would advise that you sit on the floor and gradually over a period of a few days move more closely to the bed whilst treating your dog.

If your dog is comfortable in the garden, then sitting in the garden quietly and just being there will build a good association.

If your dog likes treats, then just having your hand ‘dangle’ somewhere near them with treats in it will encourage the dog to come to you.

If your dog likes to play ball, then playing with them is going to help your bond.

**Great questions to ask yourself**

Let’s assume that the men in your household trigger anxiety in your dog. We need to work hard to prove that your dog can actually trust this men.

Dogs are smart and they sense things, they watch and notice subtle behaviours before we even do! They are watching us all the time. How many times does your dog respond so a word such as ‘walk’ or a movement such as when you put your walking boots on etc. They observe things keenly. So, ask yourself these questions:

* what is my dog observing that is causing a positive response?
* what is my dog observing that is causing a stress response?
* Who are they getting used to being around and feeling safe with?
* Who comes into the home that they don’t have quite such a strong bond with
* How can we build a bond?

It is great that your dog finds someone in your household to feel safe with, so celebrate that because you have done a great job already,

Now the next part of the process is to enable your dog to feel comfortable with all members of your family.

As the person your dog has allowed themselves to bond most closely with, your job is now to ‘facilitate’ the relationship building with other members of your family.

This will involve you ‘setting up’ the situation where your dog can engage with the other family members. There are some ideas below to help you set up these situations and I hope you find them useful and successful.

**Ideas for the person least bonded to your dog!**

Associating good things with that person is key. Here are some ideas to help build a strong bond with your dog:

When you come into the home, have a really high value treat in your hands, don’t expect your new dog to do anything for that treat, just get them used to you giving them something delicious when you arrive home.

Take your dog out for a walk as a family and you be closest to your dog as you walk, give lots of treats through the walk.

Keep your voice gentle.

Make your movements flowing, no sudden scary movements.

Feeds your dog at dinner time.

Instigate play ‘gently’ such as rolling a ball or using a pull toy – if the dog can cope with this.

Use a Kong and fill it with tasty food and place it at your feet so they are next to you whilst they are loving their tasty treat!

Avoid eye contact until your dog makes that eye contact with you.

Allow your dog the space to move to a different room when/if they feel the pressure is too much! They will come back when they decide the feel they can!

Louise x

**Overcoming Car Sickness**

Car sickness is no joke! It’s such a horrid thing for your dog to experience. Remember that the only travelling that the dogs have experienced before you adopted them has been ‘stressful.’

My rescue dog Indie got car sick very fast and would be actually sick if I so much as clicked the lock on the car. That would set her off!

So, I approached it in stages:

Firstly, I let her just be in the car with me without going nowhere! Just chilling and relaxing and being stroked chatting to her and then repeating that often 2 or 3 times a day until she was happy to jump in and out of the car, relax and so on.

Then, we did the same thing with the engine running so that she would relax with the sound, feeling and smell of the engine running. We ended every session when she relaxed.

We then repeated it until I felt it was a reliable relaxing behaviour

Then we began short trips, just going a few feet, then on really short trips e.g to the end of the road and back home, then as we arrived home we played in the garden.

Then we went to the nearest field where she could walk and have fun. I kept the journey as short as possible 1/3 mile ish to a place that is lovely to be. You could chose a park, or river or something that your dog likes, then make sure there is lots of fun and relaxation.

I then built the distance up gradually and always with a great fun thing at the end of the journey.

Remember that when you come home, make home a lovely place to be too! It might take a number of weeks to get there, one thing is for sure, once Indie had overcome her car sickness, she absolutely loved the car and when I was in the garden she often chose to sit in the car with the boot open. She taught my other dogs to do the same and I’d often find 3 of them snoozing in there on warm sunny days!

Louise x

**Children and your new DMT doggy!**

We all love the wonderful photographs of beautiful children snuggling up to adorable dogs!

We want that relationship to be the vision of the future when we foster or adopt a DMT dog and we can be very certain that they have never seen a child before.

The good thing about adopting or fostering a DMT dog is that they have not been exposed to children and so with the right planning it can be achieved.

