

# **SURVIVING THE FIRST NIGHT WITH YOUR PUPPY**

JUST AS HUMANS DO, ANIMALS BOND WITH AND HAVE AN AFFINITY TOWARDS THEIR FAMILY. THEY PREFER THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF THEIR FAMILY'S COMPANY AND DISLIKE SEPARATION FROM THEM. WHEN WE BRING A PUPPY INTO OUR HOME, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS BABY ANIMAL HAS SPENT ALL OF HER LIFE SURROUNDED BY THE WARM BODIES OF HER MOTHER AND SIBLINGS. WHEN WE MOVE THIS PUPPY INTO OUR HOME, WE ARE ACTUALLY SEPARATING HER FROM HER FAMILY, SO IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE THAT THERE WILL BE SOME INITIAL ANXIETY AND GRIEF ON THE PUPPY'S PART. SEPARATION DISCOMFORT IS A NORMAL PART OF ACCLIMATING TO A NEW HOME AND FAMILY, AND GENTLE PATIENCE IS CALLED FOR.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY: FROM AN EVOLUTIONARY POINT OF VIEW—THAT IS, ALL OF THE TRAITS THAT BEGAN WHEN DOGS WERE STILL WILD AND CONTINUE BECAUSE THEY HAVE HELPED TO KEEP THE DOG SPECIES ALIVE—a VULNERABLE PUPPY THAT IS SEPARATED FROM HIS FAMILY IS AT RISK OF BEING ATTACKED AND KILLED BY PREDATORS. IN ORDER TO DISCOURAGE HIS MOTHER FROM LEAVING HIM FOR LONG PERIODS, HE CRIES AND CRIES ON, RESULTING IN HER STAYING CLOSE IN ORDER TO KEEP HIM QUIET AND THEREFORE ENSURING HIS SURVIVAL.

IT IS THIS NATURAL INSTINCT THAT STILL PROMPTS PUPPIES TO WHINE, HOWL, SQUEAL AND DEMONSTRATE RESTLESSNESS WHEN THEY ARE SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES. FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS, OR WEEKS, IT IS NATURAL FOR A PUPPY TO HAVE TROUBLE FALLING ASLEEP IN HER NEW ENVIRONMENT, BECAUSE IT IS NATURAL FOR THE PUPPY TO FEEL VULNERABLE AND AFRAID AS SHE ADJUSTS TO THE ABSENCE OF HER CANINE BROOD. DAY ONE IN THE NEW HOME WILL BE THE MOST FRIGHTFUL FOR THE PUPPY, AND THE MOST CHALLENGING FOR YOU TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PUPPY.

ON THIS FIRST NIGHT, THE PUPPY IS GOING TO FEEL HIS NEW ALONENESS MOST KEENLY. A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL RESPOND TO THE WHINES AND SQUEALS OF A PUPPY BY PLACING THEM FAR FROM EARSHOT, SUCH AS IN A BASEMENT OR GARAGE. OR, THE PUPPY MAY BE PLACED IN A CAGE TO KEEP HIM FROM ESCAPING AND SCRATCHING AT DOORS. IN SUCH A SITUATION HIS SENSE OF INSECURITY INCREASES AND HE WILL WHINE AND SQUEAL AS LOUDLY AS HE CAN, PERHAPS UNTIL DAWN.

OF COURSE, BY PUTTING HIM IN THE BASEMENT WE HAVE TEMPORARILY AVOIDED THE DISTURBANCE CAUSED BY THE PUPPY SO THAT WE CAN GET SOME SLEEP, BUT MOST VETERINARIANS ADVISE AGAINST THIS PRACTICE, SAYING THAT THE INTENSE ANXIETY CAUSED BY THIS PRACTICE COULD RESULT IN BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS FOR THE DOG AS HE GROWS.

## **SECURITY, NOT CODDLING**

SO THE QUESTION IS WHERE TO MAKE A SPOT FOR YOUR PUPPY TO SLEEP DURING HER FIRST DAYS IN YOUR HOME. THE FIRST THING TO CONSIDER IS MAKING A PLACE WHERE THE PUPPY WILL NOT FEEL ISOLATED. THIS CAN BE A CHALLENGE, OF COURSE. SOME PEOPLE FEEL COMFORTABLE KEEPING THEIR DOGS IN THE BEDROOM ON A DOG BED OR DESIGNATED BLANKET ON THE FLOOR ONCE THE DOG IS FULLY HOUSETRAINED, BUT THIS ISN'T A SAFE OPTION FOR YOUR PUPPY'S FIRST NIGHT.

## **using a crate**

THE BEST COMPROMISE CAN BE SETTING A CRATE UP IN THE BEDROOM OR JUST OUTSIDE OF THE OPEN BEDROOM DOOR. THIS WAY, THE PUPPY KNOWS YOU'RE NEAR. VERY YOUNG PUPPIES DO NOT HAVE THE BLADDER CAPACITY TO HOLD IT FOR THE ENTIRE NIGHT, SO IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT YOU CAN HEAR YOUR PUPPY VOCALIZING WHEN HE NEEDS TO GO OUT.

AND SPEAKING OF "GOING," BEFORE GOING TO BED, TAKE THE PUPPY OUTSIDE SO THAT HE CAN RELIEVE HIMSELF. GETTING INTO THE HABIT OF WALKING BEFORE BED WILL ALSO TIRE HIM OUT AND WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO SLEEP SOUNDLY AND LESS LIKELY TO DISTURB YOU AS YOU SLEEP.

AGAIN, REMEMBER THAT THE PUPPY IS NOT USED TO BEING ALONE IN A CRATE. HE WILL FEEL ANXIOUS AND UNCOMFORTABLE AND IS LIKELY TO MAKE A LOT OF NOISE WHEN YOU FIRST PUT HIM INSIDE THE CRATE. IGNORE THE INITIAL CRIES AS YOUR PUPPY SETTLES DOWN, BUT BE AWARE THAT IF YOUR PUPPY WAKES UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT IT PROBABLY MEANS THAT HE NEEDS TO GO OUTSIDE FOR A POTTY BREAK.

## **when nature calls**

ALONG WITH GOING OUT BEFORE BED, GOING OUT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING SHOULD ALSO BECOME A HABITUAL MORNING RITUAL. PUPPIES WILL TYPICALLY RELIEVE THEMSELVES IN SMALL AMOUNTS SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE THEY HAVE FINISHED AN OUTING. ONCE HE IS FINISHED, PRAISE HIM WITH A PAT AND A SMALL TRAINING TREAT AND SAY A FEW PRAISING WORDS TO LET HIM KNOW HE HAS DONE THE RIGHT THING.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGES YOU CAN SEND TO YOUR PUPPY IN THOSE FIRST DAYS IS THAT HE IS CARED FOR AND WANTED, JUST AS YOU WOULD SHOW THOSE FEELINGS TOWARD A HUMAN CHILD. THIS INCREASES THE CHANCES THAT YOUR PUPPY WILL ATTACH TO YOU IN A HEALTHY AND CONFIDENT WAY, WITHOUT ANXIETY, AND WILL GROW TO BE A FRIENDLY, AFFECTIONATE, LOYAL AND OBEIENT DOG.