



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

## Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #17 Training Advice for Your Adopted Dog

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Welcome to Canine Master on Pet Life Radio. This is Chris Onthank. How are you today? You know, on the show we're going to talk about how is the best way to train your newly adopted dog that you've gotten from a shelter and to set yourself up for real success and for your family and also in the whole community. Rescuing dogs really has become, it's more than just like a personal mission for most. It's actually become a whole movement that we're seeing across the United States and across the world. I work with shelters from Thailand to India all throughout the United States and helping dogs get adopted. And it really is, there's just so much to discuss and I will tell you, it really is a full movement. It becomes almost a status symbol and we see people thinking, well, I rescued a dog or I rescued a dog. It really becomes something that is so important to dog lovers around the world and there's so much to discuss about this.

Why do we go to a shelter in the first place? Well, we go to a shelter to look for a dog to adopt. The mentality is I need to take a dog. He may not be adopted by anybody else and save him. And we want to save the pathetic looking, the cute puppy, the malnutrition puppy, everybody wants to look at their puppy, this dog that they're going to adopt and we're going to save him. And I would say that about half of my training business and for all of my trainers that work with me, half of what we do is we work with clients who have rescued a dog. I am called out to do assessments to evaluate dogs, their temperaments and how to fix and to help them adjust into their new family. I call that all the time to do these kinds of things.

I'm also called out to go into a shelter to help find the right dog for the family. And I want to be very clear here, rescuing a dog is an amazing way to bring a loving pet into the family. And I think it's a great thing. And most of actually what happens is these dogs come pretty well behaved. And sometimes they're even easier to train as they tend to be older, they've been homed in another house or another family. It's really funny most dogs that go to shelters are between the ages of 7 to 10 months old. And why is that? Well, that's what we call the obnoxious teenager time. That's when the dog start exhibiting chewing behaviors, destructive behaviors. They really are teenagers. They're harder to control. They start testing the boundaries and these are the dogs that people give up.

Now they go into the shelter, they're there for a couple of weeks or even a month and now they start to be a year or maybe they're 12 months, they're 13 months old and you know

what? All those behaviors that were driving the past owners crazy, it's all out of their system. And these dogs are really become delightful pets. And they are so grateful to get out of that shelter and get into a loving environment and they're eager to learn and to get into that new family and really adjust and they adjust very well most of the times. What I want to talk about today though is the mindset that many people have towards adopting a new dog. They get this mindset of, I want to adopt this poor, pathetic dog and I'm going to bring them into my home and I'm going to make sure that he knows he's so loved and I'm going to let him know that he could pretty much do anything when he gets here.

When I say that is many people, when they adopt a dog, they don't want to give any structure to that dog. They don't want to come down hard on that dog and I'm not saying you should ever come down harder dog but I mean they don't want to give the dog sort of limits or boundaries. The dog jumps up on the furniture. "Oh, but he's had a terrible life. Let him stay up on there." The dog hasn't eaten all this food. "Maybe he's too nervous to eat and we'll leave the food down all the time." There's many different things that people start to do because the dog has been in a shelter and had a misfortuned life and so I'm going to save him but I'm not going to treat him the way I would a dog that I got from a breeder or from another avenue of taking a dog in, whether that's even from a pet store.

What happens is though, when we take this mindset, we actually create problems because dogs really do need a structure. A structure that they understand. But they need a structure in order to feel secure. It's sort of like kids, right? If kids don't have structure, they become nightmares. Let me tell you, I have a couple of young kids and if they don't have the structure they need every day, they start getting themselves into trouble. Dogs do the exact same thing. Structure is what this needs to be successful in the family and to bond correctly with your pack. People have the misconception that a rescue dog automatically also comes with lots of issues. Rescue dogs do not always come with issues. In most cases they're fine. If we do see issues, what we mostly see is basically a little fearfulness and this comes from the lack of socialization.