Each dog will come with a level of anxiety, they have travelled a long distance to get to you. Their flights are circa 13 hours, but before then, they have been placed in a travel crate, taken from the only things they know in the world, their kennel and their friends. They are taken to the airport in the back of a van, a very frightening experience and placed on a noisy plane. They then arrive in a new country with a different temperature, strange sights, sounds and smells.

They are on sensory overload they are frightened, and they need time to adjust.

We would recommend that you keep children away from your new dog whilst they are in this state and introduce your children gradually.

Children need good awareness around dogs of all kinds and particularly dogs that are highly anxious.

**So, what’s the process?**

We want the dogs to be able to experience you in your household, moving about as you do and living your normal life.

We would ask that you keep the volumes of TV’s and Music down as if it’s too loud that can be frightening.

Let them find a place they are comfortable and feel safe. That might be that you place the travel crate somewhere that your new dog can see and hear what goes on and become familiar with the household routine.

Give your new dog time to recover and when you see them relaxing a little, sleeping a little more, moving a little more, eating and drinking, Pooing and peeing, then this shows they are letting go of tension.

Now is a good time to bring your lovely children into the picture, go with them towards your dog, sit, speak gently and give treats, then walk away.

Don’t look your dog directly in the face and make sure your energy is positive when you are around them. If your child is upset or doesn’t want to engage with our dog, then wait until the time and their attitude is better.

It’s good to sit on the ground at your dog’s level and make sure you are not pointing towards them, point your body away from the dog, so that you and your child are less threatening.

You want your new dog to begin to anticipate that your child is safe to be around and there are benefits (treats). But you don’t want your children to overstay their welcome, so before your new dog goes back into anxiety, your child moves away.

Repeating this over and over as often as possible will soon change the way that your dog perceives your children.

It’s important that your children do not go too close – just like people, dogs have a personal space and you will know what that is because the dog’s eyes, ears, face and body will change, looking more tense and seeking out an escape route when you go too close. You don’t want your new dog to experience that with you so get very good at noticing small changes so that you can back off and begin again.

Often the DMT survivors have not been touched. The only physical connection with a person has been a vet, or a person moving them. So, they don’t know what it is like and may not trust you. Please consider this and take things really slowly.

Start with treats in your hand and if they can’t come to you, then drop the treats on the floor for them.

You can spread lovely dog friendly peanut butter on your hand as this can be a great way of getting them to stay closer for longer!

Once you have them licking peanut butter out of your hand or trying to take a treat then you can extend your fingers to touch their chin and progress to their cheek when they will let you and so on.

Touch is something that we don’t want to do until they are comfortable and if you create the ‘peanut butter’ opportunities and do it regularly, they will soon get more and more relaxed.

The key message is ‘go quietly and with awareness’. These are dogs that need good time and good space to heal.

Louise, with thanks to Kay, Caroline and Denise. x

**The power of 1, 2, 3**

At the shelter in South Korea when working with fearful dogs, I would count to three before going into their kennel. The dogs had the opportunity of preparing for ‘something’ to happen and soon learned that I was going to open the door and enter their kennel.

When inside the kennel, whenever I placed something down on the floor like a food or water bowl, I would count myself in 1, 2, 3. This acts as a clear communication that something is going to happen. They could see the bowl in my hand and could predict what was going to happen.

If I needed to move something to clean under it I would count to 3 before moving it and then again whilst moving it, which I would do very slowly, clearly and deliberately.

A fearful dog is more likely to feel safe when they can predict what is going to happen or if they know ‘something is going to happen’. They are then more likely to trust you and more likely to trust you more quickly.

The power of 1, 2, 3, is amazing. I use it all the time in my communication with Ron. It also keeps me mindful of what I am doing.

Ron loves his walks and I always make sure we ‘run’ towards home, but he’s just started to do something cheeky (which I love). When we arrive at the top of the driveway, heading to the garden gate, he stops and looks back as if to say – ‘but can’t we stay out longer?’

So, I count 1, 2, 3 and on 3 I put a gentle ‘feel’ on the lead and give the cue for running back home (which is ‘Ready, Go, Go,Go). I had done this a number of times (it’s a new behaviour from Ron) and then on about the 10th walk, I counted 1, 2, and Ron moved forward before I got to 3. We did that for a couple more walks and then he moved forward on 1. Ron knows what’s happening and he is making a positive decision to work with me!

