

'On the Ground' Zine

Issue No.2 | November 2022



Lisa Shannon's dogs social resting #slowdogmovementphilosophy

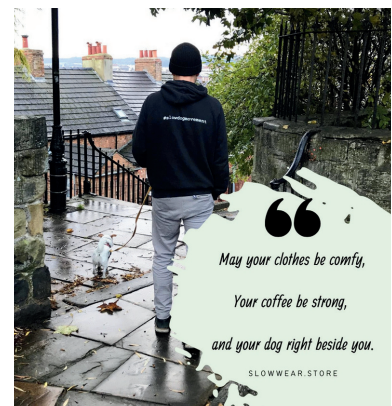
How to be more like your dog with 'Wu Wei.'

written by Laura Dobb

Humans love to complicate life. Many of us say that we want a simple life, yet often, our life is anything but this. There are many reasons for this. They range from economic, political, relationship, health, or personal development. We could have suffered trauma in our past and are habitually living a life of drama.

Some of us consciously choose to have a busy life. Our dogs live alongside us. They have their own inner life yet find themselves within our story. We often have choices within our life. Our dogs rely upon us and have much less choice. We choose when they eat, toilet and often when and where they experience nature, when the sleep and who they socialise with. This is just the way it is.

Continued on page two



“

*May your clothes be comfy,
Your coffee be strong,
and your dog right beside you.*

SLOWWEAR STORE

'On the Ground'

“

You have to allow a certain amount of time in which you are doing nothing in order to have things occur to you, to let your mind think.

”

— Mortimer Adler



Photo credit **Eva Kittelsen**

'On the Ground'

How to be more like your dog with 'Wu Wei.' continued

written by Laura Dobb

This article is not to assert any blame or shame. It asks, how can we truly simplify our lives within the eye of the storm – amidst the drama of life and therefore make things better for our dogs?

Without getting overly political, the world is in flux at this moment. Systems are changing and there is an air of 'chaos' in many spheres. War, threat of food shortages and inflation are mentioned often in the news. Human relationships have never been easy and now, many are feeling a strain. When it comes to our dogs, they feel it too. Because our emotional life affects our dogs through their senses and physiological being(1), it is helpful to be mindful of our expression of stress. We are all individuals, dogs included. You may feel that none of the above resonates with you. Hang on though. Everyone can benefit from learning how 'doing nothing' with your dog does not mean the pursuit of sloth.



Miho Beckmann's dogs social resting and sun bathing in Germany

I grew up with a father who was always reading books about esoteric life. One of the authors I remember most is **Wu Wei Wu**, who's real name was **Terence James Stannus Gray**. He started as a playwright and then went on to write several books about philosophy and metaphysics. His name literally means 'doing nothing doing.' His name has stuck in my head. I have read many books about esoteric beliefs and metaphysical philosophy, but I have not yet read his — yet. The 'path' of learning is not always straightforward, and this is a good thing! It takes the pressure off us and our dogs. Our relationship with ourselves and with our dogs is not usually linear in nature.

'The Way never acts yet nothing is left undone'(2). This is the paradox of *wu wei*. It doesn't mean not acting, it means 'effortless action' or 'actionless action'. In other words, it doesn't mean to '...fall into laziness or apathy...' – instead, this way of being encourages us to relax enough that we can 'go with the flow,' like water or be a bit like a person who has had a wee drink. But not to literally drink! Be alert, yet fluid. Be present, but not intense. Can you imagine feeling this way when 'doing nothing' with your dog? Or, even when you are doing 'something?'