Maybe they were in an environment where they were locked up all the time. They didn't get exposed during that imprint time between 5 to 16 weeks of age. They actually probably didn't get out enough, didn't meet the man on the street, didn't see the guy with the hat, didn't get to meet other dogs, don't understand what it's like to walk on grass. They've only been on cement. They maybe had been tied up. A lot of these dogs that you think have issues, basically most of that that I see is lack of socialization, which can easily be addressed with the right relationship and a little bit of work on your part. Here's what generally happens. People adopt a dog, they bring it in. They say, "Oh, what he's been rescued. Gosh, I feel sorry for him. Oh, the poor dog." You see people doing this and they get this mindset of, "Oh, he's had a hard life" and so what we do is we don't give the structure.

In the first couple of weeks, the dog seems great. Everybody's going, "Wow, this dog is awesome. He has no issues. He's a delight. He's not asserting himself, he's friendly to everybody." And then something kind of unique starts to happen at about the third week with this dog that has not had much structure in his new pack environment. We start to see

that that honeymoon period starts to come to an end and pretty much the dog is just taking it all in and he's afraid to do the wrong thing during the honeymoon period but by the third

week we start to see the true picture of what this dog is really like. The dog starts to try to create order within his pack. That's very natural thing. All dogs want order within their pack and if they don't see this order and we've given this dog too much latitude, this dog starts to think that maybe they are the new leader of this pack.

What happens is we start to see some behavioral issues and this can become a problem. We're going to talk about this. Most of my clients want to know if the dog has ever been abused. That's the other thing and they all think that their dog's been abused. How many people? I adopted the dog. "Oh, he's been abused". I hear that all the time. Do you know what? Mostly dogs have not been abused. Most dogs at shelters are coming from houses and people that just couldn't keep them. They got into that obnoxious teenager stage of 7, 8, 9, 10 months old and they couldn't control the dog. They didn't do training. They don't have a time. They bought a puppy and it's much more work than they ever imagined. These are the kinds of dogs that we see in shelters and these are kind of dogs don't come with abuse. They just don't.

Maybe the only abuse they have was that they were locked up a lot. They see a dog that's been under socialized and people automatically think to themselves, "Oh, he's been abused." But it's not abuse in the terms of physical abuse is what I mean to say. It's more abuse as the dog going to get socialized a lot but they're exhibiting this fearful behavior. They're exhibiting a sort of tentativeness, a shyness and then we automatically go, "Oh, he's been hit, he's been abused." And this is not necessarily the case. But how might we analyze to see if really our dog was abused? Because yes, there are some dogs that truly have been abused. When somebody says to me, "I think my dog's been abused, is there any way to find out, Chris. How I can tell if my dog really has been abused?"

I do a little test. I'm going to describe this test to you. You do need to be careful if you truly think that your dog has been physically abused when you're doing this test. You want to actually build gradually on this test meaning make it more subtle in the very beginning and work your way up. Here are the things that we look for when we look for abused dogs. Many dogs had been screamed at. Abuse can be a sound sensitive dog that gets yelled and screamed at or maybe the dog was in a family that everybody yells at each other or even there's small children, they're screaming and yelling all the time. This could make a dog very sound sensitive and when he hears screaming, he may become reactive and they may hide. The other thing that we sometimes see with abused dogs as they have been hit and we'll talk about how to figure that out and see if our dog's been hitting a moment.

The other thing is sometimes dogs that had been tied up. These kinds of dogs are generally tied outside in a yard and they actually become loaded up with aggression and can really exhibit aggression towards skateboarders, kids on bicycles, children running around because these are the kids who are normally out in the neighborhood. But getting restrained or tied up, as we all know is a very bad thing to do. We never should tie up a dog outside because that truly is a form of abuse. Do not tie up a dog outside. It can add to the dog becoming much more aggressive towards strangers and the dogs become bored. They start to get aggressive and the reason why they're aggressive is fight or flight. When we eliminate flight, fight's leftover and when a dog's tied up, you're eliminating the ability to flee. Many times these dogs do become aggressive.

