



### **Settling In - (Carmen & David Cole - <http://www.havoc-to-harmony.co.uk/>)**

At the best of times bringing a rescue dog into your home for the first time is a HUGE upheaval for the dogs. Where am I? Where do I stand? Who is the leader of this pack? Can I trust these humans? Am I staying? Aren't these the sort of questions YOU would be asking? Well.... Your new dog is!

Dogs are Pack animals with a very strong survival instinct, and the key to this survival is either to be led, or to lead. That's it, their lives depend on it and when they arrive they will be looking for clear leadership otherwise they will take on the job themselves. If your new dog doesn't get clear signals in a way THEY understand that it is you not they who are Leaders of the Pack, then they will take on the job. That's when problems arise that are perceived as 'bad behaviour' when actually all your dog is trying to do is a job to the best of their ability in a world they don't understand!

As animal lovers the first thing we want to do is hold them close, comfort them and say 'you'll never be hurt or hungry again', to shower them with affection and try to make up for all the bad things that must have happened in their past. To invite all your friends and relatives to meet your new addition and show them how wonderful they are.

Ok.. How would you like it if you arrived at a strange place with strange people and everyone stared at you and tried to hug and cuddle you! I know I'd freak out.

Don't bring them straight into your home, bring them into the garden and wait for them to toilet, then praise them and you've started on a positive note. Let them find their way around the house and don't shout if they get something they're not meant to have, call them gently and offer them something better (mmm chicken). If you have a very large house it can be a little overwhelming all that space so limit it for your new dog initially and then slowly allow them into the areas which are ok to be in. Don't approach your new dog, call them to you and if they choose not to come then leave them be, they're not ready yet.

Give your new dog space, give it time, don't smother them, they need time to make up their minds that you are in fact not a threat and a good thing to have in their lives. Keep to your normal routine, if you take a couple of weeks off then its going to be a huge change for them when you suddenly go back to work. Practice leaving and don't say 'goodbye' to them when you do, simply leave

the house for 2 minutes then walk back in and don't pay any attention to them till they leave you alone. THEN wait for five minutes and allow them to relax then call them over with a nice treat. Practice this as often as you can during the day extending the time you leave the house. A nice easy way to remember this is 'don't say goodbye and don't say hello'

Eat first, pack leaders ALWAYS eat first but that doesn't mean you have to eat a full meal before you feed your dog. Simply prepare their food and leave it up on the counter, then eat a biscuit or a cracker or a piece of fruit, just something small before you put their food down. NO teasing just quietly eat what you've got then put their food down and walk away. Leave them in peace to eat and when they walk away from their bowls pick it up, even if there is food left in it and then nothing till next meal. Don't pretend to eat! they know when you're trying to fool them because they can smell it! And you don't have to pretend to eat from their bowls either, they just need to see you eat first!

Trust is earned and if you allow them to decide for themselves when the time is right, you have a friend for life!



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