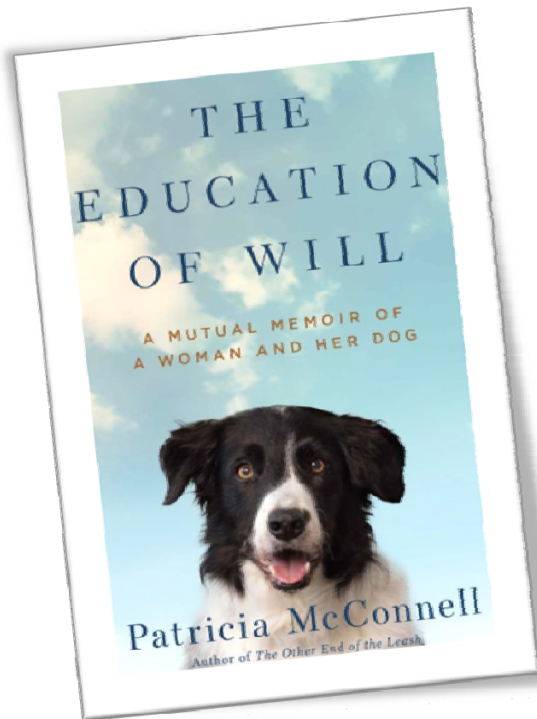


Building Resilience in Dogs



Photo courtesy of the ASPCA®

Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D., CAAB



www.PatriciaMcConnell.com

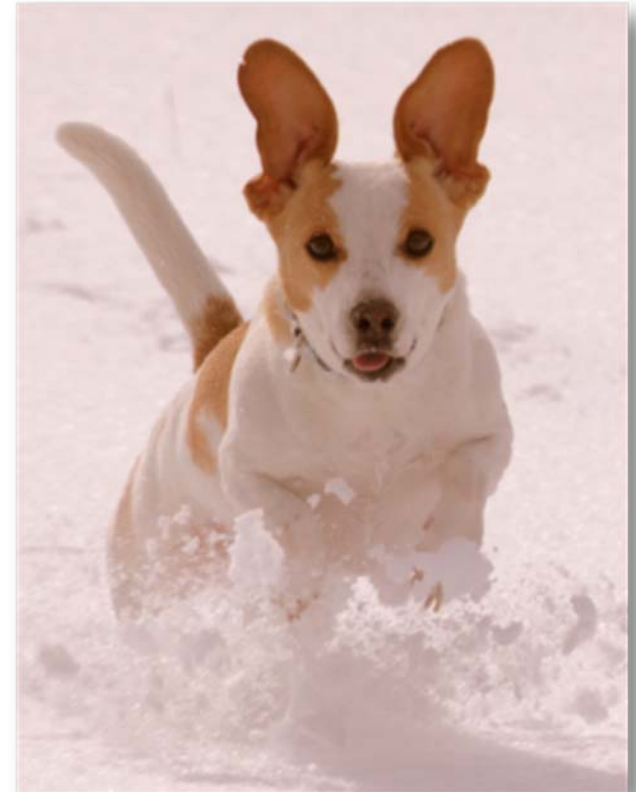
www.theotherendoftheleash.com

Thank you!

Susan Britt & Valerie Sheppard
ASPCA

Kristen Collins, Director,
Anti-Cruelty Behavior Rehab Center
Madison, New Jersey

Katie Martz, Z-Health Practitioner &
Social Media Consultant



Resilience is...

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy or even significant sources of stress.



Resilience can:

Prevent serious psychological or physical trauma,

and/or

Be damaged by psychological or physical trauma,

and/or

Create healing from psychological or physical trauma.

How to Build Resilience in Adult Dogs

All dogs need it!

However, **traumatized dogs require the most support** in their efforts to recover whatever resilience they had originally.

Note for, example, the findings of McMillan, Duffy & Serpell that 30% of puppy mill dogs exhibit a “blank look,” 24% “shut down.”

What does Resilience look like?



On reflection, allowing Buddy to watch the end of Old Yeller may not have been the best idea.

What does Resilience look like?

**Intensity of Response to
Environmental Stimuli**

Freeze? Become Frantic? Defensive
Aggression?

Recovery Time

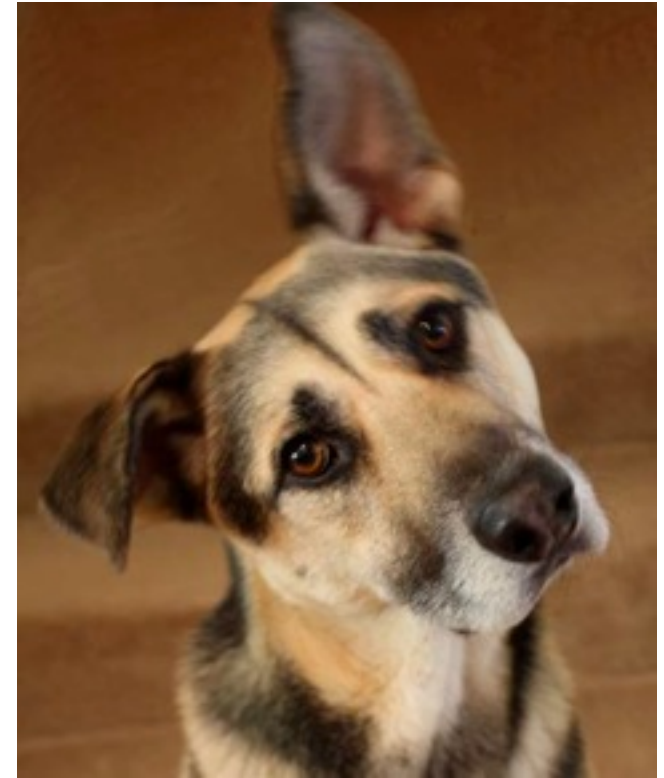
Seconds? Minutes? Hours? Days?

