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- **SAFER Canine Assessment: Scoring & Choice** (12/12)
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LOVE HAS NO AGE LIMIT

Increasing the Odds of a Successful Adoption



Based on the book

Patricia B. McConnell, PhD
Karen B. London, PhD



Love Has No Age Limit
Welcoming an Adopted Dog into Your Home

PMC

How many of you send literature home with adopters?



**Are you confident that they
Learn what they need to learn?**



WE ARE ALL MOTIVATED BY THE SAME THING:

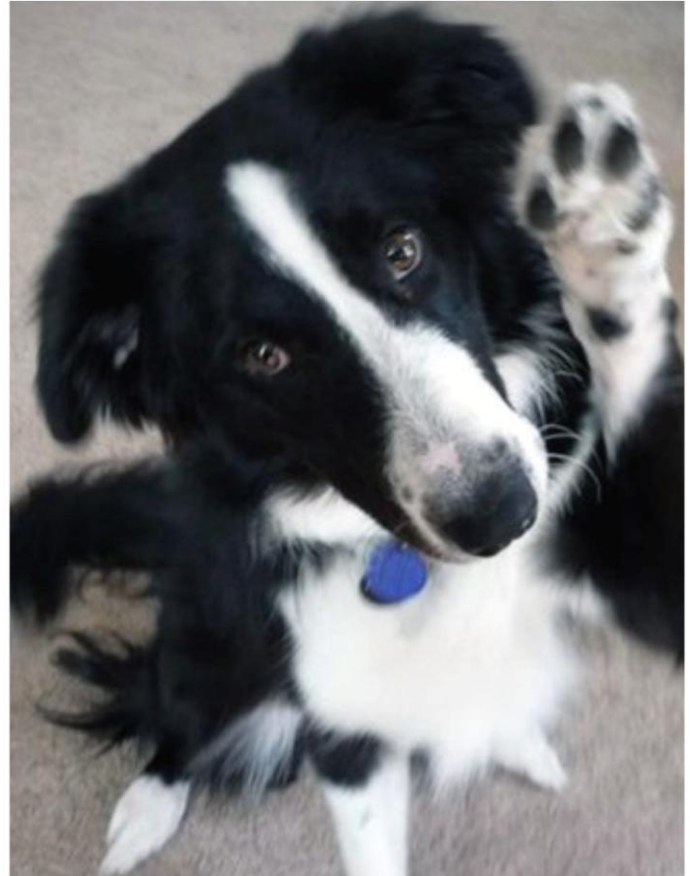
Finding Forever Homes for
the dogs in our care, and
ensuring that everyone – dog
and new family alike – is
happy with the arrangement.



How best to do that?

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ADOPTED DOGS ARE RETURNED

The % Returned Varies
Widely:



A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ADOPTED DOGS ARE RETURNED

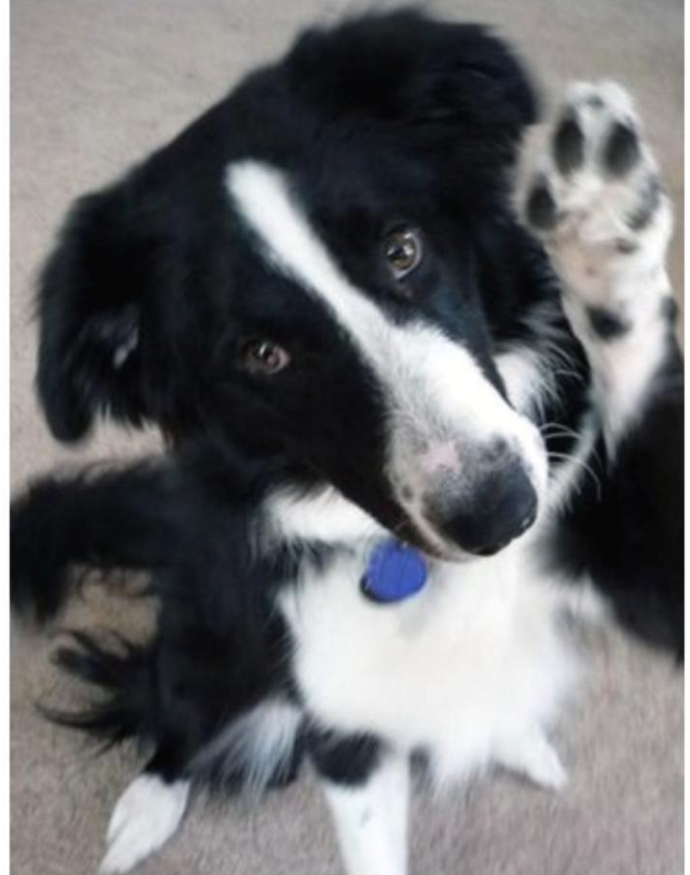
20% of dogs surrendered were
adopted from shelters. (NCPD)

