

Why Adopting a Rescue Dog is a Good Idea

Each year millions of innocent dogs and cats are tortured, neglected, abandoned and abused. These “castoffs” or “strays struggle to survive under stressful and often, horrific circumstances – alone and at the mercy of the elements – without food or water – without the care or aid of human beings – without love, compassion – and without hope of companionship, friendship, help or support from people. Ultimately, these animals end up in municipal animal shelters or welfare organizations, and if they are too weak, ill or in any way display aggressive behavior (keep in mind that they are terrified and traumatized in their new environment), they will be euthanised.

Some of the animals in animal shelters or rescue organizations have been born and raised in puppy mills and never experienced life outside a crate. Others are the inadvertent victims of greedy and irreputable backyard breeders. Others have been someone’s family members and have been surrendered to an animal welfare organization or shelter because of various reasons (i.e., divorce, separation, relocation, financial loss and so on) that we may never comprehend.

There are many reasons to adopt a rescue dog rather than purchasing one from a breeder or pet store. Many people assume that if they buy a dog from either of these sources, it will be healthier and sounder. This is a misconception, as many dogs sold in pet stores come from puppy mills where, until they are sold, are kept in deplorable conditions, confined in crates piled upon each other, fed inadequate diets, given dirty or contaminated water, and provided with little, if any veterinary care. Having adopted many rescued puppy mill dogs myself, I have experienced firsthand the many serious health and behavioral issues these poor dogs encounter.

Many people assume that if they adopt a dog from a shelter, there must be something wrong with it. This is not true at all. Many of the dogs that end up in shelters are there simply because their human owners have been ignorant, cruel, lazy, irresponsible and neglectful. They regard their dog as chattel rather than as a sentient, loyal and loving friend and family member. They have not been willing or able to provide the dog with attention, interaction, socialization or obedience training, and have not treated the animal with the respect, appreciation and love he, deserves. In many cases, the dogs surrendered to shelters have been the loving and loyal members of a family and now find themselves not only in an unfamiliar environment but restrained in a “cell” or kennel with many other frightened, barking, growling, anxious, yipping and howling dogs. Imagine the stress and terror they must feel!

There are many advantages to adopting a rescue dog. Firstly, and most importantly, you are saving the life of a sentient creature who is in desperate need of a loving home. Innocent and vulnerable, he depends upon human beings for her care and well being and will learn to trust and love his “guardians.” Secondly, it is very fulfilling to save a life and watch it blossom and flourish with love, care, appreciation and respect. Thirdly, rescue dogs have the ability to lift your spirits as well as improve the quality and increase the longevity of your life. The health benefits associated with adopting a companion

animal like a dog are many and scientifically substantiated. They benefit both our physical and emotional health. Thirdly, a rescued dog knows he has been “saved” and is grateful, loyal and unconditionally loving. He is eager and content to become a beloved member of your family.

Adopting a rescue dog may require more time, attention, effort and patience from an adopter than a dog that has not been abused or neglected. However, the joy and gratification to be derived from saving a dog in need are boundless.