Everything you didn't want to know about the dog breeding industry…

…And how we can make it right

A FREE eBook published by Happy Tails Books

Copyright Information:

Mill Dog Diaries by Kyla Duffy
Published by Happy Tails Books™, LLC **http://www.happytailsbooks.com**
© Copyright 2010 Happy Tails Books™, LLC. This free eBook may be reprinted and distributed but not edited in any way without consent of the publisher. It is the wish of the publisher that you pass this book along to those who may be looking to get a dog or to anyone who simply doesn't already know this information. Any organization is welcome to use this book as an educational or fundraising tool. If you enjoyed this book, please consider making a donation to dog rescue through http://happytailsbooks.com.

Cover photo: Enzo, by Monique and Robert Elardo, It's the Pits Rescue
Author's Note: The word "he" was used throughout this document for brevity to indicate "he" or "she."

Contents

Introduction 4
Section1: The Dog Breeding Industry: What Everyone Should Know 5
What is a puppy mill? 5
A brief comparison of puppy mills and responsible breeders: 5
What are the most common puppy mill breeds? 7
How are puppy mills and pet stores related? 8
How to politely deflect the "puppy in the window" syndrome: 9
Other issues related to careless breeding 10
What happens to puppy mill dogs who can no longer breed? 10
To illustrate the point, here is one rescuer's memory of attending an auction: 11
How is this legal? 13
What can I do to help strengthen legislation against unscrupulous breeders? 13
Section 2: How to Choose a Reputable Breeder 13
In researching a breeder, take the following steps: 13
Breeder Red Flags 16
Section 3: What is dog rescue? 17
If I want to adopt, how do I get in touch with a rescue? 18
What questions should I expect to be asked by the rescue before adopting? 18
How much does it cost to adopt a dog? 20
What should you ask of a rescue from which you'd like to adopt? 20
A note on "kill" and "no kill" shelters 21
Why would I adopt a distressed dog instead of a shiny, new one? 22
Don't Kill Bill 23
So why would you adopt a distressed dog? 25
Why wouldn't you adopt a distressed dog? 25
What about old dogs? Why would anyone take them? 25
How can I help rescue? 26
Section 4: I just adopted a distressed dog… Help! 27
A Slow Introduction 28

A Disciplinary Squirt 28
Anxiety Disorders 29
Separation Anxiety 29
Crate Training 30
Getting to Know You 30
Unreasonable Fears (of humans, other dogs, children, etc.) 31
Thresholds 33
Stairs 33
Potty Training 34
Marking 34
Poop Eating 35
Walking on a Leash 35
Leash Aggression 36
A Final Word on Training 36
About the Mill Dog Manifesto 37
Section 5: Resources 38
Please Participate in Happy Tails Books' Dog Rescue Efforts 39

Introduction

Kyla Duffy and ex-puppy mill breeder, Bill

Let me start by saying that burning down someone's farm holds no appeal to me, and it's not in my disposition to picket pet stores (though I'm thankful to the people who have a stomach for standing on the corner with signs). I'm just a normal person who has been surprisingly affected by the unconditional love and companionship dogs have brought to my life, including the ones who have suffered tremendously from human greed. Originally from the East Coast, a career in professional snowboarding brought me out to Colorado, where I eventually retired from snowboarding (at about 21) and attended college, obtaining undergraduate degrees in Marketing and Spanish Translation and eventually a master's degree in Organizational Leadership. In my professional career, I've worked as a salesperson, business consultant, college instructor, and entrepreneur. After falling in love with Boston Terriers, I became heavily involved with dog rescue organizations, frequently serving as a foster parent for the most down-and-out dogs our rescue takes in.

The creation and dissemination of this informative eBook is my quiet protest; it's my way of helping others understand problems and solutions regarding the dog industry. The first thing you'll read herein is a discussion of the dog breeding industry and tips on how you can tell a reputable breeder from a puppy mill. Next I've included information about purebred dog rescue organizations, fostering, and adoption. The final section is my attempt at "tech support" for people who have opened their hearts and homes to ex-puppy mill breeding dogs and other distressed dogs, including tips on potty training, obedience, and socialization.

I hope that after reading this you'll feel inspired to join me in "voting" with our dollars for change by only supporting stores that do not sell animals and only obtaining pets from

rescue organizations or breeders, who are indisputably breeding for the betterment of the breed. –*Kyla Duffy, Happy Tails Books Editor In Chief*

Section1: The Dog Breeding Industry: What Everyone Should Know

What is a puppy mill?

The term "puppy mill" is commonly used to describe large, commercial dog breeding facilities with subpar standards of care. After a drought following WWI, farmers were in need of a cash "crop," so they stuck dogs into their chicken coops and rabbit hutches and began breeding them for money. The deplorable conditions in which the dogs lived was the impetus for the Animal Welfare Act (discussed below).[i]

A typical puppy mill[ii]

A brief comparison of puppy mills and responsible breeders:

Responsible breeders care about perpetuating the breed and improving breed lineage, period. They breed small quantities of dogs (maybe they own a few males and females and breed the females once a year). Working to ensure good health and temperament is of utmost importance to reputable breeders. Additionally, good breeders encourage potential buyers to

visit their facility, require an extensive amount of personal information before passing their puppies along, and have a comprehensive return policy.

Puppy mills, on the other hand, keep many (sometimes hundreds of) breeding dogs in cramped, outdoor, chicken wire cages (yes, even the floor of the cage is chicken wire so the waste falls through – think about how walking barefoot on wire all day would feel on your feet). They breed females every cycle (about every six months), and wean puppies way too early (before eight weeks). Dogs are never allowed to exercise or socialize, resulting in ill-tempered, sick puppies and very emotionally and physically distressed parents. The parents' jaws are broken if they bark, or they are "debarked" by having something sharp jammed down their throats to silence them. Puppy mill breeding dogs' teeth are often filed down to the gums to prevent them from defending themselves, and if the cages are ever hosed down, it is done with the dogs in them.

The offspring of these mistreated dogs are sold to pet stores, where unsuspecting people purchase them without home checks and comprehensive return policies. They are also sold online and through newspapers under the guise of responsible breeders. These puppy mills have fancy websites with delightful names including words like "butterfly" and "rainbow" to make you think the dogs are romping around on a hillside, but I can tell you that is not the case.

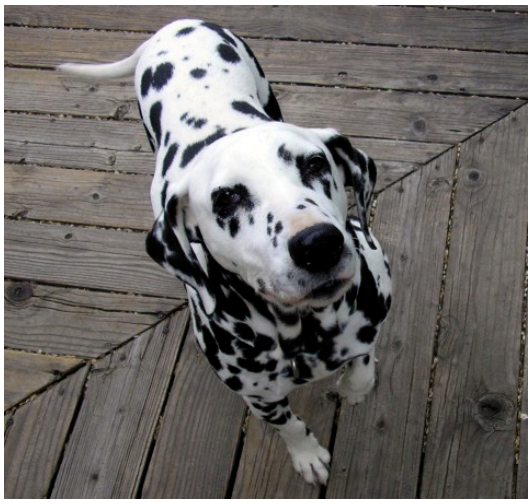
Gracie, saved by Golden Rescue South Florida

Thousands of puppy mills exist throughout United States, with the largest concentrations of mills in MO, NE, KS, IA, AR, OK, and PA (many puppy mills are run by Amish).[iii] Millers (puppy mill breeders) try to fool people into believing they are reputable breeders by saying things like, "We have a USDA license." I'm not impressed, and you shouldn't be either. It can be argued that holding a USDA license is actually indicative of unscrupulous breeding because the only reason a breeder would have one is if he was a large-scale operation selling to pet stores![iv] Smaller, more reputable breeders are not required to hold a USDA license. (Side note: The USDA requirements only state that animals

must have food, water, and shelter. The amount and quality of these items is ambiguous, and millers easily find loopholes to provide care for their animals that any reasonable person would consider grossly substandard.)

