

Be Right Back! Podcast with Julie Naismith

Episode 032 Transcript – 5 Steps To Helping Your New Rescue Get Over His Fear Of Being Alone

<https://julienaismith.com/episode-32/>

Well, hello there and welcome to another episode of the Fixing Separation Anxiety podcast. I'm your host, Julie Naismith. And this week, well, if you have a dog who you've recently adopted, who you got from a shelter or a rescue or a foster organization, then you need to tune in. Because if your rescue dog isn't settling in, is struggling when you leave, this episode is for you. I'm going to share my top five tips for helping your rescue dog get over his anxiety at being left.

But before we dive in, let me tell you about my book, Be Right Back, because Be Right Back is being bought by tons of owners and so many of them are getting results by following the training that I outline in Be Right Back. So if you haven't grabbed your copy yet, you need to do so. Head over to Amazon, read the reviews, check them out, because I think you're going to find this book is just what you're looking for if you're struggling to know where to start with training, how to craft a training plan, what to say to your friends and family who think you're crazy for doing this. So head over to Amazon where you can find Be Right Back, my brand new book.

So let's dive into this week's episode.

So tell me, have you adopted a dog recently or maybe not so recently, only to find out that they aren't settling in quite as you'd hoped, not quite as you'd imagined? Well, stay tuned because we're talking about how to get your rescue dog, how to get that newly adopted dog of yours to be comfortable and happy, home alone. Okay, so let's talk about dogs with adopted dogs who aren't quite settling in. One thing I think that immediately springs to mind, if you have a dog that you've rescued or adopted, you immediately come to the conclusion and then they're not settling in. You immediately conclude, well, maybe that's just a thing. Maybe rescue dogs, adopted dogs are never going to settle in. Maybe that's just more common for dogs with an unknown history or a difficult or problematic history to have separation anxiety.

So do rescued or adopted dogs have more of a tendency to have separation anxiety than other dogs? Dogs from a breeder, for example. There is some data which seems to suggest that if a dog has been adopted later in life, they are more prone, a little bit more likely to have separation anxiety. However, we need to unpick that and reflect. Does a dog get adopted or given up or surrendered because they have separation anxiety and the owners can't cope? Or was it the process of moving homes, of getting a new family? Did that actually cause the separation anxiety? And it can be difficult to tell, and here's why. Okay, so back to that point. Are dogs who have been adopted, do they have separation anxiety? Is that why they were relinquished or did the relinquishment cause the separation anxiety? If you think about dogs who are relinquished to a shelter, when an owner comes in, they will be asked, why are you relinquishing this dog?

Some surveys suggest that owners like to conceal the reason. Other surveys suggest that owners are fairly transparent.

So it's kind of a bit mixed as to whether owners are totally upfront about their dog's condition or not. And you can kind of see why if you are relinquishing a dog, you might not be totally honest about your dog's condition. But I'm not saying by any means that owners who relinquish their dogs lie about their dogs because oftentimes with separation anxiety, what we see is that owners don't always know. They haven't had the note from neighbors, they haven't been aware that their dog barking all day is anything unusual. Remember that not everybody works out that a dog who destroys when they are at home has separation anxiety. So I'm sure there are dogs that are going into shelters or going into a rescue organization who have separation anxiety and the owners just don't know about it. There are probably some dogs going into a foster rescue or shelter who have separation anxiety, but the owners are being a bit cagey about it. And then we may have dogs who do become anxious at being left because of the change in situation. Either kennel life has stressed them out or just changing homes has caused stress. So changing homes can be a big factor in a dog developing separation anxiety. So it's hard to say whether dogs are much more prone if they've gone through that and what's causing it. Is it cause or is it affect where they relinquish for their anxiety or did the relinquishment cause anxiety? Anyway? It is what it is. If you have a dog you've adopted and it has separation anxiety, all of that kind of doesn't matter now because the dog is in front of you and you're trying to work with the separation anxiety.

So let me talk about my top five tips. The first thing is don't panic. Tip number one I know it sounds obvious, but don't panic just because in those first few nights or first few weeks, even your dog doesn't seem to be settling. Goes without saying, and I know you know this, but this is a whole new different environment for your dog. So it isn't really surprising if your dog seemed unsettled and weirded out. However, there's also kind of a gut feel reaction that I'm sure you've had where you think, yeah, but I feel like this is going on a bit too long. And that's when you then go to number two.

