



# Should Red Rover Come Over?

## *Mistakes people make with rescue dogs*

By Jennifer McCarthy

How can anyone resist that cute little face that peeks back at them through the kennel door at a dog shelter? Many times, when people walk into a rescue organization, they become overwhelmed with emotions of guilt or sadness. These emotions need to be checked at the door! Emotional decisions can be destructive and lead you to choose a dog that is totally wrong for your lifestyle (go in with the mindset that every dog is going to a great home and you will have a clear head to operate).

### The Selection Process

- Lifestyle, exercise, commitment, training, socialization and leadership are a fulltime job. Educate yourself on what breeds are appropriate for your lifestyle so you won't end up sending Fido back.
- Gauge your physical strength and lifestyle. If you are a runner, choose a more active dog. If you are a couch potato, meet my friend the greyhound who loves to sleep and watch television!
- Be sure to choose a dog that fits your budget—dog food is expensive and some animals go through several pounds a week.

### Points to Note

- Rescue dogs can sometimes be at a rescue because they have run away. Ensure you have everything set up, such as checking fencing, before you take him or her home.
- Realize your friend needs about two months to properly adjust to his new environment and this is often an organic process.
- Take your dog for a long walk around the neighborhood the first day. The most successful way to form a bond with your dog is on a walk.
- Walk your dog off the property every day. Larger and more active breeds require a fast-paced, one-hour power walk and small dogs require two half-hour walks.
- Most puppies don't fully mature until 2-3 years, so be prepared for the stress of a puppy even if your dog looks full grown.

- Enroll in a dog training class ASAP! This develops bonds and establishes the pack leader.
- Lastly, if you treat your dog more like a dog and less like a human being, you'll be speaking his language and ensure a healthy and happy relationship with each other!

### Who's the Boss

Dogs rely on their owners for food, shelter and protection. Letting them run amuck with your life and home makes them confused as to who is the boss. The vulnerability and anxiety leads to bad behavior. With rescue dogs, it is important to project as much control over your dog's environment as possible, this way they don't have to worry about where their next meal will come from or what is going on.

For instance: Go in and out of doors first, having the dog follow you. Entryways are often significant territories. By leading, you establish yourself as leader of the pack. Also, dogs only need a handful of toys to really stay stimulated. Make sure you rotate the toys that are out and about. (Please note: Puppies need many toys to chew, this is only appropriate for older dogs). ♦

Jennifer McCarthy is a celebrity trainer and trainer-to-the-trainers with experience working in behavior, trick, security and show training for some of the most prominent names in their respected industries. Contact info, [www.jmdogtraining.com](http://www.jmdogtraining.com) and 702.807.9950.

