



Foster Bootcamp

Dealing with a Bratty Bully

From the Bad Rap Blog: badrap-blog.blogspot.com

I snapped this not-so-nice photo of a stressed little boy-dog when things were at their worst for him a few days ago. I want to remember this moment.



He didn't come from a cruelty case. He's a locally rescued dog who's still unwinding from several weeks of Good Intention Overload. Let me tellya! His original rescuer didn't know it at the time, but by taking a little never-had-nothing orphan and then lavishing heaps of freebies on him - free affection, free praise, free treats and snuggle time in her bed - she created the most insufferable BRAT.

Terrifically-Spoiled dog had lots of love on tap but no rules and not a leader in sight. His baby brain couldn't handle the freedom, the excitement, the non-stop vending machine of Life's biggest party. So, like a triple-latte-tanked teenager with a paw full of mom's credit cards, he (understandably) made all kinds of bad decisions, which got him ejected from one foster situation to another to another...to another! All told, this dog was said to be in eight or nice different addresses in ten weeks time. Just imagine.

It seems his big eyes, tiny size and sad story inspired each new caretaker to repeat the same structureless spoiling, including pillow time in their bed at night .. "Pooooor weeedle misunderstood peeboo." ... Until he chased the cat or snarked at a dog or otherwise acted like a terrier gone awry. Then, good bye! *Bounce. Bounce. Bounce.* By the time we met him in Pit Ed class, his eyes were bugging out of his stressy head and he was homeless again. His final caretaker pleaded for help and then ducked beautifully while we cussed and grumbled. She

even bought us lunch, and suckers that we are, we accepted both the dog and the bribe.

So here he is, in our program now, making us slightly nuts (well, *much* less nuts than he was a few days ago).

We'll ride it out. There will be rules. There will be structure. You will not snark dogs, chase cats, bounce off my body or otherwise get what you think you deserve. We'll ignore you when you holler, beg, cajole, YODEL for attention, and if you persist - Yes, Little Stinker - we will zap you with the squirt bottle and walk away ... entirely unimpressed. Gasp.

We're cold as ice, baby.

You are no longer a six figure rock star bouncing from one terribly exciting situation to the next. You are just a cadet in our bootcamp. We don't care how cute you are - Your pleading eyes will not move us to feed your addiction to frenzy.

Life will be perfectly boring, and you'll be forced to rest, ponder, breathe - come back down to earth, already. When you get out for stretches and exercise, you'll have to work for everything. E-v-e-r-y-t-h-i-n-g. When you're ready to play with dogs again, you'll be grounded and sane - Not spastic and defensive (not surprising, spazz boy got attacked by two dogs in one of his many foster stations). You'll look to your new leader(s) and we'll coo - very quietly so it doesn't excite you - "yes. good boy." *But only* when you do the good stuff.

And when we get to the other side of this, you will be *truly* adorable, and the world will wonder how such a fabulous dog ever ended up homeless.

Sigh. We'll fool everyone - I promise.