'It means being at peace while engaged in the most frenetic tasks so that one can carry these out with maximum skill and efficiency. Something of the meaning of 'wu wei' is captured when we talk of being 'in the zone' – at one with what we are doing, in a state of profound concentration and flow.' (3)

To me, this means letting go of expectations, assumptions, and planning things — whether you are walking with your dog, sitting beside them, lying on the bed with them or just sharing a space with your best friend. In my own life, I have felt '*wu wei*' when I practiced the Japanese martial art of Aikido. I was going to the Aikido dojo regularly when we adopted our Westie, Bonnie at age six months, from my Mum. Because of this practice, I think that I was able to bond with Bonnie in a very real way. I really had no expectations of her. I followed her cues when walking through the deserted play parks in our neighbourhood and felt 'at one' with her. If you can harness this feeling, the closest I can describe it to be like, is when dancing or sex is joyful – you are paradoxically very much in your body but not focused on yourself:

'Wu wei' is closely connected to the Daoist reverence for the natural world, for it means striving to make our behaviour as spontaneous and inevitable as certain natural processes, and to ensure that we are swimming with rather than against currents. We are to be like the bamboo that bends in the wind or the plant that adjusts itself to the shape of a tree. 'Wu wei' involves letting go of ideals that we may otherwise try to force too violently onto things; it invites us instead to respond to the true demands of situations, which tend only to be noticed when we put our own ego-driven plans aside.' (4)

Modern life often includes tasks that feel separate from each other. Working either inside or outside of the home, cooking, caregiving (children, parents), walking our dog, hobbies etc. When we are doing one thing, we are likely thinking of what's next. We may be remembering something from the recent past – a conversation, or how our dog reacted to a situation and how that could happen again. '*Wu wei*' is urging us to be open to the unknown.(5) While observation is important, really seeing your dog is the point. This means letting go of ideas of perception and being open to what is in front of you.

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'On the Ground'

How to be more like your dog with 'Wu Wei.' *continued*

written by Laura Dobb

If you think about it, dogs can't be anything else but 'wu wei.' Their state of being is honest and their reactions pure. They do bend in the wind, like the bamboo and flow like water. Like us, they can have baggage. But unlike us, they are not thinking about themselves. When humans are in the early days of love, our focus is solely on the person in question. We are not looking at our phones, zoning out and thinking about someone else, or checking the news headlines. All relationships must come out of this intense state and become more comfortable yet many of us seem addicted to distractions. It's part of our popular culture but we can practice and make a habit of 'wu wei' at any point.

Just like any new way of doing things, starting out slow and regular is the easiest. Like our other #slowdogmovementphilosophy ideas, taking the time to sit with your dog, allowing your dog to lead and be free to move on a 'slow walk' or trying to integrate #oneminuteofslow into your relationship with your dog – it's all about creating the best life for you and your dog. Whatever helps you remember 'wu wei' — the feeling of fresh love, the swaying bamboo, flowing like water, feeling tipsy or simply, watching your dog for his Daoist essence, I urge you to try this one on.

Citations:

- [1] Long-term stress levels are synchronized in dogs and their owners, Ann-Sofie Sundman, Enya Van Poucke, Ann-Charlotte Svensson Holm, Åshild Faresjö, Elvar Theodorsson, Per Jensen & Lina S. V. Roth Scientific Reports volume 9, Article number: 7391 (2019): <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-43851-x>
[2][3][4] <https://www.theschooloflife.com/article/wu-wei-doing-nothing/>
[5] <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/maybe-its-just-me/201107/the-wisdom-wei-wu-wei-letting-good-things-happen>



Photo credit **Jaime Convery**

"He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals."

— **Emmanuel Kant**



Get to know:

Pennie Clayton

Slow Dog Movement co-director

Pennie Clayton is a Director at the **Slow Dog Movement®** and works with horses and dogs. She works on a freelance basis, coaches horses and riders to develop confidence and helps people understand their dogs better by providing support and training.

She has lived with lurchers and greyhounds for many years and loves spending time with her current two greyhound girls and a lurcher that constantly presents her with lots of problems!

In 2008 Pennie qualified as a human Bowen therapist and then studied further to become a canine and equine Bowen therapist. She recently set up and runs **Crabtree Canine Enrichment** in Sussex and writes regularly for Edition Dog magazine.

