

The Lesson A Stray Puppy Taught Me

By: Trent Jayroe

The other day my wife called me and told me that she had picked up a stray dog that she felt really sorry for. She couldn't stand the thought of leaving him. She took him home and fed him. The dog was so scared that his tail was tucked the entire time he ate and he whined each time she got close to him. After a couple of days, what turned out to be 4 month old puppy got more comfortable with her and would run to her when he saw her. However, when I showed up he wouldn't have much to do with me.

Time has passed and "Chocolate" has had his first series of shots, is eating all day long, and runs to me each time I walk outside to see him. He has become a part of the family already and hopefully will be around for years to come.

This little, or should I say massive, puppy has taught me a valuable lesson in his short time with us. See, I have a nine year old Miniature Schnauzer named Resi. She's been with us since she was six weeks old and still doesn't grasp the concept that she's a dog. She's never locked up, she sleeps on the bed, she eats off the table, and she gets treats from my kids every hour on the hour. She lives a good life. And now that Chocolate is her, well, let's just say she isn't dealing it with it too well. But that's for another story...

Here's the simple lesson that Chocolate has taught me. He stays outside in our backyard which is completely fenced in. I've watched in amazement as over the past few days I literally have to drag him to the front yard or to the car to ride with me anywhere. The fence can be wide open and he stays right there in that backyard. Now Resi, well, if she has any chance to bolt she

does. You can't leave her in an open area for two minutes because she's running off exploring a whole new world that she feels like she's missed out on. It's not that she wants to run away. She just goes off on her adventures without ever thinking about the possible consequences.

Chocolate on the other hand, he's been on the outside of the fence and he knows what is out there. He has already grasped the concept of being "captured by love." That fence is more of a freedom to him than the wide open spaces beyond it. His security lies in the fact that he is in a fence, a fence that offers him shelter and protection from what lies beyond.

Chocolate has taught me to be thankful for fences in my life. He's taught me the importance of truly being free. The freedom doesn't lie in everything that's beyond the fence... the freedom is in the protection of the fence.

I've told my wife that one day Resi's going take off and never come back. Not because she's mad or doesn't want to, but because the danger that lies beyond the fence is going to catch up with her and take her away. She takes everything for granted and feels as though she's being punished because she can't run free all the time. Chocolate looks at what lies beyond fence and says, "NO THANKS! I've been out there before and I'm not going back."

God help us to be more like Chocolate and be thankful for the fences in our lives. They aren't holding us back or keeping us down... they are keeping us protected from the forces of evil that exist beyond them.