3.8% (HAWAII, HI)

7% (Weiss 2011, ASPCA)

8.3% (DeLeeuw 2008)

15% (Weiss 2011, “Others”)



OLDER DOGS ARE RETURNED AT HIGHER RATES



- Return rates highest among dogs over one year of age. (2 primary factors in returns = Age of dog and Presence of children).
- Dogs are more likely to be relinquished because of behavioral problems.
- Returns most likely to occur within 6 months, *20% within 2 weeks.*

Neidhard & Boyd 2002

WHAT RETURNERS SAY

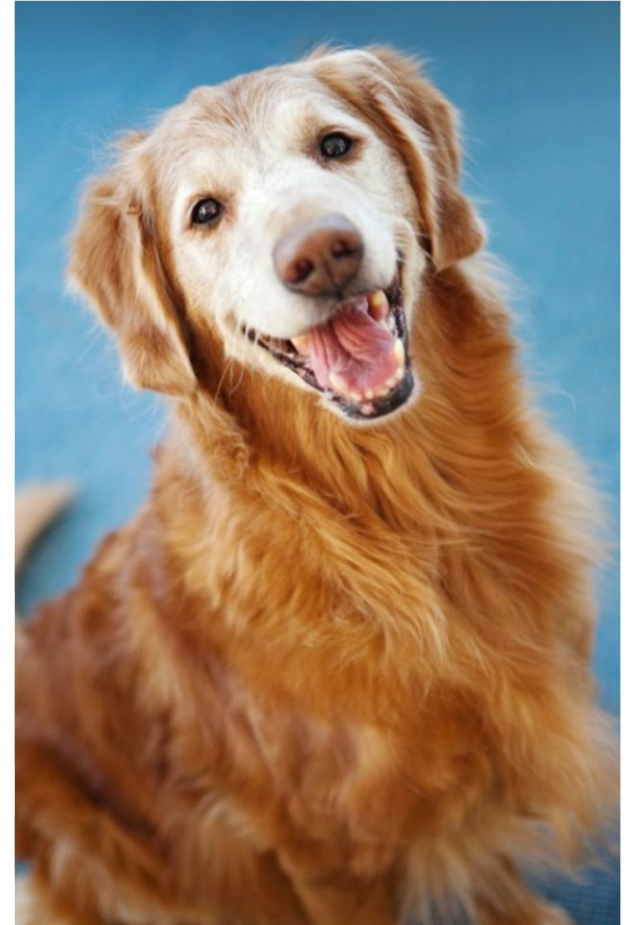
SHORE 2005

- Major theme = “Align expectations with reality of time, energy needed.”
{Emotional Energy?}
- Author suggests “It may be that returners did not conceptualize adoption as the beginning of a relationship.”
- What are the adopter’s expectations? Good to know before proceeding.



GETTING AN “OLDER DOG” IS NOT LIKE GETTING A PUP

- Remember: the first month is critical.
- Adopters have “puppy perspective,” which can lead to frustration and fear.
- “Buyer’s remorse” occurs with the lack of (puppy generated) oxytocin release.
- Adopters need to know what to expect, *before* they take the dog home.



THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNED EXPECTATIONS



- Adult dogs still need training.
- Adults not “house trained” in every house.
- Behavior in foster home not always same as in new home.
- Could take months for a bond to form.
- Could take a year for the dog to “settle in.”

DOGS NEED AN ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

- Clients often spend a long time deciding and getting ready, while the dog has no idea what's happening.
- Adopters need to understand that dogs can be “shell-shocked,” and need time to adjust.
- The value of understanding “The Magic of Threes!”



