

Black dog Jack

Now, I would consider myself an intelligent, thoughtful and on the whole sensible individual, so why was it that one day in November when out shopping for a little black dress for an impending formal did I come back with a little black puppy dog?

Why you might ask, and yes I too have been asking myself that very same question for the last 3 months.

The simple answer is not the fact that I am blonde butcute puppy in a pet store window syndrome! Before we could say woof woof, Jack, yes that's his given name (or at least the only printable one) was out of the puppy pen and in my arms safely nuzzling his way into my heart.

More than a few hundred dollars later, and devoid of any black dress (and apparently brains) we walked out of the shopping centre laden with puppy paraphernalia and a new baby. Jack was coming home.

Two (2) blissful days ensued, sleepy, cuddly puppy, demure puppy, playful puppy, a few 'cute' accidents puppyfollowed by, you got it, barking puppy, whinging, whining puppy, clingy puppy, poopy puppy, you've peed on my sheepskin rug again puppy - and the list goes on.

Reality check 1.....when did I lose my brain cells?

Reality check 2. NEED puppy training, (must have one brain cell left)

So at last we succumb to those voices in our heads that keep ranting the "I told you so's" and take our seemingly lost cause to our local dog behaviourist and trainer, Dee Scott at Positive Response.

Through sheer hard work, determination, stubbornness & tears (on my part) and the reinforcement of positive behaviour, Jack is making progress in becoming the kind of puppy we imagined was part of the bargain.

Jack had learned behaviour in the pet store at a critical time in his short life leaving him with some quite serious anxiety and separation issues which encompass a whole realm of other unsociable behaviours. None of these were his fault, no puppy deliberately gets anxious, continually barks and seeks constant attention, but all are resultant from the fact that he was probably taken from his mother before he had been nurtured and weaned naturally.

Although ignorant may be a harsh word, the reality is, that is what we were when we 'bought' Jack from the store. We had no idea of his parentage, hey the store weren't even sure of his exact breed (we knew he was a Jack Russell X of sorts) and we certainly had no idea the kinds of problems we might have in adopting a puppy we had no history for.

However, we persevere and to date, through behavioural training we (and Jack) are having light bulb moments. Progress is sometimes slow, but that is not because we have a 'dumb dog', far from it, the progress is governed by us and our ability to be consistent with training. I guess what we have seen is that consistency and re-enforcement is the key. We have many of the tools we need to ensure that Jack develops into the family dog we believe he can be, but it's down to us and our commitment to him to nurture and train him to be so.

So I guess the moral of my story is, much like grocery shopping, if it isn't on the list don't buy it and if it is, did you know you should always put two things back and ask yourself, do you really need it?

PS. We really do love our Jack boy

PPS. I still don't have my little black dress (those \$ have gone on de-sexing Jack)!!!
