

BARC's No More Weeping Willow-call name Willow

He had been named Derek after "Dr. McDreamy" on Gray's Anatomy, great name one would think. No, not for this puppy; there was nothing McDreamy about him. Rescued from somewhere, I have never gotten the details; this boy was so afraid, spooky, and anxious that to make eye contact overloaded his senses. Yet, there was something about him; he had the softest face and eyes begging to be released from the inner turmoil that engulfed him.

I too was begging to be released from inner turmoil that engulfed me. I lost my husband, Bruce, to cancer in March, my older Berner, Missy, unexpectedly in late August, and I had just buried my father. The pain from the grief was nearly incomprehensible.

When I had asked BARC for a puppy, I meant a little puppy, not one that was nearly the size of a horse and weighed 90 pounds. However, the little puppies BARC had didn't work out for one reason or another. Derek was destined to be the one sent to heal my soul.

I saw Derek right after he arrived at his foster home, on the way back home to Louisville from burying my father. He was an emotional wreck, I was an emotional wreck. He wouldn't even let me look at him, I couldn't touch him. That's OK; if someone looked at me or touched me I broke into tears. He spent about three weeks being fostered by an incredible family; I spent those three weeks trying to get my life back to a semblance of normalcy.

During the three weeks in foster care, we decided to rename Derek. We decided on BARC's No More Weeping Willow, call name Willow. The name has significance for both of Willow and me; it means "No More Tears, No More Pain." Willow reminded his foster mom of her dog, Willie which she loved intensely but lost too soon to cancer. The name just fit.

When I brought Willow home in November, he still had an incredible amount of baggage as most rescues do. He still wasn't housebroken, had never played with a toy, wouldn't eat in front of me, wouldn't cross the threshold to come into the house after going out to potty, and worst of all wouldn't let me look at him. However, he did immediately bond with my five year old Berner female, Kenzie. Kenzie stepped right up and took the lead; she instantly became his life line to the real world. She showed Willow what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and in dog speak why to do it. Willow took all cues from Kenzie.

I knew I couldn't handle the traditional Christmas back home in Cleveland without Bruce and Dad so I decided to travel 3800 miles round trip to Nova Scotia. I would spend Christmas with Claire, Sherman's mom. Since I was spending the holidays with Sherman's mom and dad it only made sense that I would bring my two Berners, right?

When I left for the trip, Willow still wouldn't look at me or let me look at him. He wouldn't come to me; he wouldn't let me come to him to touch him. But something magical happened on that trip. Slowly he began letting me touch him, he would come over for short pets and then longer rubs. While in Nova Scotia, he became comfortable enough to climb up on the couch with me and then up on the bed. He even climbed up on the couch with Claire.

Now back home, Willow has decided he loves his forever home. He has unpacked what seems to be a Hollywood starlet's amount of baggage Kerplol!

I believe in serendipity. I believe that Willow was sent to me to learn about trust. I must trust in God that my life, while drastically different without Bruce and now my dad, will be OK. And this beautiful creature of God will learn that not all humans bring pain and misery, that it is OK to trust his mommy. No More Tears, No More Pain. Together we will make a great team.

Patti Finley-Louisville, KY

Willow
Patti Finley