That’s the power of 1, 2, 3.

Louise x

**Register your DMT Survivors Microchip**

Here’s the link to register your dog’s microchip – it’s a simple process and you can find your microchip number on the paperwork you have been given.

<https://www.petlog.org.uk/recording-a-pet-with-an-overseas-microchip/>

Louise x

**Heartworm**

Here in the UK we are not familiar with a condition that a lot of dogs in South Korea have, which is Heart Worm.

They get it from a mosquito bite which lays eggs in the blood stream of the dog, the eggs find their way to the heart and develop into worms. Untreated it is fatal.

It is widespread their and dogs that are rescued are tested for it but of course it is possible that the night before their journey they could be bitten by the mosquito and we wouldn’t know about it.

We would recommend that you speak to your vet about it, but here are two ways of dealing with it.

* You can have your dogs tested for microfilariae (these are the early stages of the worms) or heartworm about 6 months after arrival in the UK
* Or with your vet’s consent you could use a monthly topical wormer such as Advocate – I’m using that for Ron of course I couldn’t start using it until I could touch him so that was about 4 months after his arrival.

Coughing is a sign of Heartworm, so if your dog develops a cough and you don’t know why that might be, it’s worth remembering to check for heartworm or talk to your vet about using a topical wormer.

This is a very good article on Heartworm <https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/resourcesforyou/animalhealthliteracy/ucm188470.htm>

**Worming & Flea Treatment**

The dogs are given a wormer treatment ‘Drontal Plus’ before they fly as per the quarantine regulations. They may not have been given a flea treatment.

We would currently advise that you set up a vet check for as soon as your new family member feels able to take on such an experience.

**Vaccinations**

The dogs have gone through their quarantine process which means they have been given a rabies injection and 30 days later they have a ‘titer’ test which measure the antibodies in the blood stream if the antibodies meet the acceptable levels they after a further 90 days they are allowed entry to the UK

They are also given active immunization against canine distemper, adenovirus type 2, coronavirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus & leptospi­rosis. Usually Quantum DA2PPv (although the choice of vaccine might change).

They are also given a kennel cough vaccine which is generally Bronchicine CAe but the choice of vaccine might change

Louise x

**What to feed your new family member**

The dogs are generally fed kibble in South Korea. The shelters have a lot of dogs to feed so it’s likely to be a budget range.

The dogs that arrive in the UK will have been travelling for at least 36 hours. That’s a lot of travelling and a lot of stress. They don’t know where they are going, everything is unfamiliar and the people they meet are strangers.

When they arrive in their new home they are disorientated and have a lot to get used to. They are often fearful.

This affects their digestive system and they can have upset stomachs for weeks.

We would suggest that you give your dog something that the stomach can digest easily such as chicken and rice or chicken and sweet potato.

When your dog has settled in then you can introduce other foods gradually.

Louise x

**A Raw Food Diet**

Food for a DMT survivor can be a divisive issue. It can trigger anxieties because food is often very scarce in the dog meat farms and usually consists of the discarded carcases of their friends and family including their paws, intestines etc.

They have to find a safe way to eat and often find eating stressful.

In the shelters, they are often in small enclosures with 2, 3, 4 or more dogs and therefore again food can become a stressor.

It can take a few months for the dogs to be comfortable around feeding time and that includes their water intake too. Often the dogs have a choking reflex when drinking water and this settles in time. Both of my dogs from Korea took over 12 months to be able to lap water normally and to drink well independently.

We all have our own way of feeding our dogs and Amanda Wraith, who runs an ancient Yorkshire Inn, and has adopted two beautiful dog meat trade survivors Lady and Noah, is a big advocate of raw food. She has kindly put together this really informative piece below about the benefits of a raw food diet.