The other type of abuse we see often is malnutrition. Malnutrition, not being attentive to its coat. Dogs infested with fleas and lice or ticks. This is all part of what we'll call husbandry kind of abuse and neglect. These are the kinds of abuse that I see and some of them are very visual. You can tell, "Wow, this dog is really skinny. This dog is infested with hookworm or roundworms. This dog's coat is all matted and he has sores underneath the mats." That's easy to see. But the other thing is, is that, let's talk about finding out whether your dog has been hit because it seems to me that everybody goes, "Oh, my dog's been hit." Well, how do we test for this?

What I tell people to do is, again, you're going to start slowly on this. You're not just going to ramp up. You want to do subtle successive approximations or successive sort of escalated successfully in a slow way. You're going to go in front of your dog, you're going to walk right in front of him. Maybe he's sitting in front of you and you're going to raise up your left or your right hand quickly. Like you're raising your hand up above the shoulder in a quick movement with your palm facing outwards and what's going to happen is you're going to see if the dog starts to react. When you raise up your hand quickly does the dog cower? Does he growl at you? Does he go back as in fear? Is susceptible to what we call hand shyness? When you bring your hand back down to touch him on top of the head, is he closing his eyes? Is he lowering his head?

Let me be really clear. You raise your arm up really quickly and then you come down towards the dog, like you're going to pet him on the head. Here's where I want you to be careful. When you raise your hand up and the dog doesn't react. Now come back down a little bit fast, not too fast to go to the top of his head. If the dog shuts his eyes, squints, lowers, cowers. This dog has been hit. If the dog doesn't react, keeps his eyes open and go, "Hey, what's going on?" That is a dog that that has not been hit. If I have a dog that cowers when I raised up my hand and then go back down in a little bit of a quicker emotion towards his head, here's what I want you to do. You've got to stop doing what you're just doing because a dog is going to get scared of you and I don't want the dog to get scared of you. But what we're going to do now is we're going to try to fix this. And the way to fix this is to counter condition that movement.

The movement of raising my hand up and coming back down. Now, why do we want to counter condition that movement? I bring my dog to a park. A child comes at the dog very quickly to pet him and that dog is scared, he may bite him and he may bite him because the dog may think that the child is about to hit him by that quick movement and we don't want the child to be bitten. We also don't want the dog to be scared. What you're going to do is you're going to get some treats, some really good treats and you're going to go gradually and you're going to move a little faster and faster and progress faster as we go.

You're going to bring your hand up and then you're going to slowly go down to the top of the head and give him a treat. Okay? I want to be clear. You got treats in your right hand. Your left hand is going to be your hand up or you're treating your left hand and your right hand. It doesn't matter which hand you use but you got treats in one hand. The dog's not looking at the treats. Okay? Hide those treats may be behind your back and then you got to come up with your hand, lower it down pretty quickly towards the top of his head and then outcomes a treat and do it again. Raise up with your hand, go down quickly towards his head and give him a treat. You're going to keep on repeating this to where that motion becomes a great thing.

Now this is going to take weeks you guys. You're not going to get this in one day. Pretty quickly though after the first week, the dog's going to start to desensitize to that motion and actually think that that means a treat's coming. Okay. Now, we actually have to generalize it. We have to generalize this using different people. I might have a friend come over. Once the dog gets used to it with me, the owner, now I want other people in the family to do it. I want friends to come over and do it. And again, we start at the very beginning. When a friend starts to do this, we give the friend treats and one hand they put it behind their back. They make that motion quickly up and then they slowly go down to the dog's head and then they actually start to increase the speed in which they start to come.

Once we start seeing that squinting start to diminish, that actually is the time to try to another person. Again, once that squinting stops and once that dog starts to de desensitize towards one particular person, you want to add another person until the dog starts like liking being touched on the head by many people. This is the way in which to fix hand shyness. The other thing I want you to do is when the dogs away from you walk up to the dog, lift your hand up, stand tall and bring down. By applying pressure as you walk up to the dog, that can be intimidating. You want to counter condition that as well. There's many different ways. Think of all the way that people approach your dog. You want to do that same thing and then do the same thing coming on top of the head.