What are the most common puppy mill breeds?

While small breed dogs are extremely common, all breeds can be found in puppy mills. Breeds become popular with millers the moment they see dollar signs (think of *The Simpsons* episode where Homer sees a pig and a "thought bubble" appears over his head with a picture of bacon on a plate). The Dalmatian frenzy, which occurred after the movie *101 Dalmatians* was released, is a perfect example of how dogs become valuable in the eyes of millers. After seeing that movie many children cried, "Mommy, Mommy, I want a Dalmatian." So mommies everywhere gave in and demand for Dalmatians spiked, allowing unscrupulous breeders to begin popping out Dalmatian puppies like sneakers in a sweat shop. But here's the thing: Dalmatians have a lot of energy, they grow to quite large, and they often suffer from deafness and urinary tract infections when carelessly bred.



Tillie, Courtesy of Erika Donaghy and Tyler Johnson, Dalmatian Rescue of Colorado

Mommy hadn't really researched the breed before getting a Dalmatian for her little darlin', and she was shocked when the dog grew up to be more than 50 pounds. Quickly Mommy decided it would be best to get her dog a new home and thus relinquished her personal responsibility, leaving their "beloved family pet" at a shelter to become someone else's problem. That "someone else" was probably the shelter vet tech, who most likely had to put the Dalmatian down because: a) At the time there were too many Dalmatians in shelters and they weren't getting adopted (Mommy wasn't the only one who made a bad decision for her kiddo) and b) Shelters generally don't have the time or staff to properly rehabilitate "aggressive" dogs.

Shelters and rescues became flooded with Dalmatians when people found they "just weren't working out" for their family. I'm not blaming Hollywood for releasing a movie about Dalmatians, but the sad fact is that movies about dogs are often a catalyst for an increase of puppy mill suffering within a breed.

The Dalmatian incident is not isolated – this cycle repeats itself every time a dog breed becomes popular in Hollywood. Spikes in puppy mill dog breeding also happen after a breed wins any major dog show (Westminster, Crufts, etc.). The demand for the breed again increases, some people buy the breed without thoroughly researching it, and again shelters and rescues get flooded with dogs of that breed.

The most recent batch of *breeds* finding popularity among millers are not really breeds at all. They are referred to as *designer* dogs, mutts whom people have given a name. Let's face it, it's fun to say "Labradoodle" (Labrador/Poodle mix) and "Eskijac" (Eskie/Jack Russell Terrier mix). But if there wasn't a fancy name, who would ever breed dogs of different breeds together deliberately and think they could make money at it? An Eskie and Jack Russell blend used to be referred to as a mutt, usually the product of unspayed and unneutered dogs getting together *BY MISTAKE*. But as soon as this mutt "breed" was given a fancy name, it was also given dollar signs, making "Eskijacs" attractive to millers.

Do you see where I'm going with this? While it's cute and convenient to call mutts by fancy names, we're actually doing a disservice to them because along with a name comes a life of suffering for some unfortunate dogs of that type. What's wrong with calling them what they are? Mutts! By doing so you can save money adopting one if you like that blend of breeds and at the same time save their buddies from a life of suffering.

How are puppy mills and pet stores related?

As explained above, the puppies found in most pet stores are the offspring of the emotionally and physically distressed parents who are sitting in cages in puppy mills (which makes for equally distressed puppies). These pet store puppies have usually been weaned too early, affecting their physical and emotional development which results in grave

disappointments for those who thought they were buying a "healthy" pet store puppy, only to find out that the dog is terribly ill shortly after bringing it home.

The immediate, tangible concern about buying a dog from those pet stores is that you've got a good chance of picking up a sick dog. A broader social concern is that by buying a dog from those pet stores, you are perpetuating this cruel puppy mill breeding industry.

How to politely deflect the "puppy in the window" syndrome:

> ***Misguided Molly:*** "Oh, that puppy in the window is so cute! We can't just let it sit in that cage in this pet store. Let's *rescue* it."
>
> ***Reasonable Ralph:*** "Molly, that dog *is* adorable and it will eventually find a home. But by *buying* it we're voting with our dollars for this unscrupulous breeder to continue what he is doing… And what he is doing *is wrong*. The parents of this adorable puppy are chasing their tails in a small wire cage right now. They're either breeding or about to be bred, and they're sitting alone in the cold. They probably haven't ever even seen a vet. By purchasing this dog, we're saying it is okay for this dog's parents to be treated that way. Let's instead get a dog from a breeder we can visit or from a rescue organization."

Dogs offered online through Craigslist (even through ads that say something like, "I'm moving and can no longer care for my dog") and other advertising websites often come from puppy mills, too. That goes the same for classified ads in newspapers. The only way you can really be sure you are getting a healthy dog is to actually visit the facility where the dog was born (or the home where the dog is living, for older dogs).

Other issues related to careless breeding

Have you looked to see how many vets there are in your town lately? I bet there are at least twice as many today as there were a decade ago. One reason for this is a common notion that inbreeding is okay for dogs. For centuries dogs have been inbred-even the champions-a practice that is slowly causing breeds to move towards endangerment due to the increasing severity and frequency of congenital defects. Some of the problem lies with backyard breeders-people who breed dogs even though they don't have the experience and knowledge necessary to produce healthy, well-tempered puppies but they breed dogs anyway. The other side of the coin is that national governing bodies of breed standards could help mitigate these issues by disallowing dogs produced from close bloodlines to be entered in dog shows. Instead, many take a stance similar to America's AKC, which states the following on its website: "There is no rule that prohibits inbreeding and line breeding; this is left to the discretion of individual breeders."[v]

Inbreeding over the decades has compounded, resulting in more puppies than ever with genetic illnesses. The increased demand for veterinarians can at least in part be contributed to this phenomenon.

What happens to puppy mill dogs who can no longer breed?

Each puppy mill dog has a scorecard indicating how many litters it has had and how many puppies were produced per litter. When a miller has had his fill of a dog, he will usually put it out for auction. If the auctioned dog is not sold, it is commonly taken out back and shot…. Or its head is bashed in with a rock… Or it is beaten against a tree. Yes, killing a dog out back is illegal, but so what? Nobody is really watching. You might not want to believe it is possible (I don't want to, either), but the fact is it's true.

Sometimes the more "humane" millers will just let the dogs go loose. The important thing to the miller is that he has one less mouth to feed and can make space for a new "cash cow."