**FEEDING RAW FOOD TO YOUR DOG**

*“Until the fox raids the henhouse and then builds a fire to cook them on, I won’t believe the statement that dogs have evolved in captivity to eat cooked food” (Dr Sue Armstrong)*

The above quote was plagiarized from renowned vet, homeopath and raw food advocate Dr Sue Armstrong and just about puts it in a nutshell. Dogs have *thrived* on raw food for millennia; they have *survived* on cooked food for less than two hundred years. The emphasis here is thrived and survived. Is your dog experiencing optimum health or is it simply symptom free? You could argue that we probably didn’t hold such extensive records as we do now but it’s a fact that today’s dogs present with far more digestive issues, “allergies” and intolerances, skin conditions, autoimmune responses and more serious conditions such as cancers than they did at the start of those two hundred years. If you were asked if you’d feed your child on processed takeaways every day, you’d probably be appalled but it’s in effect what you’re doing with your dog if you’re feeding it a highly processed diet. I know that’s pretty strong language but I believe, as science proves, that there is an inescapable link between highly processed diets and not only ill health but also behavioural issues.

There is a heap load of science behind the benefits of raw over processed diets which I won’t go into here. The purpose of this piece is to give you an overview and supply a few links that you can follow up on if you wish.

Why Raw?

By feeding a raw diet you are feeding a species appropriate food.

A dog’s teeth, skull structure and digestive system is set up to consume raw meat and bone and occasionally entire carcasses. Dogs are omnivores, which means they’ll eat their fair share of green stuff too, whether that’s through eviscerating prey or doing a bit of selective grazing. Raw food is nutrient dense and presented in the exact molecular structure that a dog’s body requires. Cooking changes that molecular structure to the point where the body will create an inflammatory response. Very, very simply, inflammation is at the root of many of the conditions mentioned above. Processing can range from simply cooking meat for your dog to feeding ultra processed tinned or dried food.

Dogs actually spend a lot of time snoozing and not doing much at all. They should be able to quickly wake up and exercise when necessary but the types of neurotic and obsessive behaviour that we see today simply don’t exist in the wild. The science supports that this is very likely to be connected to feeding, or more specifically feeding processed foods. Again, this is not the place to go into the detail of why but it’s to do with the quality of the protein and how cooking dramatically alters that quality.

Of course, as we all know, dogs such as DMT rescues can have had exposure to highly stressful and traumatic situations which obviously have an impact on behaviour and may need specialist treatment. I believe that feeding as near natural a diet as possible can actually help with this process.

**Raw Food and Bacteria**

Yes, any raw meat has a high bacterial load. The dog’s stomach contains an acid soup that is more than a match for any bacteria that it’s likely to encounter. Think of the two week old rabbit or pheasant carcass that your beloved devours before you have chance to pull it away and then suffers no ill effects?!

You should simply treat your dog’s meals in the exact way that you treat your own when you’re preparing raw meat, that is of course if you are a meat eater. To prevent the risk of cross contamination, remember to wash your hands and keep utensils and dog bowls nice and clean. It really is that easy.

**How Convenient is Raw Food?**

There is no doubt that opening a bag of kibble is about as easy as it gets and getting down and dirty with some raw cuts might sound daunting to say the least. Whilst some people do prefer to prepare all their own raw food, there are some fabulous complete raw foods out there which make life very easy. Frozen raw food is readily available, convenient and easy to feed. The food I buy is measured so I know exactly how much each of my dog’s needs. They are delivered to my door in convenient recyclable trays that I just pop in the freezer. They defrost overnight in the fridge and will last three to four days but you soon get into the rhythm of how many you need to defrost.

**What about Bones?**

When something is exposed to heat it changes. COOKED bones are potentially lethal for dogs. Feeding raw bones is an essential part of a raw food diet and is probably one of the most contentious. There are a few common sense highlights to mention when feeding bones: always supervise your dog when it’s eating a bone, don’t feed small bones that can potentially choke a greedy dog, whilst chicken wings are fine as long as you train your dog to crunch and not just swallow (I used to hold the end of the wing until my dogs had crunched and started to chew) chicken legs are more likely to splinter. This is due to them being weight bearing but only applies to the bones of fowl. Some raw food companies have part chicken carcasses that give dogs not only the right nutrition but also provides a valuable workout for teeth, gums and jaws, not to mention mental wellbeing.