It's a very rare dog that gets hand shied from underneath and that's what I tell all children how to really approach a dog is actually from coming from below, never from on top. Dogs generally don't like being pet on top of the head but unfortunately we can't control the people that are coming up to pet our dogs and especially kids. We do want to desensitize this so that the dog starts to actually not be bothered by hand raised quickly and a hand coming down at them quickly. They start to actually go, "Wow, good things coming. Here comes my piece of hotdog or bacon or a great treat." The other thing is you might see that your dog is, is shy and usually and sometimes they can be shy with women but in many cases they're shy with men. And the reason why that is is that men tend to have a more guttural tone.

They have a deeper tone and that can be growly. Men tend to be bigger and men tend to be more dominant in posture than females. With these things, dogs many times, if they haven't been around men can be intimidated or even fearful and shy. People like this ... if they are shy around men, again, what we do is we have to create structure first for the dog to desensitize to men. What I'll do is I am going to make sure that first that my fearful dog is behind me. I'm going to get him on a leash. I'm going to put them about an arms distance behind me and I'm going to be in front of them and I'm going to go and start to approach men. Strange men. I'm might have a man come over the house and to keep my dog behind me, not next to me and certainly not in front of you.

When they're meeting men, if the dog is in front of you, you're putting all that pressure for that dog to be in the decision making process and it's very scary. You're also eliminating his flight because he's on leash. Get the dog behind you on leash. Take that pressure off of greeting and have a conversation with that man. If your dog starts to relax around that man, then you might give that man a treat. Have that man kneel down and entice the dog over. If the dog doesn't want to go towards that man, don't force him. Never force him. Let him go on his own accord and you might also want to try this when the dog's really hungry. You do

this before you feed him, because many times a dog that is fearful doesn't have a food drive. Sometimes we need to actually withhold food, a meal and then do this when we start to desensitize him towards a man.

We're going to put that dog behind us, we're going to have the man kneel down, then we're going to have the band call them over and give them a nice treat. And then it doesn't have to have pet them in the very beginning but gradually, the dog's receptive then have them pet him but it doesn't have to be that way. I would move at a slower pace. Don't try to make this happen quickly. Have this happen over weeks and weeks, not over a week. We don't fix things generally with older dogs in that shorter timeframe. Younger dogs, yes, puppies, yes but older dogs, no. It takes weeks and weeks and possibly even months and months to get dogs used to men. Instead of carefully avoiding things that frighten your dog give that man a stranger, a treat and we will actually see the dog start to think that men carry great things. Sit. Stay. We'll be right back after a short pause. Well, four to be exact.

Okay. The number one characteristic I find with an older rescue dog would be some level of fear. That's what we're just talking about. This usually exhibits itself in one to two ways. The dog comes into the house, there is no leader. He starts to think that he's in the decision-making process and the people don't give him structure. The dog starts to think that he's in charge of who comes into the house. He's in charge of the relationships within the pack and he starts to become protective. And if the dog had a clear leader from the very beginning, this actually would never start to happen and again, we usually see this about the third week. The other thing we see is the dog becomes submissive. He starts peeing when somebody bends over him. He hides in a corner and even starts to shake. Both of these behaviors again are reflections of the relationship and the dog thinking they are in the decision-making position and that they're in charge of their territory.

A couple of things. I want to take a client of mine as a perfect example of this. Her name was Sally-Anne and Sally-Anne is an amazing person. She probably has one of the biggest hearts I know out of any person that adopts dogs. I think she actually adopts many dogs, like has a whole pack. But the problem with Sally-Anne is, is that she has that syndrome of, "My poor abused dogs. Oh, let's let them just sort of run the household because they've had a hard life." And what happens with Sally-Anne is that these dogs that are in her house start to control the house and we start to see that these dogs do a lot of jumping on people. They're hyperactive at the door when people come, they all are barking. She has no control over them and they literally run the house and they're very difficult for her to control.