There is a small ray of hope in the shadowy world of puppy mills. Because of the compassion and bravery of animal rescuers, some "lucky" dogs are saved. Many dog rescues that take in puppy mill dogs have special volunteers who work with millers. Some "compassionate" millers will call on these volunteers to pick up their "spent" dogs instead of killing them. In many situations, however, these volunteers rescue dogs by going undercover to puppy mill auctions. Posing as millers, these volunteers are usually allotted an amount of money or number of dogs that a rescue can take in, and they do their best to leave the auction with those dogs. This practice is controversial because in a sense, the rescues are supporting the millers by *purchasing* the breeding dogs at the auction. However, the alternative is that the dogs will be left to suffer at the hands of another breeder or will be "taken out back" when they return to the farm unsold. Some of these dogs have been breeding for seven years or more, never having left their cold, wire cages. What would your heart tell you to do?

To illustrate the point, here is one rescuer's memory of attending an auction:

Puppy mill auction[vi]

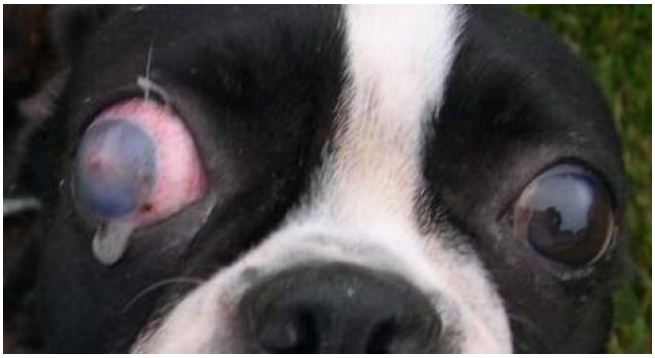
"The lighting was very poor, but it was enough for me to see the horrid conditions where these cries were coming from. The smell was so bad it brought my whole stomach up in my throat and stung my eyes so bad my vision was blurred.

There were dogs crammed into very small, wooden boxes everywhere. Each box contained as many as five dogs stepping on each other to get to the end for me to touch them. One box was full of Chihuahuas, with one very tiny, very pregnant girl who was being trampled to death. Row upon row of these makeshift boxes lined this small, poorly ventilated building.

I walked around to the backside of the building and found larger dogs outside in pens that were not much more than mud holes. Some dogs had empty food and water dishes while others had no dishes at all. The dogs were covered in mud, and as I walked by them, they all just begged for my touch and maybe some food.

The next building contained even more dogs in the same pitiful boxes. Whether Boxer or Chihuahua, dogs were stuffed in these small boxes. The large dogs did not even have space to turn around let alone lay down to rest. Each building I entered just seemed to get worse and worse.

Most dogs were ill and desperately needed veterinary care. I'll never forget one Boston Terrier-his eye was so swollen with infection it hung out of his head. It was the size of a plum. Many Bostons had severe cherry eye, and other dogs were so matted and grown out that I could not tell what breed they were. There were dogs with many infected cuts and wounds. There was just no end to the horrors I saw that day and the stench."[vii]



Puppy mill breeding dog in desperate need of medical care for cherry eye[viii]

How is this legal?

While dogs are supposed to be protected under the 1966 Animal Welfare Act, there are many loopholes. "Enforced" by the United States Department of Agriculture, large scale breeders are supposed to be licensed and regularly inspected, but there are only a few inspectors in each state and way too many farms. Additionally, breeders who only sell online and not through pet stores are not required to be licensed at all. Breeders who are licensed regularly get away with many violations of the AWA and continue to operate with animals living in conditions way below any reasonable standard of care.[ix] With documentation of failed inspections to prove it, animal welfare organizations are constantly accusing the USDA of being too lax with their punishment of crimes against animals.

What can I do to help strengthen legislation against unscrupulous breeders?

First, you can contact your local shelter to find out what measures are being taken to fight puppy mills in your state. Signing petitions (online and on paper), sending letters to your congresspeople, and volunteering with organizations that are fighting puppy mills can help create positive change. Meetup.com is a great place to find like-minded people in your area, as are other social networking websites like Facebook.

Section 2: How to Choose a Reputable Breeder

A responsible breeder is one who obviously cares about perpetuating and improving a particular breed. He usually only has small quantities of breeding dogs, does not breed the dogs every cycle, is very particular about who buys the puppies, is involved with only one breed, and is very knowledgeable about that breed.

In researching a breeder, take the following steps:

First, Research the breed. Be sure you understand the temperament, congenital defects (likely inherited illnesses), grooming requirements, and exercise needs of the breed. Consider these issues carefully and think about your lifestyle. What breed is truly right for you?

Second, research breeders through breed clubs and rescues. Most breeds have a club in each state. While their list of breeders is not infallible, it's probably a good place to start. Most breeds also have a rescue in most states. Call the rescue or visit the rescue's website to see if any reputable breeders are recommended. You can be sure that if anyone knows the disreputable breeders in the area, rescue groups do! They can at least help steer you away from bad breeders.

Once a breeder is selected, ask them the following questions:

- What is your history with dogs? What made you interested in breeding?
    - The answer should have something to do with loving the breed and wanting to better it. If he is involved in dog-related activities, all the better; it's an indication that he is truly into dogs and not just breeding for money.
- How many dogs do you own? How often do you breed each one?
    - He should only have the number of dogs he can support with individual attention, and the dogs should not be bred excessively.
- What are the congenital defects of the breed? What steps have you taken to decrease those defects?
    - At this point the breeder should rattle off every possible defect and give you an answer that involves screening and testing his breeding dogs. Listen for words like *O.F.A.ed, thyroid, CERF certified,* or *vWD tested*. All of these tests should be familiar to a good breeder. Don't be too impressed with champion bloodlines–they can still carry these genetic defects. Make sure dogs are screened.
- How close do you breed your dog's bloodline?
    - Inbreeding is the most obvious cause of congenital defects. It would be best to make sure your dog comes from dogs who are not closely related.
- Where are the puppies being raised?
    - "In the house" is the best answer-that way the pups are familiar with common household noises.
- How frequently are the puppies handled by humans?

    - The answer should be frequently–you want a puppy who is comfortable with human contact, of course!
- What kind of "tech support" will you give me throughout the life of my dog? Can I call on you with questions in the future?
- What is included in your contract?
    - The contract should include a replacement or refund if the dog develops a congenital ailment, usually throughout the dog's first two years. It should also include a requirement to neuter your pet and to return your pet to the breeder should any unforeseen circumstance arise where you need to relinquish your dog.

You should also expect the breeder to ask you some of the following questions; questions you hopefully have already carefully considered before looking into getting a dog:

- Do you have a fenced yard?
    - This is not necessarily a deal breaker, but you'll need a greater commitment to dog walking if you don't have a fenced yard (which you should be committed to anyway). Many breeders will not consider an invisible fence acceptable–a 6' fence is ideal for most breeds.
- How old are your children (if you have them)? How have they been educated about proper pet care?
- How much money do you expect to spend on your dog each year?
    - This question is asked of people to ensure their ideas about veterinary and feeding costs are realistic. Over the life of a dog, most people spend $500-$1,000 per year (depending on the size of the dog). Costs can escalate if the dog has health problems.
- What will you do with your dog when you go away?
    - A good relationship with a kennel or friend who can dogsit is a must!
- How much time do you plan to leave your dog alone each day?