**Isn’t Raw Food Expensive?**

Well I think it’s fair to say that feeding raw isn’t a cheap way to feed your dog but when you examine the accuracy of raw feeding it’s far less expensive than people expect it to be. My dogs are fed by weight and that’s what they get each day. So I can calculate what they’re going to eat and there’s absolutely no waste. I would say that feeding raw is only slightly more expensive than the better quality kibbles but the difference in nutrient density, bioavailability and the health and wellbeing benefits of species appropriate feeding is what really makes the difference. You can save money by obtaining appropriate bones, either from your butcher or from your raw food provider and these will easily replace a meal. Similarly I will occasionally feed chicken wings to my dogs (please exercise care and caution as explained above when feeding chicken wings) which make a very cheap meal. Some raw food advocates would even go as far as to say that the money you could save on visits to the vet by far exceed any added expense. I listened to a podcast recently that suggested that a feeding regime should perhaps not be as regimented as we sometimes like to make them, with even the occasional fast period (one meal a day) to encourage mitochondrial scavenging (mops up proteins in cells).

**Will Feeding Raw Meat To My Dog Make It Aggressive?**

This is a complete myth, in fact, feeding a raw diet that is naturally low in processed sugars is known to help balance out some behavioural issues.

**Useful Links!**

The Raw Feeding Veterinary Society [www.rfvs.info](http://www.rfvs.info)

[www.CAM4animals.co.uk](http://www.CAM4animals.co.uk) is more about complimentary modalities but a big supporter of raw feeding.

Raw food companies that I have either experienced myself or have been recommended by people that I respect:

[www.bellaandduke.com](http://www.bellaandduke.com)

[www.naturaw.co.uk](http://www.naturaw.co.uk)

[www.gorocketo.com](http://www.gorocketo.com)

[www.naturalinstinct.com](http://www.naturalinstinct.com)

[www.able.dog](http://www.able.dog)

**And Finally**

The thing to be aware of when buying raw is that the meat should be human grade. It’s important that we are mindful of the environmental and welfare issues and don’t unwittingly support the production of substandard meat from poor production facilities that wouldn’t pass the standards, including animal welfare,  required for human consumption.

Both Bella and Duke and Rocketo produce a freeze dry raw food. Bella and Duke’s is marketed as a convenience food to be fed when you’ve either forgotten to take your food from the freezer or when you’re taking your dogs on holiday. It’s also great to use as treats as they’re small freeze dried meat nuggets. I believe Rocketo’s food is just freeze dried and is a complete food.

Amanda x

**Creating positive boundaries**

Imagine you won the lottery and you were advised to buy a huge property as an investment. Imagine the day you move into that property with many vast rooms, acres of land and employed staff doing everything they can to please you.

Depending on your personality, you would either be like a kid in a candy store, pressing every button, checking every room chatting to the employed staff and asking them to bring you cups of tea and cake every two minutes……

Or

Sitting in a room, quietly looking at the view wondering what the employed staff do and how to behave with them.

We would all have different responses in the early days and as the days, weeks and months passed, through trial and error, we would settle into a routine that we felt comfortable with.

We would probably develop rules like:

* Walking around the grounds each morning before breakfast
* Running our own bath
* Asking the employed folks to do the ironing and cleaning

Along the way we would make mistakes like, spending too much money too quickly or asking too much or too little of the employed team.

We would discover that there might be some members of staff who go about their business quietly and some that want to engage and chat and have fun. Your own personality would influence which type of person you prefer.

For the dogs, living in their new homes is like this – because in most cases the dogs you are fostering or adopting have not lived in a home and not lived in close proximity to people for 24 hours a day.

So, transitioning to a life of freedom with people who give us attention and look after our every need requires a bit of getting used to and therefore very careful management.

In exactly the same way as we would rely on someone to guide our investments if we became a multi-millionaire overnight, the dogs need us to guide them too. The dogs have no idea how to behave in a home or with people. They don’t understand the routine of walks, using different rooms and how to react when scary things like TV’s appear or washing machines whirr away.

We can all become ungrounded when we get excited. But there are usually boundaries placed around these things. We go to a great gig or movie or theatre production and feel euphoric, but the event comes to an end and that’s our cue to travel home go to bed and sleep. We learn this over time, but these dogs have had very short lives with little or no experience of things outside their crate or kennel.

Breaking things down into recognisable small chunks

If we go for a long walk in the great outdoors, we break things down into smaller bite size chunks, like setting ourselves the goal of walking up to the next peak, or ridge. Even if we set off to walk from Lands’ End to John o’ Groats we would break it down into what can be achieved in a day! We naturally create and follow ‘structure’.

