

Rescue dog Albie: if only children could be so accommodating

Rescue dog Albie is making a good impression on his owner Peter Zheutlin. Straight from the pound, the rescue dog's patience and calm is remedying Zheutlin's adoption anxiety.

By [Peter Zheutlin](#) / January 28, 2013



Peter Zheutlin

Rescue dog Albie is pleasantly well-behaved. A welcomed relief to the uneasiness owner Peter Zheutlin felt about adopting an unfamiliar dog.

If patience is a virtue, Albie, our part golden retriever, part yellow Lab, is virtuous in spades. I've never seen a dog so willing to wait calmly for the things he wants – a treat, a belly rub, a pat on the head – though there is one exception. When he senses we're getting ready to take him for a walk, and he has an uncanny way of knowing, he can hardly contain his excitement. He rears up on his hind legs like -- and I'm going to date myself here -- Fury, the black stallion who starred with Peter Graves in the eponymous 1950s television show. Then he barks, which is completely out of character. But he otherwise displays an almost preternatural calm.

For example, he never wakes us up to go out in the morning no matter how late we sleep and, one presumes, how urgent his need might be to relieve himself. He watches us eat dinner from a respectful distance, never begging for food, something virtually unheard of in Labs. When we come in from a walk on a wet day and his paws and legs are covered with dirt, he sits patiently offering up one paw at a time to be wiped off. Though he doesn't voluntarily get into the tub when it's bath time, he stands stock still even as I pour water over his head to rinse the doggie shampoo from his fur. He offers no resistance when I clean the wax from his ears or brush his teeth. If only my children had been so accommodating!

Adopting a dog was a huge leap for me: I fretted about how much work it would entail, the limits it would place on our ability to be spontaneous, and whether the dog would even be lovable enough to make it all worthwhile. In essence, the same anxieties I had about having kids. To be fair, I did have a little more information about Albie than I had about either of my boys. For them I had a blurry ultrasound image and a mild faith in the genetic dice. With Albie there were a couple of photos, a twenty second video (quite fetching) and the raves of the volunteer from Labs 4 Rescue attesting to his high moral character and lovability. But still, as with kids, you never really know what you're going to get.

Now, more than six months into this new phase in our lives, I can't imagine a dog more perfectly suited to our family and, more to the point, to me. He's made every day better – not necessarily easier, but better. He's the calm when it's hectic, and the balm when it's been a bad day. He's the reminder, as he lopes with pure joy across a snow-covered fairway, that we need to sometimes set aside our human concerns and worries and just be in the moment. He's the one we can count on not to judge us even as we judge ourselves. And he's the one who waits patiently at the window, sometimes for hours, for me to come home. Patience is a virtue.