    - The answer to this question is usually eight hours for working people, which can be hard on a dog. If you need to leave your dog alone for that long, you might consider hiring a dog walker or putting your dog in daycare.
- Will you crate train your dog?
    - There are many different views on crate training, but especially if you have a puppy you need to leave alone for hours at a time, crate training can be very helpful.
- How much time will you exercise your dog each day?
    - The correct answer to this question really depends on the breed. Some breeds only require a few walks a day while others need to get out and run. Please be sure your breed research includes understanding the exercise requirements of the dog.
- Will you spay/neuter your dog?
    - The correct answer to this is dependent on the breeder's policies and whether you're getting a dog for show. In general, there are SO many pets in need of homes and "oopsies" happen very quickly with dogs. Please spay/neuter your new pet!
- The breeder will most likely require a home inspection and references.

Always insist on visiting a breeder's facility and MEETING THE PUPPY'S PARENTS in their living environment. The dogs' environment should not smell and should have ample space for the dogs to exercise and socialize. When visiting, take note of the breeders other dogs (and children, if you ask me!). They should all be well-socialized, friendly, and reasonably calm. (Note: It is possible that the breeder does not have the puppy's father onsite. This is not necessarily a red flag).

Breeder Red Flags: If you encounter the following, run away with your hands in the air, screaming!

- The breeder does not answer the aforementioned questions to your liking.

- The breeder does not have a thorough application process including personal questions.
- The breeder does not have a contract that obviously is meant to protect him, you, and *the puppy.*
- The breeder is breeding multiple breeds of dogs and/or has a very large kennel with hundreds of dogs.
- The breeder breeds his females every cycle.
- The breeder breeds close relatives.
- The breeder is hesitant when you ask to visit.
- The breeder is willing to ship you a dog without meeting you.
- The breeder does not have a policy indicating that you must return the dog if you have to relinquish it.
- The breeder is USDA licensed. (See above section entitled: *What is a puppy mill?*)

Section 3: What is dog rescue?

One type of "dog rescue" is when the firemen come and save a dog who fell into a storm drain. That is not the type of rescue we're talking about here.

Most people know they can adopt a homeless dog from a shelter, but many don't realize there are private rescue groups around the country specializing in dogs of certain breeds, sizes, or circumstances. For example, there are more than 70 rescues dedicated to Golden Retrievers in the United States. These rescue groups take in dogs from a variety of situations:

- Dogs are obtained from puppy mill auctions
- Dogs are surrendered by their owners for a variety of reasons
- Overcrowded shelters give their purebred dogs to rescues
- Animal control turns strays and abused dogs over to rescues

Photo courtesy of Michelle Enebo

Dogs wind up in shelters and rescue groups for all sorts of reasons. Homeowners who have been foreclosed upon often struggle to find dog-friendly rental units and sadly have to relinquish their dogs to rescue. Sometimes dogs lose their owners to illnesses or old age and then find themselves in shelters and rescues. Lively breeds and large breeds are likely to come into rescue after being surrendered by their owners or dumped at shelters. While dogs are occasionally surrendered or abandoned because they are aggressive or sick, that circumstance is much less common than most people believe. The percentage of dogs from puppy mills is higher for rescues that serve small breeds, especially in the Midwest. The point is that many shelter dogs are good dogs who have had a stroke of bad luck.

If I want to adopt, how do I get in touch with a rescue?

One of the easiest ways to find a rescue is to access a website like Petfinder.com, adoptapet.com, or pets911.com. These websites are common places where rescues post available dogs and are generally very easy to search. From there, you can access the rescue's website to learn more about their requirements. Rescues often also have blogs, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts, so if you are familiar with any of these social networking tools you can find rescues there, too. Another way to find a rescue is simply to do an internet search for "(breed of choice) (your state)."

While researching rescues, keep in mind that those outside your immediate area may still adopt to you. It's usually worth an email to find out whether a rescue has transport arrangements to help move dogs around the country. (If you need to arrange your own transport, check out http://www.pilotsnpaws.org.)

What questions should I expect to be asked by the rescue before adopting?

Some rescues are stricter than others with their adoption policies, but in general you can expect to be asked to provide the following information:

- Basic personal contact information
- Information about others living in your household (including pets)
- History regarding dogs

    - Have you had dogs of the particular breed?
    - Were they neutered/spayed?
    - Have you ever abandoned a dog?
    - Have you ever put down a dog?
- Preferences
    - male/female
    - age
    - willing to adopt sick dogs
    - willing to adopt dogs with behavioral issues
    - willing to adopt mixed-breed dogs
    - potty training preference
- Do you own/rent your home?
    - If you rent, you normally have to provide a letter from your landlord stating he allows dogs
- Do you have a fenced yard?
    - Many rescues require a 6' high wood fence, but requirements vary from rescue to rescue
- Are you willing to provide training for your dog?
- How long will your dog be left alone?
- Will you crate train your dog?
    - Most rescues recommend this, especially for puppies
- What are your plans for your dog in case you fall ill or have to take an extended trip?
- Are you willing to travel to pick up your dog?
- When can we schedule a home visit?

The purpose of an extensive list of questions is not only to evaluate you as a potential adopter but also to ensure that you have thoroughly considered your decision to adopt.

How much does it cost to adopt a dog?

Saving dogs costs a rescue *a lot* of money! The rescue I work closely with took in 330 dogs and spent an average of $308 per dog in 2009. That same rescue charges $100 to $375 per dog, depending on age. Each dog who comes into rescue gets a vet visit including an update on vaccines, a spay/neuter (if not already altered), and whatever other medical care is necessary. Some dogs require amputations, cancer treatments, cataract surgeries, and other major medical procedures, and most rescues are more than willing to step up to the plate and take care of it. If you just think of the medical costs you don't have to spend on your dog during the first year because the rescue already took care of them for you, you'll see that adoption fees are minimal in comparison. You might even feel compelled to send additional annual donations… (Hint! Hint! These volunteer-based rescue organizations can't succeed without your help!)

What should you ask of a rescue from which you'd like to adopt?

- How long has your rescue existed?
- Do you disclose your annual operating budget? Do you have paid positions?
    - Especially if the rescue is a 501c3, they are required to disclose their annual revenue and expenses. Rescues are generally completely made up of volunteers, so if someone is profiting off the organization (other than vets!) then you might want to think twice about their motives.
- Do you require me to return my dog if I have to relinquish it for any reason?
    - This contractual clause is one indication that they actually care about the dog's living situation.
- Do you require a home visit?
    - Any reputable rescue will require some type of home visit.
- Do you allow for some kind of trial period?
    - Some rescues will let you do an overnight with the dog before making a decision; others will hold your check for a week or two to ensure your new dog is a good fit.

- Do you only adopt out dogs who are in good health, and will you provide its medical records?
    - Most rescues spay/neuter dogs and make sure they are up on all their shots before rehoming them. They also tend to any medical issues they can and disclose any that might be ongoing.

Dogs of all ages, from puppies to "past their prime," are available through dog rescue organizations. Most rescues provide foster homes for their dogs, which is an advantage for potential adopters. Dogs' personalities tend to unfold after being in a home for a while, so being able to meet them after they have been living in a home is very helpful (as opposed to meeting them in a shelter). When adopting a dog from a foster home you can normally get a better idea of how he would be in your home. You can also find out things like: How is this dog with children? Other dogs? Cats? Squirrels? Does he walk on a leash well? Does he mark? Is he food aggressive? Does he sleep in a dog bed or will he sleep on my head (I prefer mine on my head)? The answer to all of these questions can generally be obtained from foster parents.