The dogs from Korea have had very little and often no exposure to normal things and they don’t know what to do with the space we give them until they find a way through their fear. They have never had to problem solve, or work anything out. My dog Ron chose to lie on his mat in the corner of the living room for 8 months. He ate his food lying down, drank his water lying down too. He would only go into the garden if I picked up his lead and took him in the garden and he only came back into the house when I picked up his lead and led him back in. He had never been given freedom. He had never freely walked over the threshold of his kennel.

We always look at our dogs and identify what they ‘CAN’ do. So even a dog with limited experience, knows how to sleep, they can eat (even if they are not confident eaters like Ron). They know they want to pee and poo. Creating an opportunity for them to do these things safely will help them to settle in well and the more confident they feel in meeting their own basic needs, the more quickly they will feel safe and grounded. Ron could not eat from a bowl and he was particularly scared of stainless steel bowls (the kind they were fed in at the shelter). So, I fed him chunks of food on a flat plate.

Remember that they will be jet-lagged for at least a week when they arrive, therefore their clock might be out of sync with ours, but they know they want to sleep. They usually know they want to eat and drink, but sometimes, like us when we get excited, stressed or worried, they might need to be reminded to keep hydrated and eat.

They definitely know they want to feel safe and so will seek out the most likely spot – often it’s the crate they travelled in because until they have explored their new home it’s the only think in the world they know.

Helping them make sense of the world by the things we do

They are naturally seeking things to understand, and we can help them. Putting puppy pads down gives them a space to wee and poo and they quickly pick that up.

We don’t have to go out for a walk at the same time every day to provide structure and predictability, we use our behaviours for example, when we put our wellies on or pick up the lead these are ‘communications’ that say – we are going for a walk.

I spend a shed load of time working on my computer each day – when I’m sat and working, my dogs know they can relax because I’m not moving any time soon. It means they can go to sleep.

Boundaries

Whilst we are doing a great job of creating ‘communication’ from our behaviours, we also need to create boundaries, so the dogs know how to behave appropriately with the family members and so that they don’t become too attached or possessive of certain people or things.

In the same way that you might have a favourite person at work, or a ‘best friend’, dogs can also have best friends or favourites. They can attach themselves to certain people because that person has given them something that they don’t get from others. That could be safety or fun. Our aim is to avoid this happening. Ultimately, we want our dogs to feel safe 100% of the time. we want them to feel safe and have fun with others too, so that it’s not all dependent up on one person in the family.

When you are watching your favourite tv programme and someone comes in and asks you to turn it over, you are likely to go through a range of emotions and want to protect your ‘right’ to continue to watch the programme.

In an effort to feels safe and ‘understand’ the world around them, dogs can want to protect their bone, toy, person, sofa or bed.

Remember that when they come to this country, the only thing they know in the whole world is their travel crate, everything else is alien to them. Dogs want to feel safe and so they are actively seeking safety when they arrive.

So, if one of the members of your household makes that connection and the dog sits beside them on the sofa or shares their bed, then you can forgive them for wanting to defend that.

Guarding Behaviour

Here’s a situation that most of us with dogs will have come across at some point:

Fido has decided that the dad of the household is the person that’s around most consistently and so Fido has made a connection of safety with him. Fido feels safest when he is close to dad curled up on the sofa watching TV. Then things change as mum enters the room. Fido doesn’t feel quite so safe with mums because she’s not around quite as much and doesn’t take him out for walks as often. Mum sits down on the sofa and interrupts Fido’s feeling of safety. Fido is wary of change because change usually means a person is going to move them to another place or take them to the vet. Fido has seen many dogs be taken from them and tortured and killed and he hasn’t learned to deal with change yet or to relax fully. Fido doesn’t yet know how to trust all the people in his life and so he growls at mum to protect himself.

There are many ways to deal with this including:

Work to ensure that all members of the household are equal in terms of the dog feeling safe, happy and relaxed.

Your dog should have a place that your dog can go to, to feel safe in each room, but if there’s a possibility of them guarding that spot then make it on the ground, in a corner (the walls provide grounding for the dogs) and on their own bed.