In 2016 she founded a Facebook group called **Enhancing the Life of Your Hound**. She is currently writing a book about how to live with an ex racing greyhound which is due to be published soon!



photo credit **Laine Kupča** - Amadeuss 'just watching the sea.'

'On the Ground'

I want to adopt a Border Collie (part 2)

written by Santos Salcines Nazabal

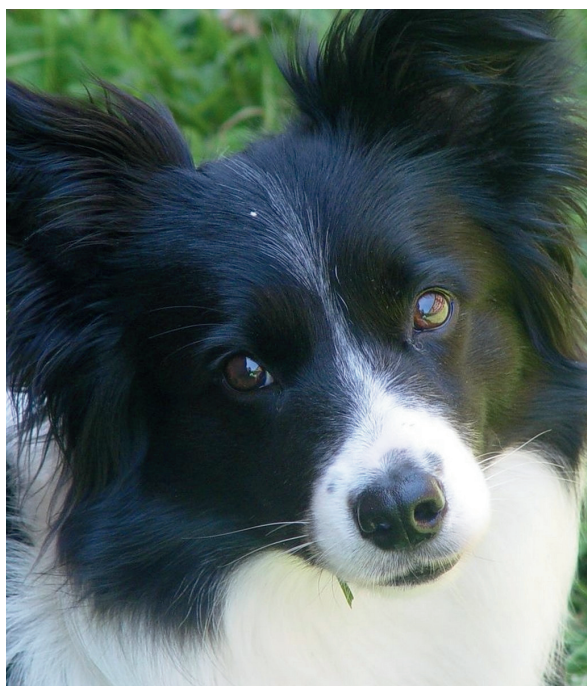


photo credit Santos Salcines Nazabal

It is fortunate that they have so much attraction. They are pretty, smart, suicidal in acrobatics, and obsessive about any sports. They become true junkies of everything you ask of them, in addition to being able to learn algebra in a weekend. But they are unlucky enough to need you to understand them just like you do any other dog. Besides that, same intelligence, it can be a curse when it comes to branding in his mind that the human is a threat.

The dog has a past that no matter how hard you try or believe; it cannot be erased. In the case of a Border Collie, he will so anticipate what is going to happen because of his experiences, that he will act long before you can give a humane explanation for the behaviour he has just offered. In 13 years of rehabilitating Border Collies, I have never seen so many as emotionally shattered as they are now. Before they were discarded from herding or from litters that they wanted to get rid of. Now they are insecure dogs with many fears, raised in a family environment but unfortunately commonly separated before two months from their mother and siblings.

Their needs supposedly go through tiring them for at least three hours a day so that later they are calm at home. If we start with training, ball, Frisbee from puppies, the more the better.

Result = Dogs that either do not know how to be quiet or no longer trust their own shadow. They have many chances to end up abandoned and the excuse for this will also be the breed that helped them to be the chosen ones. The bad, as we said before, it is that everything they have learned to associate negatively with emotional disarray, they will carry on their back. These dogs have been taught that children are dangerous, that other dogs are to blame for pulling their leashes, that walks are stressful, and you can't feel safe even in your own home. From then on, both the protector, the collection centre or the adopter can hide it or ignore it. But the dog will not do it. He carries that baggage of experiences, and it is fair that he does not go through the same thing that has made him end up in this situation.

The job of the person who puts him up for adoption is to give all the information, that the dog is evaluated by an educator and to find the right adopter for each dog. A separate chapter would be to talk about those who do not understand that a dog that does not tolerate children is best go to a house without children. That one who is afraid of people, noises, and cars, it is best not to live in the centre of a city. That one who has bitten needs space and that we be careful when approaching. Those who are distrustful need to get used to the house before you let your cousins, uncles and nephews come to meet you.