As mentioned, many reputable rescues take in dogs regardless of age or illness. They spare no expense in rehabilitating those who can be. Sadly, rescues also face occasional instances when a dog must be put down, which usually include terminal illnesses which cause severe pain or uncontrollable aggression which could result in serious injury or death to other animals or people. These instances are rare, but sometimes difficult decisions must be made.

A note on "kill" and "no kill" shelters

Whether they work at shelters or with rescues organizations, most people involved in rescue have their hearts in the right place. The challenge with shelters, specifically, is that some are so overwhelmed with dogs that they have no choice but to euthanize the ones who have been there for a while (or the ones who prove challenging) to create space for new dogs. These shelters are commonly referred to as "kill" shelters. Of course dog-loving people want to pass legislation in their area to make their shelter a "no-kill" shelter, but sometimes "no-kill" becomes synonymous with "won't take dogs that are old or sick because we'd have to put them

down and that would make us look bad." This creates an even worse situation for dogs in need. (I am by no means implying this is always the case.)

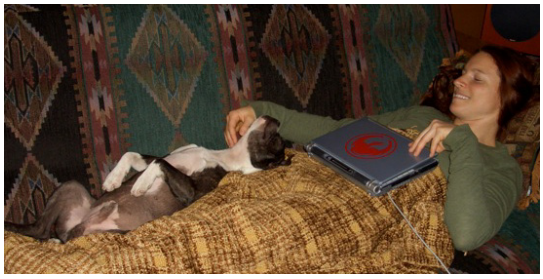
While educational outreach is the only thing that will truly minimize the number of dogs landing in shelters, a temporary panacea is to encourage your local shelters to establish relationships with private rescues in your area. The shelter can then call on these private rescue organizations to take in the dogs who are most likely to be put down. From there these dogs can be rehabilitated in foster care and afforded a second (or third) chance to find a forever home.

Why would I adopt a distressed dog instead of a shiny, new one?

There is something about being human that makes most people inclined to help others in need. To illustrate this point I'm going to tell you a little story about how I came to be where I am with rescue.

It all started when I first thought about getting a dog. I contacted a rescue, saying that I only wanted a young dog who was potty trained and well-behaved. After poking around a bit more I found that my husband really wasn't too keen on getting a dog, so instead I asked the rescue if we should consider fostering. They responded that if my husband didn't want a forever dog, he was certainly not going to be interested in all of the uncertainty that comes with fostering (you never know what you're going to get). So I put the idea out of my head for a week until the rescue called with an emergency – they had a foster dog in my area who had kennel cough and was in a house with other dogs. All of their other foster homes were full – could I take him for a few days? You should have seen the grin on my face. "Oh, honey, how could we not help this poor little guy?"

So my mom and I hopped in the car and drove about twenty minutes to go get "Dozer," a Boston Terrier. Dozer was a wreck-broken tail, crooked spine, damaged eye, ear infection, kennel cough-you name it, he had it. He was my first dog



Lounging with my first foster, Dozer

ever and I was already administering meds! The good news was that he was potty trained and he loved all living things, and after a week of farts (him) and giggles (us), he found the perfect forever home with a family whose children had saved up all of their allowance money to adopt him. That's right about where my addiction to fostering begun.

But I digress-what was the question? Right, why would you adopt a "jacked up" dog when you could get a "perfect" one? Here's why: With a perfect dog you've got nowhere to go but down. Sure, you can take them to obedience class and impress your friends with the way they roll over on command, but chewing a bone or jumping on the couch is most certainly nothing to celebrate. With an "imperfect" dog and some patience, you are given a gift of perpetual small celebrations unique to the experience of rehabilitating another living being.

Don't Kill Bill

My story didn't end with Dozer… I had just moved into my new home when the rescue called and asked if I would foster a dog named "Bill." I said, "Bill? Are you kidding me? He sounds so lame! Who names a dog *Bill*?" But of course I took him anyway.

It turns out Bill had spent the first two years of his life in a cage at a puppy mill and then was picked up by our rescue at an auction. He was a wreck-as dead inside as a living, breathing animal could be. It pains me to think back to how he would just sit in his crate lifelessly, as if to say, "I know you're going to do whatever you want to me anyway, so go ahead. It doesn't matter. I give up." All of the "terror" this Boston had experienced in his life had killed his will to live.

Bill, after being lost in the woods for Three weeks

On that particular day we ended up with two fosters. It's a long story, but it suffices to say that little "Sage" was the Boston most people dream of. She was spunky, friendly, and loving. She was also smart enough to push open our back gate, through which both she and Bill walked without my knowledge. Sage was found immediately, but Bill

decided to hide in a hole in coyote-infested woods. After a few weeks Sage had been adopted, but Bill was still nowhere to be found. That is, until one morning when I checked my voicemail and heard the president of our rescue say, “They found Bill. Call me.”

How ambiguous can you be? I didn’t know if he was alive or dead after THREE WHOLE WEEKS in the woods, but my fingers shook as I dialed her number to find out. Thank goodness he was alive, but he was emaciated and more terrified than ever, with a wound so deep on his arm that you could see muscle. The shelter wasn’t sure if it would be more humane to put him out of his misery or to let me try and rehabilitate him, but luckily they chose the latter. For a month we went to the vet every day to change his bandages, and for three months he was too scared to move.

Each day we carried Bill outside several times to get him to go potty, but for the rest of the time he would just sit in his bed. I started thinking I should just re-home him with an elderly someone who had little activity in his home. But then I hired a trainer and life changed irreversibly for both Bill and me.

Bill is a whole new dog today

The trainer only came three times, and the first time we simply worked on getting Bill to look at me. He wasn’t treat motivated, so waving around food didn’t really help, but with time and patience we started to see a small reaction when I would say his name. This was to be the first of many accomplishments, which is discussed in more detail in the “Rehabilitating a Distressed Dog” section.

Of course my husband and I adopted Bill, and as he slowly “reanimated,” I promised him at least two hours of fun outdoor activities every day to make up for the two years he spent in the puppy mill. As I write we are a year and a half into our relationship, and Bill is almost completely “normal.” No, that’s not quite correct. Bill is more than normal-he’s AMAZING! He’s the most popular dog at the dog park because when he runs

he kicks out his back right leg as if doing a leprechaun jig. His joy is contagious for other dogs and humans alike. Additionally, he's become the best big brother ever for our foster dogs, somehow knowing exactly what they need.

So why would you adopt a distressed dog?

- Because he will know you saved him, and in time you will see he is grateful
- Because he needs help and you have the time and patience to assist him
- Because you, too, want the unique experience of achieving small celebrations with one who had nothing before he had you
- Because you're looking for the best "best friend" in the world

Why wouldn't you adopt a distressed dog?

Adopting a distressed dog who has lived his life in a puppy mill or other equally horrific circumstance is NOT for everyone. If you need instant gratification, are not frequently at home, have small children or a noisy home, or are particularly impatient, adopting puppy mill breeder is probably not for you. Training dog requires time, patience, love, and sensitivity, but rehabilitating a dog requires those traits in abundance. It also takes support from friends and family because you will have days when you want to pull out your hair. But, on the flipside, most people who have adopted puppy mill breeders don't regret it because the dogs' gratitude is so apparent.

What about old dogs? Why would anyone take them?

A common misconception about adopting an older dog is that he will not bond with you. If you are nice to the dog, there is nothing farther from the truth. I have yet to meet any dog who has not bonded with an adopter who has been loving and patient with him. And in fact, many of my older fosters are bonded to me within a day or so, which is obvious by the way they follow me everywhere (cheese does wonders for bonding a dog to you!).