Sources of Resilience

~ Genetics

~ Early Development

~ Current Environment

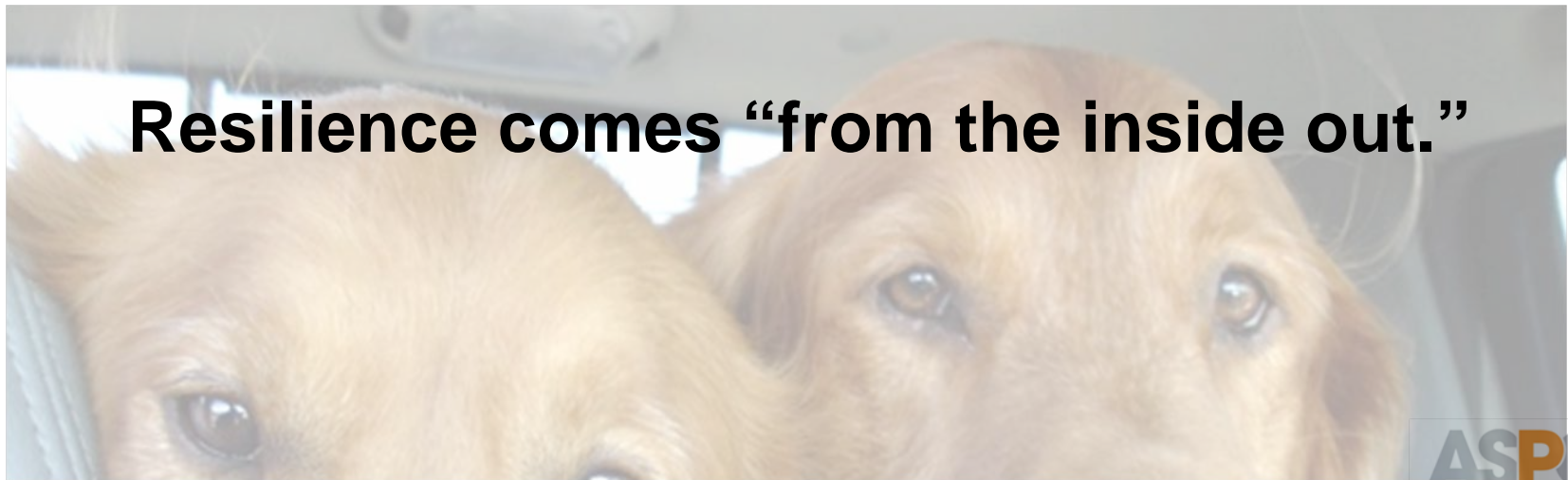


Building Resilience Similar to Healing Individuals After Trauma

Resilience requires:

- ~ Sense of safety and security
- ~ Social Support
- ~ Sense of Autonomy
- ~ Healthy & Balanced Internal Physiology

Resilience comes “from the inside out.”



Provide Sense of Safety and Security

Avoid sensory overload

Create predictability



Provide Social Support

If dog fearful and overwhelmed,
it's critical to “be there,” but by
definition, easy to overwhelm!

In this case, avoid talking, petting,
training attempts at first.

Just be there!



Photo courtesy of the ASPCA®

Use Dogs as Social Facilitators?

Who is a social partner
to the dog?

A person? Or a Dog?

If the dog is comfortable
with other dogs, social
facilitation can be the key
to recovery.



Autonomy

Autonomy is essential to a balanced mind and body for dogs and people.



Autonomy

Create choices!

- Use basic principles of no force.
- Teach behaviors dogs can initiate themselves.
(body targeting for ex)
- Teach tricks.



Healthy & Balanced Internal Physiology



Photo courtesy of Vic Neumann

Exercise & Time Outdoors have a profoundly therapeutic effect on dogs & people, both on healing from trauma and developing resilience.

How Long Does It Take?



It depends! (Of course!) Every dog is different.

But... It might take less time than you think.

But... Patience always a virtue!

**Every dog has the ability
to build resilience!**



Resources

Contact the Anti-Cruelty Behavior Rehab Center
by email: Behavior.Rehab@aspca.org

ASPCApro Webinar: Canine Behavior & Acoustics
www.ASPCApro.org/acoustics

www.patriciamcconnell.com/reading-room
[or learning center]



I can't be "everything to everybody," but you can help me be the BEST I can be.

