



For all creatures great and small.

THE MOST COMMON REASONS FOR RELINQUISHING AN ANIMAL

The bond between humans and dogs is a phenomenal one.

The dog is the only species which has chosen to bond with another, i.e. humans.

But for dogs, man is often their worst enemy.

Over 100,000 animals are surrendered to RSPCA shelters every year, and the vast majority are dogs.

Because of that, various studies have been done, mainly in the US, on why people give up dogs which were once loved family members.

And all of them have shown that one of the major reasons is behavioural problems.

Dogs who don't live up to their owners' often unrealistic expectations.

41 percent of those interviewed in one survey said the problem was barking; 24 percent said chewing; 45 percent, hyperactivity; 21 percent, soiling the house.

Less than 8 percent of dogs surrendered were given up for being aggressive to other pets, and less than 9 percent for hostility to people.

It's pretty sobering to remember that at least three times as many dogs are destroyed every year because of behavioural problems as die of cancer.

The majority of dogs surrendered are young. Research by the US National Council on Pet Population found that 47.7 percent were aged between five months and three years.

Approximately half of all dogs surrendered were not desexed and 31 percent had never seen a vet.

The other reasons commonly cited for relinquishing a dog were:

- Moving house
- The Landlord not allowing pets
- Too many animals in the household
- The cost of veterinary care
- Owner's personal problems
- Inadequate facilities

The statistics on abandonment for behavioural problems speak for themselves.

They are ridiculously high.

It's very sad to think people will simply give up their dog because they don't know how to be responsible pet owners. And the irresponsibility is compounded when they then simply go out and buy a replacement dog, repeating the pattern.

Nicholas Dodman, the Director of the Animal Behaviour Clinic at Tufts University of Veterinary Medicine, and author of the books, "The Dog Who Loved too Much" and "The Cat who Cried for Help", sadly says: "..... death from behavioural problems is the leading cause of pet mortality".

But the important point here is that behavioural problems, in the vast majority of cases, can be prevented by very simple measures.

Choose your dog carefully.

- If you're elderly, don't decide on a strong, boisterous German Shepherd.
- If you've got babies or toddlers, don't buy a dog which can knock them over.
- If you've got a busy lifestyle where you're rarely home, think carefully whether you have the time to care for a dog.
- And always take your puppy to Puppy School, or your adolescent dog to training classes, where they learn basic commands, socialise with people and other dogs, and learn how to be what they most want to be - YOUR LOVING, DEVOTED BEST FRIEND.

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