You can either take away toys or bones that create a problem of guarding or you can bombard the dogs with more – give more bones and toys if there is a guarding behaviour. With my dog Dilly, I simply take away what she is guarding because the item she is guarding stresses her out. She’s watchful of the other dogs. The moment it’s not there, she relaxes and then reverts to being the wonderful dog she is – it’s so instant.

You can also ‘break the pattern’ by suggesting a walk and getting the dogs in a known happy state – simply turning their attention away and doing something different that is a happy and relaxed activity.

Distract the dog with play or reward-based training or going out for a walk. Always distract with something that will instantly change the state of your dog to a positive state. With Ron, I always use going into the garden or going for a walk because things give him plenty of to think about and he loves the anticipation of running into the garden now or going for a walk.

A note about reprimands

I hope this has been a useful in thinking through the reason that your dog responds in certain ways. Please do not reprimand your dogs in any way because this merely proves that people are make them feel bad.

Think ahead and plan out how you are going to manage situations when they arise. Boundary issues are going to arise for most dogs and being prepared for them means you will spot them before they become a problem and that you will have a plan in place to head any escalation off.

Louise x

**Separation Anxiety**

In most cases the DMT survivors are getting used to people and value their time away from people, but some dogs have either:

* Been in foster and connected with people
* Are looking for safety and comfort and are finding it with their new family member(s)

The aim of managing the separation anxiety is very simple:

**I want my dog to be relaxed when I’m not around!**

The signs of separation anxiety are:

* Your dog weeing and pooing when you leave (if they are fully housetrained normally)
* Your dog howling when you leave
* Your dog destroying things whilst you are away from them
* Your dog shows signs of unusual behaviour that you might see on the dog cam, such as pacing
* Your dog follows you everywhere

**How the manage separation anxiety**

When your new dog arrives:

1. Make sure you go out regularly so that they don’t build up a reliance on you.
2. Ensure they have a safe place to be. Usually it’s behind a sofa or in a corner, but if you can get them used to a crate (keeping the door open) then they often go there to feel safe.
3. When the dog is in their safe place and relaxed, reward them with a toy or food (if they are play or food orientated)

Therefore, you are setting the scene so that the environment they are in can provide safety for them.

Separation Anxiety can run very deep and so therefore it means that the training process needs to be very small steps.

**Your aim** is to increase the duration of your dog feeling safe in the house when you are not there, so that you can leave them for a number of hours and they are fine.

**Here’s an idea of how to do it – this is much easier and more successful with a dog cam!**

When your dog is safely and happily in their safe place, leave them for a second or two and then return, use gently praise and rewards (food or play).

You of course might need to start your training earlier than that. You might need to sit by them and then increasingly move away a few steps at a time.

Then leave them for increasingly longer periods of time – you do need a dog cam so that they can watch them and you can see when they are relaxed and calm.

Aim to get the rewards in before they become anxious if you reward when anxious, the message is anxiety, if you reward when they are relaxed, then the message is relaxation.

Build the duration and then begin to step outside the house and increasingly build to stepping out of the house, then shutting the door, then locking the door, then going to your car, then driving away.

It takes time but is worth the effort if your dog has separation anxiety.

**Please also consider the following:**

So that the house doesn’t go from hustle ‘n’ bustle to silence when you leave the house, put the radio or TV on low. I asked Alexa to play soothing music for dogs, she didn’t have anything, but she put relaxing ‘driving’ songs on. Youtube have a door shuts leaving radio or tv on or you tubes ‘relaxing music for dogs’

Adaptil plug ins are really useful and do make a difference in a lot of cases and also you can buy a collar which is impregnated with Adaptil too.

Keep your ‘hello’s’ and ‘goodbye’s’ low key so that the contrast from you being there to being alone is not so marked.

If your dogs don’t food guard, then you can also:

Leaving Kong’s filled with goodies

Leave treat balls

Place food down before leaving

Hide treats around the room to search out whilst you’re gone

**When working with separation anxiety, please don’t:**

Reward them for following you around the house – ignore that behaviour and only reward when your dog is relaxed (they must be relaxed) in their safe place. I know this is really tough to do, but it will encourage your dog to find safety in themselves.

Good luck.

Louise & Laura x