Do we ask too much? Yes. Neither the one who gives the dog usually tells everything, nor does the dog evaluate it and is helped by an educator and on too many occasions he does not go to the right home. In the latter, there are no magic wands and no crystal balls to know what will happen once you get home. We can make mistakes even apparently finding the best adopter. Let's say we do all the above well. The new managers must have individualized guidelines for that dog. Same scenario as the dog, we must deal with humans. On the one hand we are the voice of the little angel that tells them how they should do it, but the voice over the other shoulder tells them: "you have had a dog all your life", "have a dog it is not so difficult", "Who does this guy think he is?"...

90% will not listen to you and thanks to the fact that the dog is a master of adaptation, most of the time it works out well. We remain as alarmists and catastrophists, smartasses who complicate existence. But what if it goes wrong? In the best of cases, the dog will have had another bad experience that will have caused him significant stress. In the worst of cases, abandonment. It will have been preceded by a traumatic event, in which after having defended himself, he has received blows and shouts. Each traumatic situation brings him closer to being invisible in the shelter or to being classified as non-adoptable.

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'On the Ground'

I want to adopt a Border Collie (part 2)

written by Santos Salcines Nazabal, *continued*

Adopting is not just an act of kindness before which the dog must show eternal gratitude. Adopting is a commitment of acceptance, respect, collaboration, and empathy. Just in case it is necessary, he clarified that the commitment is from us to the dog. What we should not do is stop asking for help when we need it, and we cannot have the feeling of being alone during the entire adaptation process. I prefer an adopter who asks questions frequently, than one that asks once it's too late. We are talking about Border Collies because, like the Malis, they are breeds that fashion ends up turning into dogs that are both in demand and abandoned. A dog, treated like a dog and meeting his needs as a dog. He will have a simpler life than a dog treated as a breed and covering through it, the needs of a human. Border Collies and shepherd dogs in general, are the ones I know best, and I could say my favourites.

This text is a commission from @Borderssinfronteras

Many Border Collies are abandoned for not finding a balance between what we think we should give them and what they really need. A Border Collie can live in an apartment, in a house with a garden or on a farm. Each place has its characteristics, and the dog will respond much more to the environment than to the supposed needs of its breed.

ANJANA, in memoriam

Slow Dog Movement Stories from our Worldwide Community....

'Silvos' written by Karoline Schlögl

I saw Silvos ten years ago in a photo from a Slovakian dog rescue organization when he was about six months old. It had been half a year after I lost my first dog "Gia", a Border Collie Mix with whom I spent more than half of my life (14 years). Silvos looked scared and shy in this photo, and I decided to try to be his foster mum to see if we match, because not much was known about him, and he came directly from the Slovakian shelter. When they shoved this little dog (compared to "Gia") in my arms at a parking spot, he gave one last look to the even smaller dog he had been kept in a box with and came with me. In the car he instantly sought body contact and even wanted to sit on my lap while I was driving. So, it became clear very fast that he came to stay with me.

"Dogs do speak, but only to those who know how to listen."

— Orhan Pamuk

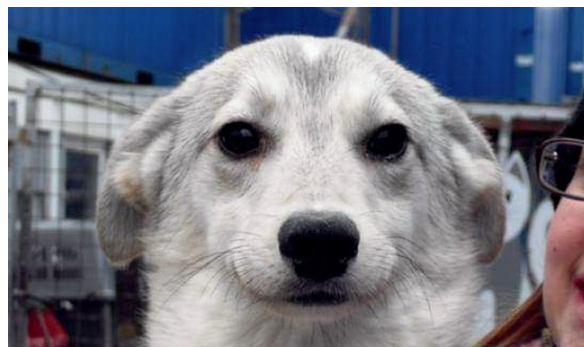


photo credit **Karoline Schlögl**

At first, Silvos was sleeping a lot and was adapting very well. But after a few days he started following my roommate's boyfriend, who said he feared dogs. It ended a few months later in losing my roommate because her boyfriend was scared to be home alone with my dog (while I was studying). I couldn't understand at that time what really happened. And see now that Silvos, now happy to have a home, started to defend it against others. Similar situations with strangers in our home occurred often. Silvos had a handful of people he liked which were welcome, others not so much. At that time, he just followed them and snapped if they touched my things.