TEACH ADOPTERS TO EXPECT CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

- Quiet dog becomes vocal.
- Fearful dog becomes “aggressive.”
- “Well-behaved” dog becomes not-so-well-behaved (or vice versa).



THE FIRST DAY

**Adopters need to know what to do
the instant that they pick up the leash.**

- Go straight home!
(Someone else in the car?)
- Keep the leash on until you
are in the house.
- Stay outside (dog on leash)
until the dog potties.
- Keep short leash on in house.
- Keep close, but give space.



INTRODUCING INTRODUCTIONS

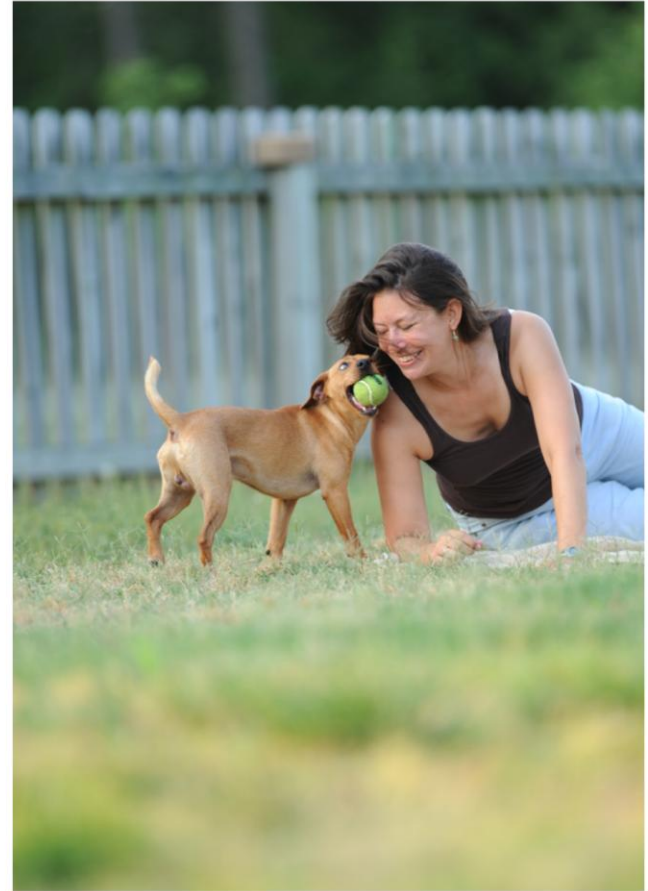


- One new family member at a time.
- Go SLOW! (Define it.)
- Outside if possible.
- Dog on leash if cats or small mammals.
- No welcome home parties!

TRAINING BASICS

Adopters Need the Basics:

- Use Positive Methods
- Down on Dominance
- Reinforce Attention
- Do This, Not That
- Use Play to Train
- Manage, Manage, Manage
- Wait on Classes



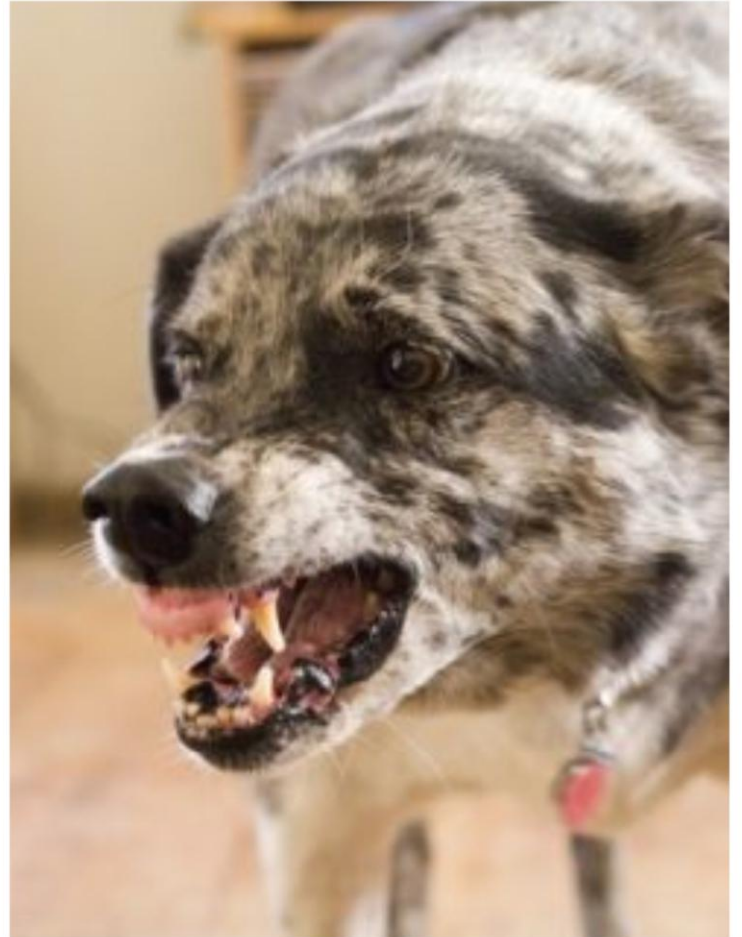
WHAT ABOUT THE RESIDENT DOGS?