My tip number two. So if you've got a dog who doesn't seem to be settling and you are just starting to think, no, this seems like it's not kind of just normal adjusting. So tip number two, continue to give them time. And in that time, don't let your dog don't leave your dog to howl it out or bark it out or chew it out thinking that it will resolve and your dog will settle in, because all the adopted dogs eventually settle in. So if you have a suspicion that your dog isn't settling, the answer isn't to force your dog to settle by leaving them to get on with it. Go gently with them. Test out some absences and just see how they deal. Don't force them into long absences that they are not yet comfortable with.

And then number three, start some home alone training. I would love it if with puppies, adopted dogs, any dog that's new to our home, we prioritize home alone training in the way that we prioritize house training. Even with five year old rescue dogs who we've been told are completely house trained, we're all a bit nervous when they first come home, aren't we? We're all a bit watch them, don't let them out of our sight. Let's make sure that they are truly house

trained so we don't take house training for granted, nor should we take home alone training for granted. Dogs are naturally social. They love being with us. Most dogs are disappointed when we leave, if not anxious. So I really wish that on the list of things that we have to do when we bring a dog home, I wish on that list we had home alone training. And what does that look like? It means gradually building up the time that your dog can handle. It means that first day you get your dog, you don't leave them for even half an hour. I probably would say even less than that. Test out, see if your dog's okay. Leave them for seconds, and then minutes, and then multiple minutes. Go easy on them. Gradually show them that this is their new home, that you go and you come back and that it's safe and that they are here and that they are going to settle and love it. But don't take for granted that they are going to be okay. Teach them how to be home alone.

Then the fourth thing, although I've said start home alone training and don't expose them to too much alone time. Don't throw them in at the deep end. I do want you to balance time with them and time without them. One thing that can definitely happen with newly adopted dogs is their world. Because it's been turned upside down, their world is made better when they make a connection with one or two really significant people. Some dogs, when they're new to a home, will attach to one or two people, but really strongly in not a very helpful way, in a way that actually stops you feeling like you're ever going to be able to leave this dog. So I want you to comfort the dog, be there for your newly adopted dog, but don't do that at the expense of other people getting involved, even if that's friends, even if that's daycare or dog walker. I don't want you to be the sole focus when you first adopt. Now, if you've already gone through the issue of hyper attachment, your dog has latched on to you. You're the only person that will do and it's very common. Don't think you've done anything wrong. I want you to focus on building out their circle of trust.

So that's my tip number five. Use friends, family, dog walkers, daycare people, get other people involved in fun and care so that gradually your dog realizes it's not all about you. Get them comfortable with a wider circle of people so that the pressure is off you. And then when you are training, you know that all the other times that you're not training, you can suspend absences. And your dog's not going to be over threshold just because they're at daycare. Because remember, if they're really super attached to you, if they are not with you, they're over threshold. So work on expanding their circle of trust so that when they're not with you, they're doing fine. The key thing about all of this is time and patience. Time and patience. Patience in the training, patience in the way you gradually teach them to be home alone. Time and patience. And it's true for any issue that your newly adopted dog might have, time and patience are going to be the key. And remember, if you're thinking about getting an adopted dog, if you've just adopted a dog, lots of adopted dogs, probably most adopted dogs settle happily in and never show any long-term signs of anxiety. So don't panic. Don't let this thought, the thought of a rescue dog with separation anxiety put you off. Do know that most dogs will eventually learn to settle in your new home. And by the way, thank you for adopting. And thank you for thinking of adopting.

Well, that's it from me this week. Thank you so much for listening. I know you have a ton of options when it comes to listening, so I really, really appreciate you tuning in. Now if you're liking

my podcast, I would love it if you'd head over to the Apple Podcast store and rate and review the podcast. That would mean so much. Meanwhile, don't forget to check out my book on Amazon. The book is Be Right Back. Or you can just go straight to this link and I've linked to it in the show notes. [MyBook.to/BeRightBack](https://www.mybook.to/BeRightBack), that's [MyBook.to/BeRightBack](https://www.mybook.to/BeRightBack). All right, happy training and I look forward to seeing you online somewhere soon. Bye for now.