Libby Rose, adopted as an old dog she gave her "mom" almost two wonderful years

Adopting older dogs comes with many benefits. Compared with puppies, they are pretty set in their personalities, so when you meet them, you know exactly who they are going to be. Additionally they are generally calmer and less needy than puppies. Many can be left alone for a while each day and are potty trained, and for the ones that aren't, they often catch on quickly. The downside to adopting an older dog is that he most likely won't be with you as long as a puppy will, but in the end you'll look back and see how every minute with him was special.

How can I help rescue?

Basically you call a rescue and say you'd like to help! Most rescues are in desperate need of fosters, transportation volunteers, website administrators, accountants, lawyers, seamstresses (to make diapers and belly bands for dogs), newsletter editors, adoption coordinators, etc., as the number of dogs coming into rescue is ever increasing.

As far as fostering is concerned, rescues offer varying degrees of training and have different standards for what they expect. In general, if you fit the requirements to adopt a dog, you probably fit the requirements to foster. Rescues need foster homes with/without other dogs, with/without children, and with/without other animals, as individual dogs tend to have unique needs. Additionally, sometimes rescues need to test a dog with children or cats, so it's helpful when they have fosters they can call on that fit diverse profiles.

Fostering takes patience and an ability to "go with the flow," as things don't always turn out as planned. Sometimes the transport is late, sometimes you're told your dog will be potty

trained when he isn't. Before evaluating a dog, the rescue just can't know for sure. A foster needs to be able to adapt and to unconditionally love the furry wreck who is running around peeing on furniture. After all – he doesn't mean it… he just doesn't know any better!

Fosters need to be committed to caring for a dog for a day or a year. Different breeds tend to stay in rescue for different lengths of time, with smaller dogs usually being adopted more quickly than larger dogs. Sometimes as a foster you might get a dog who is sick or old, which can also extend the time it is in foster care. Again, an ability to just "roll with it" is key.

What about the other animals in your home? People who are considering fostering should take a close look at Fluffy and Fido… would they enjoy another animal in the home? The animals already living in a home should be your first priority.

If these sound like situations you could handle, I highly recommend fostering. Nurturing a dog and then finding him the perfect family is tremendously rewarding.

Section 4: I just adopted a distressed dog… Help!

Here is some advice about issues you may come across if you've adopted a distressed dog. Keep in mind that each dog is unique, and the same techniques don't work for everyone. Also remember that I'm not a vet or behavior specialist, I'm just a foster mom who has "been there" with quite a few dogs.

I believe most distressed dogs can learn potty training and basic obedience, and that if they are unsuccessful the reason is usually because their human became impatient and gave up. Training a dog is not usually an overnight endeavor. It takes time, sometimes months, to see results. But most people who are patient enough to see their dog's training through experience significant, lasting results.

If your dog has medical concerns or severe behavioral issues, I suggest contacting a professional for help immediately.

A Slow Introduction

Going into a new home (sometimes only the second the dog has ever been in after his foster home) can be very scary for a distressed dog. The best way to ease this fear is to introduce your new dog to your home slowly. If your dog is most comfortably in his crate, let him stay there for a while with the door open. He'll come out when he's ready. Perhaps for the first few days you can confine your dog to one room and then slowly allow him to explore the rest of the house.

If you have other pets in your home, the introduction might be different. Sometimes other pets make a new home less scary because the new dog feels more comfortable around his own species. Sometimes it makes it worse if the dog is afraid of other dogs. The pets who have been living in the home also must be considered. The best way to introduce a dog to a new dog who is about to enter his home is in neutral territory, like a park. If possible, introduce your dogs outdoors, first.

What about cats? Most won't attack a dog but will instead run and hide. It turns out my cat enjoys sitting on our barstools and swatting at anything that walks by. The dogs quickly learn to steer clear.

You need to build trust with your dog. Basically building trust means having patience and letting your dog come to you on his own terms. It means sitting by his safe spot and talking with him but not being too forward with touching him. It means gentle words and treats-even if your dog isn't treat motivated. Just put a treat in his crate and let him get to it when he is comfortable. Most importantly, building trust means showing your dog strength, proving that you are in charge by exhibiting kindness and confidence in your speech and mannerisms. Keep reading for more details on building confidence and trust.

A Disciplinary Squirt

I find that the best way to train distressed dogs is by using positive reinforcement techniques. This means lots of "Good boy's" and treats, but occasionally a dog is exhibiting a behavior that a firm "No!" or "Ah-ah" (that's my favorite) is just not effective against. This is the

point when I break out my spray bottle full of water. Whether the behavior is eating my cats' food, chasing my cats, humping my dog, excessive barking, or even marking (sometimes), a quick squirt from a water bottle is often very effective. In fact, after a few squirts, most dogs will stop their behavior just upon seeing the water bottle. Dogs aren't stupid…

Be sure to only fill the bottle with water and never spray the dog in the face.

Anxiety Disorders

Did you know that vets often put dogs on the same medications people take for anxiety disorders? After Bill was found in the woods my vet put him on a small dose of anxiety medication. It's tough to say if the medication helped or if it just took time to get Bill to come out of his shell, but either way he was able to get over his anxiety. Here are some more ideas if you have an anxious dog:

- Make sure your dog has a place in your home that they find safe and comfortable, and that they always have access to it.
- Try Bach "Rescue Remedy." It's an herbal tincture you can get at any natural foods store, and for some dogs it is magical. I just put a few drops into Bill's water each time I refill it. After the first week of doing this I noticed him prancing around the house more and shaking less. He definitely seemed braver and calmer.
- Try plug-in calming pheromones. This is something I haven't done but I've heard that it helps in a similar way that Rescue Remedy does.
- Contact your vet to discuss anti-anxiety medications if the anxiety is severe.

Separation Anxiety

Some dogs get very anxious when their guardian leaves the home or when they are separated for any reason. One way to help your dog get over this fear is to slowly familiarize them with the idea that you leave and then return. Here's what experts recommend:

- Collect your belongings as though you are leaving, touch the door, but then don't leave.

- Repeat several times a day until your dog is more comfortable with this idea. Then move on to actually opening the door and stepping outside for a few seconds.
- Again, repeat several times a day until your dog in comfortable with the idea. Then begin increasing the time you're away.
- Eventually your dog should get the idea that you'll always come back. Be sure to make your departure and return a non-event, only fawning over your dog long after you've been home, to convince him that it's no big deal. You can, however, give your dog a treat before you leave.

Crate Training

Honestly, if you adopted an ex-puppy mill breeder, he is probably crate trained. The challenge may be to get him out of the crate! For these types of dogs I caution people to take cues from their dog about whether crating is beneficial or detrimental. With Bill, he wouldn't move anywhere on his own and it was too hard to get him out of the crate, so we just took away the top of the crate. After a while we transitioned him to a dog bed. He hasn't seen the inside of a crate since, but he's a very calm, well adjusted dog, who doesn't need to be crated when we leave.

Some of our other ex-puppy mill breeder fosters thrive in their crates. We make sure their crate is big enough for them to stand up and move around a little and that there is soft bedding and towels inside. We are sure to give the dog treats for entering the crate and we always leave a bone in the crate so the dog doesn't get too bored. Crates, especially when it comes to potty training or separation anxiety issues, can be a very helpful training tool and many dogs enjoy having their own, safe, personal "hobbit" home.