Like I said, she is the nicest person with the biggest heart. She's trying to do the right thing but unfortunately what's happening is that she is creating chaos in her environment with her dogs and instead of these dogs living in a very calm and relaxed environment, these dogs tend to be on edge to every noise and every sound to every person that comes in the property, they're like, "What's this? What's that?" And the pack actually, because there's no real leader, the pack actually is a little bit dysfunctional, I should say, at the least. Here's what happened recently. She's had these rescue dogs and I've worked with her over the years and tried to help her gain this structure and unfortunately she's never been that great at it. I have to come back every few months and do sort of a how are you doing today kind of thing and sort of get her back on track and usually that fixes things for a period of time until it starts to get bad again.

It's just the way she is. But she had recently adopted a dog named Billy and Billy was at Dog Gone Smart at Canine Center because we rescue dogs at Dogs Gone Smart and we work with dogs that sometimes have issues and then get them adopted out. Something that we'd like to do for again for the community, that kind of mission or that movement across America. We're doing it as well. But Billy came to foster at our facility and he was there for several months and Billy came a little bit shy and we worked with him our trainers and myself. We all work with Billy, getting Billy into the center, playing with other dogs and he was really doing quite well. He was friendly to the staff. We could introduce him to would be adopters and he was very good with men and good with women alike and he was good with everybody, good with kids.

Sally came to the Canine Center I think one day to do a class and she saw Billy and she goes, "Oh my gosh, he is so cute. Gosh, maybe I could adopt one more." And I saw the wheels turning in her head and all of a sudden I said to myself, "Wow, I think she wants to adopt this dog and it's just going to be one more dog in the pack. She brought the dog home and I agreed for her to bring it home to join her three other rescue dogs and the first few weeks she called up the Canine Center. She's talking to our general manager. She left me a note. "Oh my God, Billy is fabulous. What a wonderful dog." That honeymoon period that we were just talking about. And at about the fourth week we got a call. Sally said, "You know what, Billy is starting to get really protective and assertive and getting into men's faces when they come on into the house and it's really becoming a problem. My husband is really having a big issue and he's getting worried."

Why did this happen? Well, it's really simple. Billy was given no clear leader. There was no one there that was in charge. The other three dogs are all beta dogs. Billy started to go, "Oh my gosh, I'm on my own to make decisions." And he appointed himself as the leader in this new canine and human pack. He was running to the door. I come, I come to the to do the lesson and Billy comes up to me and I'd seen Billy, known Billy. Billy starts growling at me and getting really close and we're not talking of a dog that even looked fearful, which I knew Billy was because of Billy's obligation in a high, what we'll call group instinct. Billy was right in my face and I was like and hackles were all up down the back like a stripe.

This dog was hot and I went, "Wow, we got a problem here." And Sally's going, "Oh my God, Chris, what have I done?" And I'm like, "Well, we need to take this dog from chairman of the board down to the mail room really, really quick." Here's what we did. We started going back to sort of basics. We had to literally change where this dog's position was in that pack. I had Sally go through doorways first. If the dog tried to pass her, if Billy tried to pass her going through door thresholds, gave him a little guttural tone, some body pressure, even her foot to get Billy back. We started keeping Billy away from the door when people came to the door. We set up situations like that where somebody would knock and she would use your body pressure and shove Billy out of the foyer with their feet but forward body that pressure and pretty soon Billy started realizing, ah, I'm not in the decision-making process.

We also started to see Billy start to relax and when somebody came to the house, Billy started to get better. She also was letting Billy up on the furniture and you know what? My dog is probably on the furniture right now but the thing is is that some dogs that are fearful, if you let them up on the furniture, they become a little bit more assertive because that's such a leadership spot. Elevation as we know mean status. She was letting him up on the

furniture and sleep on the couch, which made him even more thinking that he was in charge. I made sure that Billy wouldn't push her, nudge her to be pet, that she would call over Billy to be pet. I made sure that often she was walking through Billy instead of walking around him, not stepping over him and saying, "Oh, don't mind moving. I'll submit and walk around you" which made him more dominant in the space. I hate that we're dominant but let's face it folks, either the dog's going to be in charge or you're going to be in charge.