We met some dogs that became his friends (one female dog especially) daily and he seemed to be content with his life. We now lived alone and when we met other people outside our home, he didn't seem too stressed to me. I must admit, although I became a veterinarian, at this time of my life I didn't know much about dog language or calming signals. I learned this one year after I met Silvos from a colleague who was not only a veterinarian but also a dog behaviourist. And when I started to observe dogs more, I could see the small signs and learned that Silvos was a reactive dog to people. I realised that I had to be more careful with him and that this is part of his personality. Also, it may have been due to the lack of socialization with people in the dog shelter or prior to this.

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photo credit **Karoline Schlögl**

'On the Ground'

'Silvos' written by Karoline Schlögl *Continued*



photo credit Karoline Schlögl

Realising this, I started to respect his feelings more and avoided situations we both couldn't handle, like visitors.

Three and a half years later we had to move to another city because I found a new job as an official veterinarian and Silvos couldn't see his dog friends anymore. He even had to live with two cats he didn't like and had to keep separate from him in our new home. I was occupied with my new job, and he lost his routine and had to adapt again. In the new city it seemed harder to find new dog friends and Silvos was now older as well. When I found my partner (who lived in another city) things were getting harder for us again. Although Silvos liked him, he didn't trust him with everything from the start. Trust had to be gained. I don't know if Silvos found it easier that my partner always left again after a few days just to return once more, or if this disturbed his beloved routine.

Long story short; one day Silvos bit a human while passing in the dark. It happened when my mother took him for a walk while I was working. At first, I thought it was due to my mother passing someone too close and not paying enough attention to him. But, a few months later, he bit someone in our garden again while I was nearby and could observe him. He growled and lunged first and bit only after the person didn't leave and even came closer (although I asked her to leave). Understanding that this was an unfortunate situation for all of us, I was still worried that something I did or didn't do made him react.

I worked a lot and couldn't spend as much time with him as I wanted to. The first dog trainer we consulted after this bite suggested that I had to give Silvos more to do because 'a tired dog is a good dog'. This seemed fair to me as I always felt guilty for having too little time for him. So, we started doing trick training. After a few months my partner said that he found this training ridiculous. He said that our dog seemed more stressed than before the trick training, because Silvos barked a lot during our training sessions which stressed me out as well.

We did our walks at a fast pace as well, with Silvos sometimes even pulling on the lead to go faster and thought that was fine for him, because otherwise he wouldn't be pulling.

Through the **Nordic Dog Trainers** on Facebook, I came across the **Slow Dog Movement**. I even did a few webinars. The more I found out about it the more it made sense to me and what had gone wrong in our relationship. Silvos always wanted to adapt to me. I often walked very fast, especially on our morning walks because I had to go to work. And on our afternoon walks he wanted to go fast because he slept the whole day and didn't know what to do with all his saved energy. Trick training didn't make him tired. It stressed him when I couldn't show him what I wanted him to do, so we quit.

After we changed to walking slower and often letting him decide where to go. He could do more of the activities he likes to do like just sniffing one spot for more than just a few seconds. His behaviour started to improve and now, people passing by with less distance are not so much of a problem anymore. I now concentrate our walks on him, and I am more present in the here and now. I pay much more attention to our surroundings as well which maybe is a bonus for him too. Before Silvos seemed often to have the need to defend his territory, which now is less and less important to him. I now often leave my cell phone at home and just take it with me to take pictures of him. I believe we are now again at a point where he trusts me, and I know that I can trust him as well. Our walks are just our walks and not for someone else or for physical training. I am so glad I found the **Slow Dog Movement** and hope many people will follow this path for the benefit of our dogs.

Karoline Schlögl is a Vet at Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung in Graz, Austria.
She has been a member of our FB group for 2 years.

'On the Ground'

Slow Dog Movement Stories from our Worldwide Community....

