

## What is Your New Greyhound Thinking? by Kathleen Gilley



What is your new adopted Greyhound thinking?

This breed has never been asked to do anything for itself, make any decisions or answer any questions. It has been waited on, paw and tail. The only prohibition in a racing Greyhound's life is not to get into a fight -- or eat certain stuff in the turnout paddock.

Let us review a little. From weaning until you go away for schooling, at probably a year and a half, you eat, grow and run around with your siblings. When you go away to begin your racing career, you get your own "apartment," in a large housing development. No one is allowed in your bed but you, and when you are in there, no one can touch you, without plenty of warning.

Someone hears a vehicle drive up, or the kennel door being unlocked. The light switches are flipped on. The loud mouths in residence, and there always are some, begin to bark or howl. You are wide awake by the time the human opens your door to turn you out. A Greyhound has never been touched while he was asleep.

You eat when you are fed, usually on a strict schedule. No one asks if you are hungry or what you want to eat. You are never told not to eat any food within your reach. No one ever touches your bowl while you are eating. You are not to be disturbed because it is important you clean your plate.

You are not asked if you have to "go outside." You are placed in a turnout paddock and it isn't long before you get the idea of what you are supposed to do while you are out there. Unless you really get out of hand, you may chase, rough house and put your feet on everyone and everything else. The only humans you know are the "waiters" who feed you, and the "restroom attendants" who turn you out to go to the bathroom. Respect people? Surely you jest.

No one comes into or goes out of your kennel without your knowledge. You are all-seeing and all-knowing. There are no surprises, day in and day out. The only thing it is ever hoped you will do is win, place or show, and that you don't have much control over. It is in your blood, it is in your heart, it is in your fate-- or it is not.

And when it is not, then suddenly you are expected to be a civilized person in a fur coat. But people don't realize you may not even speak English. Some of you don't even know your names, because you didn't need to. You were not asked or told to do anything as an individual; you were always part of the "condo association"; the sorority or fraternity and everyone did everything together, as a group or pack. The

How many dogs have been returned because they did not know how to tell the adopter when they had to go out? How many for jumping on people, getting on furniture, counter surfing, separation anxiety, or defensive actions due to being startled or hurt (aka growling or biting)? So, let's understand: Sometimes it isn't the dog's "fault" he cannot fit in. He is not equipped with the social skills of a six- year old human but you can teach him. With love!