Getting to Know You

There is nothing more disheartening than getting your new dog home, only to find out that he wants nothing to do with you. Some experts recommend that the fastest way to get your dog used to you is to put his leash on him and loop it to your belt. That way he's got to follow you around the house and get used to being around you.

Unreasonable Fears (of humans, other dogs, children, etc.)

One of the most common issues distressed dogs have to overcome are fears, be they fearful of new experiences of fearful due to past experiences. The first step to helping your dog overcome his fears is to gain his trust and help develop confidence.

First, use his name a lot. Names are very powerful and hearing them can boost self-esteem. Be consistent with the words you say when you talk to your dog and always use his name. For example, my daily conversations with my dog go something like this:

- Mealtime: Bill, want some food? Food, Bill?
- Dogpark time: Bill, wanna go dogpark? Go play? Dogpark?
- Hiking time: Bill, wanna go hiking? Hiking Bill?
- Treat time: Bill, wanna treat?
- Sit: Bill, sit (always accompanied with a flip of my hand)
- Lay down: Bill, lay down (always accompanied with a tap on the floor)
- Stay: Bill, stay (always accompanied with showing him the palm of my hand)

You get the idea… I always use his name, and I am consistent with my words and actions.

Once your dog trusts you, it's time to let him begin to make some decisions. One of the best things I did for Bill was start taking him to the dog park. At first he was terrified and just sat at the gate. It was hard for me to ignore him while I talked with the other guardians at the park, but after a week Bill started to join in the fun. He started by sniffing other dogs, and after a few months he was even sniffing humans.

When the park wasn't crowded, Bill and I would work on commands. This was the beginning of my teaching Bill to make decisions, which is one of the best ways to improve confidence in dogs. What I would do was to start on one end of the park, asking Bill to "sit." Once seated, I'd ask him to stay (palm of my had facing him) and slowly walk backwards. I'd continue saying "Bill, stay" as I'd take a few steps back. Then I would say, "Okay, Bill come!" (Okay is our release word – discussed below). Bill would gleefully come running to me. Bill was

more game motivated than treat motivated, so I turned it into a “red light/green light” type of game with the “Stay” and “Come” commands. This has been very effective.

Once I was confident Bill would listen to me, I started taking him hiking. At first I would just let him drag his leash in case I needed to catch him quickly, but it wasn’t long before I had complete confidence in Bill’s recall ability. What’s more, each time we went hiking Bill’s confidence would grow. He loved being able to run free and then being rewarded with praise when he returned upon my calling him. I’ve used this technique with many of my fosters and have seen similar results multiple times.

As far as dealing with specific fears is concerned, the key is to slowly introduce your dog to those fears in a safe environment. For example, Bill has always been terrified of children. I have a friend who has a five-year-old and an eight-year-old who have been brought up with dogs their whole lives. My friend has done a great job teaching her kids how to properly approach dogs (always palm up, petting under the chin) and how to sit and let the really fearful ones come to them. Of course this is where I took Bill. Our first visit to her home was when the kids weren’t home because I knew he would be uncomfortable just being there. We did that a few more times, and then I started bringing him there when the kids were home. At first he was very uncomfortable, so the kids would just sit near him, not making eye contact, seeing if he wanted to approach them. He didn’t, so we shifted into a little higher gear. The kids actually approached him and put their hands out for him to sniff, which he did. Eventually they were even able to pet him under his chin. We repeated this for many weeks and now, finally, Bill will approach children with curiosity instead of fear.

Sometimes a dog will have fears they will never overcome, like a fear of vacuums and fireworks. The best we can do in that situation is to accommodate them by giving them a safe place to go when the scary situation arises.

The WRONG WAY to try and help a dog to overcome fears is to coddle him. By picking him up when he is afraid you are reinforcing that fear. By getting upset that your dog is upset,

you are again reinforcing that fear. The best thing you can do is to be strong, show your dog that you're not afraid, and in a calm voice tell him that it's okay.

Thresholds

If you adopted a puppy mill dog, try and keep in mind that he has never been in a house. I've read stories about dogs who wouldn't pass through doorways or refused to step over a power cord to a computer that was running across the floor. As your dog begins to trust you, helping him to overcome these fears will become easier. Eventually you can make some of these things into a game.

One of the most effective ways to get dogs over these fears is to bring other, well-adjusted dogs into your home (if your dog is amicable to other dogs). Even if the dogs don't play, your dog will benefit just by watching how the dog moves around your house. Actions like going through a doorway become much less scary when a dog sees others doing it.

If having another dog around doesn't help or is not possible for you, you might want to try the "leash your dog to you" technique discussed earlier in this chapter.

Stairs

Another common fear for dogs who are new to the great indoors is stairs. Most have never ascended or descended a flight of stairs in their lives. If you look from their perspective (especially from that of a small dog), you could see how stairs would be scary!

One way I've helped a dog over a fear of stairs was with his favorite toy. Going into my yard I have one step down. He never wanted to go out because of the step, but he had a squeaky toy he just couldn't resist. I got him excited by playing fetch indoors with his squeaky, and continued to play as I opened the back door. When he was really excited, I tossed the toy into the yard. Guess who went flying out the door before he even remembered there was a step? Yup, my fearful dog! We continued to play the game, and then I started placing the toy on our indoor stairs. Before long he was up and down the stairs without a problem.

Potty Training

Regardless of age or history, most dogs can be potty trained. Sometimes it takes days, sometimes months, but perseverance usually pays off. Personally I haven't had much success with puppy pads, so I've taken a different approach.

Diapers (for girls) and belly bands (for boys) are helpful in saving your floors and furniture when potty training. If you're not familiar with belly bands, they are elastic bands of waterproof material into which you insert a maxi-pad before wrapping around a boy dog's mid-section. They usually Velcro together around the dog's back. A diaper is usually for females and is secured with Velcro as well. Diapers and belly bands should not be used as a substitute for potty training but rather as a supplement for potty training.

Block off an area in your home where you can see the dog at all times. Let the dog out every hour. Accidents in your home should be minimized. The important thing is that you catch the dog in the act, give him a firm, "No!" and take him outside to the grass. You must be very diligent about this process, but after a few days of this you should be making progress.

During this time you'll probably want to take off work or work from home if you can. If that's not an option for you, you should crate your dog whenever you're not home. Dogs are unlikely to potty where they sleep.

Marking

Marking is a completely different kind of potty training. Dogs mark to assert dominance. I remember one foster who marked my mom's pillow when my parents were watching him for me. I couldn't help but laugh… That is, until he extended the same courtesy to me!

I'm not going to lie to you, this is the hardest kind of potty training to break and not many things work. First, get yourself a belly band or diaper (yes, females sometimes mark, too) so you can at least save your furniture. Next, make sure your dog is in your sight at all times. As soon as he lifts his leg, give him the abrupt "Ah-ah" and get him refocused on doing something else. If you're unable to restrict your dog to the area you're in by closing doors or using a baby gate, you might want to try the "leash your dog to you" technique discussed earlier in this

chapter. Whatever you do, be prepared to stay on top of your dog in your home for a while. Breaking a dog from a marking habit can take months if you can do it at all.