It's not one dog, one vote. It's not quality here. Dogs need this structure and Billy really needed a leader. By her being dominant in this space by walking through the dog, not in a mean way but just sort of haphazardly walking through the dog, Billy started to realize that Billy was not the dominant one in the space. The other thing that we started doing is we start working on some obedience and while obedience doesn't make you into a leader, obedience is a cooperation that can actually help. The dog gets what it wants through obeying you and usually that's a nice juicy treat of some sort.

I've been out to visit Sally now several times since that first lesson to sort of reinforce this leadership and help Sally through this process and it's amazing. Within 10 days of that first lesson, Billy's doing awesome. Billy is no longer getting aggressive when people come to the house. Billy is much more relaxed, more reliable and having control over Billy and Billy is just an overall happier pet. It's really important that again, when you adopt a pet that you teach them the rules of your household and holding them accountable for good behavior and that will make them feel more secure and bonded with you. And give them of course plenty of love. That's really important. I mean, gosh, I mean this isn't that why we adopted in the first place. I want to be really clear here. Giving your dog love and affection is not bad.

It's something that we should do to our dogs. It's just like our kids. Structure and love, structure and love and if we do those things, they literally walk out with a lot of security, happiness, go lucky kind of attitude and life's great for these dogs and for the children. Same exact thing. I rescued my dog Dave and he's just the most amazing dog. I got them out of Florida Rescue down in Florida and adopting a dog I think is probably one of the best things you can do but doing it the right way is really important. This really touches my heart.

Adopting a dog is probably one of the best things we can do for our souls because it is a great feeling to take a dog from a shelter, a dog that's not wanted and to bring them into your home and make him part of your family. What a very, very cool thing. You just got to do it in the right way. All right, Jaimee, I hear we have a few questions for today.

**Jaimee:** Yep. This question comes from Lois from New Jersey. She writes. Hi Chris, we have only ever adopted dogs and it truly is the greatest joy. We just recently lost our 14 year old shepherd mix and are ready to adopt again but we are older now and we're considering maybe adopting an older or senior dog that requires less activity. Do you have any advice?

**Chris:** Well, I think this is great. I mean, I'm sorry that you lost your German Shepherd, 14 year old German Shepherd. That's awesome. I mean that's a long life for a German Shepherd or a German Shepherd mix. As we get older and I include myself in that picture, you got to think about how long you're going to live and when you adopt a dog, when you pass, where's that dog going? Sometimes, I don't know, you're in your 70s and your 80s and



you want to adopt the dog because we do love to have our companions. It's a great idea to adopt an older pet. That dog's lifespan can be a little bit shorter. It's going to allow you to have a great sort of relaxed dog. Usually an older dog is definitely more laid back and we don't have those crazy puppy behaviors and adolescent behaviors to deal with.

I really think it's great to adopt an older dog. When you adopt an older dog, realize that that older dog is going to have had a history. We're going to want to really make sure that dog is evaluated before you take that dog home. I might hire yourself a professional dog trainer to come with you to do some evaluations on that older dog so that you're making sure you are adopting a dog that will really benefit from your situation and vice versa. The worst thing we can do is adopt the dog, bring it home. It's an older dog and then we have to give it back. That really is not a nice thing to do those dogs. What I would do is I'd hedge your bets, go out there and find yourself a canine behaviorist or a dog trainer that you respect or have heard great things about and bring them to the shelter with you. It'd be probably some of the best money you'll ever spend to really make sure that you get the right pet for your home.

**Jaimee:** Okay, next is Bill from Syracuse. Hi Chris. I've just recently adopted a Golden Retriever, a beautiful purebred puppy who was abandoned by his owners who thought a puppy was too much work. He's the love of my life and friendly to all people and dogs. However, he has just started humping the occasional guest on the leg while causes a good chuckle, I know it should not be allowed and I'd like some advice as to how to address the cause and not just correct the behavior.

