

Dog to the Rescue

If you watch the news or read the paper it's quite easy to become discouraged about how people treat each other. Compassion, understanding and tolerance seem to be in short supply. But someone always seems to come along just in time to restore my faith in the human heart.

My wife and I are "Dog People". We don't really own a dog; we just share a home with an 11-year-old Jack Russell Terrier named Molly. Now, we love Molly very much, but she does have a few quirks. She will go from calm, sweet and loving to spinning around in one place for no apparent reason, to staring at the last known location of a lizard for hours, then straight to her "Sling-Blade" character who will attack a dog the size of a horse or the top of our friend Cheryl's head (sorry again Cheryl). So, naturally my wife Lori and I wanted another dog... not a different one mind you...ANOTHER one.

Lori wanted to look for a rescue dog, and I thought this was great until I realized we weren't going to get a large dog that always carried Brandy in a little keg around his neck all the time. An internet search revealed dozens of individuals that, out of the kindness of their hearts, rescued dogs that were scheduled to be euthanized. Some of these dogs had been through unimaginable experiences, from abandonment on the side of the road to being used as training targets for fighting dogs. The people that rescue these dogs most often use their own money and homes to find good families, inspecting the homes before allowing an adoption.

That's how we met Winston, a good-looking 12-year-old Jack Russell mix. His rescuer brought him to us from the other coast so we could see if "psycho"... I mean Molly, could tolerate another dog in "her" house. Winston's previous owners were forced to move away without him after their home was foreclosed on. He was left alone and afraid at the animal shelter. His rescuer said that he seemed constantly afraid of being abandoned and that he never played or chewed on toys. We found him to be a kind, gentle, cuddly old fellow whose "dog breath" could take the paint off of the walls. Despite the "dogatosis", Winston has a new home with us. His rescuer asked for nothing. She handed us his papers, gave Winston a hug and then she left. It was a simple, yet emotionally powerful demonstration of kindness. It makes me wonder ... Why do our hearts go out to animals so readily and yet, it's so difficult for some of us to do the same for our fellow humans?

Winston, the dog who never played, has now worn out two stuffed rabbits and is playing like a puppy! Lori and I watch him sleep peacefully in his bed and realize that the fuzzy dog with the bad breath knows what's important. He's safe at home with people that love him.