Poop Eating

Yes, it's gross. In fact, if you ask me it's one of the nastiest habits a dog can have. Unfortunately it is a habit exhibited by many ex-puppy mill dogs because they were confined to a small cage that they wanted to keep clean. Another reason for poop-eating is that a dog isn't getting enough nutrients from his food.

The way to stop poop-eating is to always be there when your dog is pooping. After he poops, shoo him away from the poop with a firm "No!" (Be sure **not** to say "No!" when he's pooping because he'll think you don't want him to poop!) You can even give him a treat for not poop-eating. This, coupled with a nutritious diet, should decrease the amount of poop your dog is eating.

I find stopping a dog from poop-eating to be very difficult because it requires me to not just let him out in the backyard and come back for him in a few minutes. I've got to be standing over a poop-eater at all times when he is outside. It's a pain, but a week or two of diligent "No's" and a healthy diet goes a long way.

Walking on a Leash

When Bill first came to live with me, going for a walk was like going out on a battlefield. He would "duck and cover" at every opportunity, flattening himself to the ground and refusing to get up again. My husband would stand him back up and hope he would walk again, but we quickly found out we were being ineffective. My trainer taught me that the best thing I could do for Bill was to face the opposite way, say, "Bill, let's go," and slowly start pulling on the leash and walking away. At first I thought he was crazy, but it turns out he was right! Bill resisted but eventually got up and started walking. Time after time we would repeat this until weeks later, Bill no longer flattened himself to the ground.

Another issue was that Bill pulled when he would actually walk. The trainer taught me to turn him around, saying, "This way," and then walking a few steps in the opposite direction.

Once he was walking nicely we would turn back around, repeat, “This way,” and then continue in our original direction.

One thing that Bill and I always do on our walks is stop at every corner. If he ever is off leash, I most definitely don’t want him running into the street! To ensure that doesn’t happen, we practice stopping at every corner each time we walk. Bill sits, and it isn’t until I say, “Okay,” that he is allowed to get up and cross the street. Sure, this makes our walks a little choppy, but I feel much safer knowing that my dog is disinclined to run into the street.

Leash Aggression

I find determining whether a dog is leash aggressive or just plain aggressive to be challenging at times. If a dog is aggressive on leash, the last thing I want to do is to let him off leash to hurt another dog! However, I’ve found more often than not that dogs are much more aggressive when on-leash than when off-leash.

With my leash aggressive dogs, I’ve tested them with a neutral dog to see if it really just has to do with the leash. Our dog park has a small enclosed area where smaller dogs play. I take leash aggressive dogs there when no other dogs are around and borrow a friend’s larger, very calm dog. I then see how the dogs do together.

I had one dog who would growl when other dogs approached. I stayed near him and every time he’d begin growling I’d give an “ah-ah” sound, which was very effective. He saw that I had the situation under control and was able to relax enough to sniff the dog. From there they became friends.

A Final Word on Training

There are enough books out there about dog training from people who are professional trainers that I’m not going to go into the details of basic obedience training. My intent here was simply to cover training challenges that are somewhat unique to distressed dogs.

I highly recommend hiring a trainer who uses positive reinforcement techniques to visit with you and your dog. I’ve heard people say, “But my dog won’t even listen to me! Why would

he listen to a trainer?" Sadly those people are missing the point. The idea is to bring a trainer into your relationship with your dog so that the trainer can teach YOU how to better communicate with your dog.

If you expect a trainer to walk in and train your dog for you, you might want to reconsider getting a dog in the first place. Training is a big part of the bonding experience. Dogs want to learn, and they need to know that you are the "pack leader." By teaching your dog commands and using those commands, you'll be reinforcing your status in your dog's mind, and your dog will be happier knowing that you have every situation under control.

About the Mill Dog Manifesto

This eBook is offered at no charge to help as many people as possible understand the dog breeding industry and make good choices about their family pets. If you found the *Mill Dog Manifesto* informative and would like to help us continue raising awareness about dog rescue and adoption, please consider making a donation or buying some of our other books at http://happytailsbooks.com/buy.htm.

While we are not a 501(c)3 non-profit at this time, Happy Tails Books is an organization that produces educational, entertaining books about adopted dogs and gives every penny we can back to dog rescue. Your money will be passed along to dog rescue organizations and used to continue our efforts to minimize the number of animals who are suffering at the hands of human greed and ignorance.

Section 5: Resources

- Pet adoption websites:
  - http://www.adoptapet.com/
  - http://www.pets911.com/
  - http://www.petfinder.com/
- Puppy Mill Awareness Day – annual events to raise awareness about puppy mills
  - http://www.awarenessday.org/
- Humane Society Puppy Mill Information Website
  - http://stoppuppymills.org/
- Humane Society Puppy Mill Frequently Asked Questions:
  - http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/puppy_mills/qa/puppy_mill_FAQs.html
- Puppy Mill Rescue – nonprofit dog rescue specializing in puppy mill survivors
  - http://www.puppymillrescue.com/
- ASPCA puppy mill information
  - http://www.aspca.org/fight-animal-cruelty/puppy-mills/
- Puppy Mill Dog's Voice – educational website about puppy mills and pet stores
  - http://www.puppymilldogsvoice.org/
- United Against Puppy Mills – website covering zoning, legislation, and public awareness
  - http://www.unitedagainstpuppymills.org/
- Wisconsin puppy mill project – working to end WI puppy mills through education
  - http://www.nowisconsinpuppymills.com/
- Prisoners of Greed – puppy mill education
  - http://www.prisonersofgreed.org/
- National Mill Dog Rescue – dog rescue specializing in puppy mill survivors
  - http://www.milldogrescue.org/
- Last Chance for Animals – working to reform pet stores
  - http://www.milldogrescue.org/
- Pet Store Cruelty – organization raising awareness about pet stores
  - http://www.petstorecruelty.org/
- Don't Kill Bill – my blog about my adventures in rehabilitating foster dogs
  - http://happytailsbooks.com/blog.htm
- Advocacy blog - the HTB blog featuring interesting interviews with animal advocates
  - http://happytailsbooks.com/advocacy.htm
- Best Friends – information about USDA inspections
  - http://network.bestfriends.org/9045/news.aspx
- Direct access to USDA inspections
  - http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/inspection_list.shtml

Please Participate in Happy Tails Books' Dog Rescue Efforts

Happy Tails Books™ was created to help support animal rescue efforts by showcasing the love, happiness, and joy adopted dogs have to offer. With the help of animal rescue groups, Happy Tails Books collects stories from people who have adopted dogs and then compiles them into breed-specific books that entertain and educate readers. Happy Tails Books™ donates a significant portion of proceeds back to dog rescue groups.

To submit a story or learn about other books Happy Tails Books™ publishes, please visit our website at http://happytailsbooks.com.

---

[i] http://www.prisonersofgreed.org/USDA.html
[ii] http://michelle2005.wordpress.com/2008/12/04/i-rescued-a-human-today/
[iii] http://www.puppymillrescue.com/what_is_a_puppy_mill.htm
[iv] http://www.awarenessday.org/national/pm_info.html
[v] http://www.akc.org/about/faq.cfm?page=10
[vi] http://daawgs.rescuegroups.org/info/display?PageID=4209
[vii] http://www.puppymillrescue.com/puppymill.htm
[viii] Photo courtesy of MidAmerica Boston Terrier Rescue
[ix] http://stoppuppymills.org/frequently_asked_questions.html#2_Are_there_any_federal_laws_that_regula