Wow. Okay. Well Bill, here's the thing. You got yourself a dog puppy and he's starting to hump. Humping, it can be two things. It can be sexual but in most cases it's actually the dog dominating. It's not as sexual as many people think. While we think that's really kind of funny and cute, it actually is a behavior that's part of a bigger piece. We don't want dogs humping your guests. What they're doing is they're dominating them in most and this can actually then lead to other behaviors that can get out of control very quickly. It's the first symptom to the dog being in charge in your home to new guests coming in.

What I'm going to tell you to do is you are going to make sure that when you greet your strangers at the door that your puppy golden retriever is behind you and I would say he's a good 10 feet, 8 to 10 feet behind you and if he tries to come up, do an about face turn from your guests and literally use your legs and forward body pressure and push him in a direct line away from the person at the door, like basically getting them out of the foyer. Then after the dog starts to settle, that may take three to four pushes. You may need to set this up a few times. The dog's going to start realizing that you're in charge of the greeting process and it's you who should be humping your neighbor. No, I'm only joking but basically the dog's going to give up that responsibility of dominating that person coming into your house and he's going to give it to you.

The next thing that's going to happen is when the person comes into the house, if the dog starts to run over to them and starts to hump again, walk up to the person, put your rear end towards that person and say, excuse me and shove the dog away from that stranger and do that for three to five minutes and when you shove them away, again, forward body

pressure, you don't even need to say anything. Just put your rear ended up against the stranger, forward body pressure against the dog. Use your legs, shove him away about four feet and then go back and talk to your friend again. You're going to find really quickly that that dog realizes that you're in charge of the interactions in the space and you're in charge of how that dog is approaching that stranger. Humping is not a good thing. It's not funny and it actually usually leads to other behavioral issues that are not desirable.

**Jaimee:** Okay. Last question for today is Michelle from Arizona. Hi Chris. Our family is finally pulled the trigger and agreed to adopt a dog. We went to our local shelter this weekend and fell in love with the poodle mix. In fact, two poodle mixes. They are about eight months old, brother and sister and the shelter was hoping they would be adopted together. We were not intending to adopt both but our hearts break to separate them so we would consider it. Can you give me the pros and cons of adopting two dogs at once?

**Chris:** Well, so here's the thing. Many people think that two dogs that come from the household together really need to be with each other and I think that may be true in some cases but in most cases it's not desirable and I'm going to explain why. Let me talk about how it would be good in some cases. If they are older dogs and they've been together their whole lives, like they're 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 years old, you know what? Breaking those dogs up probably is not a great thing to do and you should adopt both of them at the same time. However, if you have a younger dog, a puppy for instance or an adolescence and there's two of them that are brothers and sisters or two brothers or whatever.

What happens is that those dogs, when you adopt them, first of all, you're going to have a handful adopting one dog's a handful adopting two dogs is a much bigger handful in most cases. But when you adopt two dogs at once, those two dogs will always be bonded to each other more than they're bonded to you. And that's not 100% of the time but you can do things to make that not the case like spend time alone with each dog every day. Take one dog with you to the park and leave the other one home and then reverse it. It's a lot of work.

I'm going to recommend that you get yourself one dog. The two dogs that are together, they're going to find another home and while they may miss each other for a few days, within a couple of weeks of being in their new home, they're going to be happy as can be. Getting one dog at a time is always a better situation. It allows you to train the dog better, to integrate it into your family much easier and you'll just find that it just becomes a much easier process overall.

Adopt one dog at a time in most cases is what I would advise.

Okay. That's it for today and I really hope you found our show to be really interesting on adopting a dog. I'd love to know your comments and have you join the conversation. You can go ahead and visit us at [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com) that's C-A-N-I-N-E master.com and let me know what works for you, what's not working for you and what issues you're coming across. Send me your videos and photos so I can see what's going on with your dog and I'll help you resolve your problems. Goodbye for now. See you next time on Canine Master Radio where I will help you to continue to master the relationship with your dog.

*Master* the relationship with your dog!