

Trust - A Deadly Disease

There is a deadly disease stalking your dog. A hideous, stealthy thing just waiting its chance to steal your beloved friend. It is not a new disease, or one for which there inoculations. The disease is called trust.

You knew before you ever took your Greyhound home that it could not be trusted. The people who provided you with this precious animal warned you, drummed it into your head. A newly rescued racer may steal off counters, destroy something expensive, chase cats, and must never be allowed off his lead!

When the big day finally arrived, heeding the sage advice, you escorted your dog to his new home, properly collared and tagged, the lead held tightly in your hand. At home the house was "doggie proofed." Everything of value was stored in the spare bedroom, garbage stowed on top of the refrigerator, cats separated, and a gate placed across the door to the living room. All windows and doors had been properly secured and signs placed in strategic points reminding all to "CLOSE THE DOOR"

Soon it becomes second nature to make sure the door closes a second after it was opened and that it really latched. "DON'T LET THE DOG OUT" is your second most verbalized expression. (The first is NO!) You worry and fuss constantly, terrified that your darling will get out and a disaster will surely follow. Your friends comment about who you love most, your family or the dog. You know that to relax your vigil for a moment might lose him to you forever.

And so the weeks and months pass, with your Greyhound becoming more civilized every day, and the seeds of trust are planted. It seems that each new day brings less mischief, less breakage. Almost before you know it your racer has turned into an elegant, dignified friend.

Now that he is a more reliable, sedate companion, you take him more places. No longer does he chew the steering wheel when left in the car. And darned if that cake wasn't still on the counter this morning. And, oh yes, wasn't that the cat he was sleeping with so cozily on your pillow last night? At this point you are beginning to become infected, the disease is spreading its roots deep into your mind.

And then one of your friends suggests obedience. You shake your head and remind her that your dog might run away if allowed off the lead, but you are reassured when she promises the events are held in a fenced area. And, wonder of wonders, he did not run away, but came every time you called him!

All winter long you go to weekly obedience classes. After a time you even let him run loose from the car to the house when you get home. Why not, he always runs straight to the door, dancing a frenzy of joy and waits to be let in. Remember, he comes every time he is called. You know he is the exception that proves the rule. (And sometimes, late at night, you even let him slip out the front door to go potty and then right back in.) At this point the disease has taken hold, waiting only for the right time and place to rear its ugly head.

Years pass--it is hard to remember why you ever worried so much when he was new. He would never think of running out the door left open while you bring in