- Our first responsibility is to protect the dogs we have already.
- Each dog needs one-on-one time with you.
- Try to keep routine similar as much as possible.

PERSPECTIVES ON PROBLEMS

- Where'd my perfect dog go?
- Who switched dogs on me?
- What's critical, what's not?



HELPING FEARFUL DOGS ADAPT

- Patience, Patience, Patience!
- Adapt to Needs of Dog (not desires of owner).
- Keep short leash attached.
- Provide dog with “safe house.”
- Provide help with Classical Counter Conditioning.

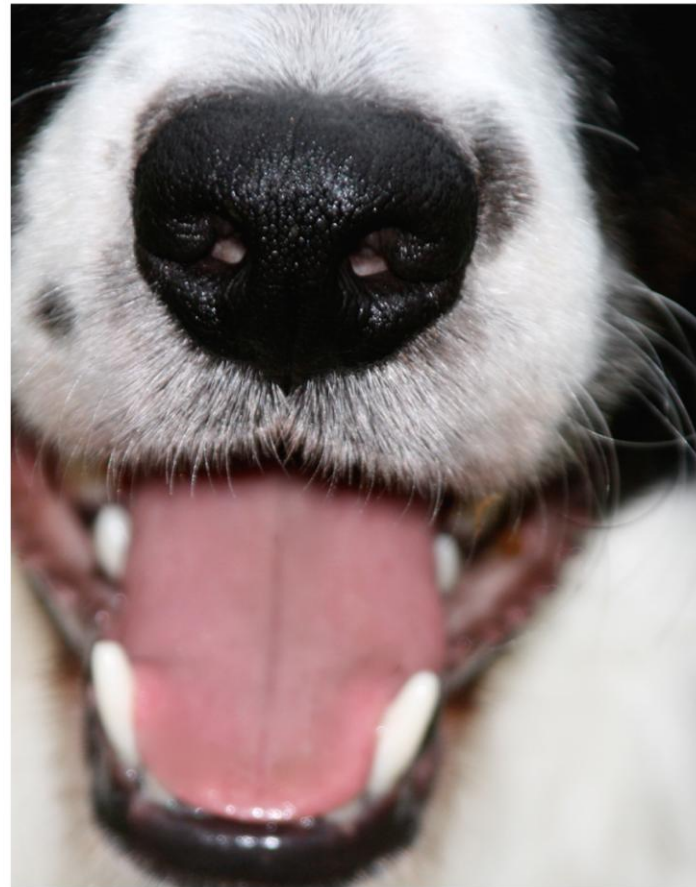


IF ONLY ONE TIP?

HAVE PATIENCE!

Along with:

- Use your support system.
- Remember to breathe!
- Keep a journal.



RESOURCES

Love Has No Age Limit: Welcoming an Adopted Dog into Your Home.

PB McConnell & KB London

Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance for a First Class Life.

P Miller

Puppy Mill Dogs Speak!

C Shaughness & C Slaweck

Second-Hand Dog: How To Turn Yours Into a First-Rate Pet

C Benjamin

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**THANK
YOU!**



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