'Miri' written by Jean Fitch

It was 10 o'clock on a Monday morning that the life-changing phone call came. I like to think it was a transformational moment for Miriam (Miri) as much as it was for me.

Having been without a Dachshund for almost a year, the emptiness had begun to feel immense. Dachshunds had been in my life continuously for over 40 years, until I lost my boy, Ollie, at the grand age of seventeen and a half. Already on the list as a potential lock-down foster, I just knew the moment was right to take the plunge and open my home, and my heart, to a rescue for life. The phone rang three weeks to the day from my application.

A 6-year-old Black & Tan mini Dachshund needed rehoming. The only issue, she was in Cardiff (which was still in Covid lock-down) and she had to be rehomed immediately. It took me all of 2 seconds to say 'YES'.

The wheels were set in motion and arrangements made for the following morning. I was to meet the rescue coordinator, who would be travelling with a letter giving her permission to leave Wales, at a Services a hundred miles from my hometown, being a half-way point.

No one from the rescue had actually seen Miri, as all contact with the elderly owner, who had made the distressing decision to surrender her precious girl, had been over the phone. Reports were, however, that Miri was rather overweight and quite nervous.

As I sat in the service station carpark, I spoke on the phone with a member of staff from Dachshund Rescue UK, Miri was on her way. A photo was emailed on to me, and I had the first vision of my new girl, substantial in stature and beautiful.

My first in-the-flesh sighting was of her little face peeping out from under a blanket. Even the photo, however, hadn't prepared me for when Miri was lifted out of the car. I've seen many plump Dachshunds in my time, but Miri was a super jumbo. Picking her up to carry her to my van further reinforced the scale of her weight issue.

Handing a dog over in the middle of a service station car park made both myself and the rescue co-ordinator feel rather uncomfortable, and we commented just how easy the moving on of animals by illegal gangs must be, those around unquestioning of our activity.

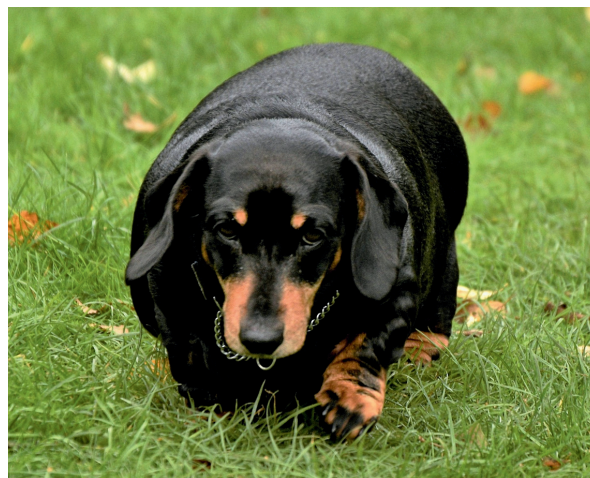


photo credit **Jean Fitch**

Serenaded by Classic fm, there wasn't a peep out of Miri for the whole journey home.

Despite having allowed me to pick her up at the hand-over, trying to get Miri from the crate on arriving back at my house, however, proved a greater challenge. As I went to lift her out, a growl and snarl were her message that she was just too afraid for that.

Continued on page eight

A white dog is looking at a Christmas gift pack. The pack includes a fan tote bag, a calendar, and a Christmas card. The background is decorated with snowflakes and festive lights.

Christmas is coming!
Support the **Slow Dog Movement**
with our 'SLOW seasonals'
'Dreaming of a SLOW Christmas
gift pack' £25* only!
Visit **slowwear.store**
Includes: 2 ZINES (Nos. 1 & 2), our 2023 Fan
Calendar, a white logo black fan tote bag and a
blank Slow Dog Movement Christmas card!
*doesn't include postage

'On the Ground'

Slow Dog Movement Stories from our Worldwide Community....

'Miri' written by Jean Fitch, *continued*

With difficulty, I carried her in the crate and took her to my back garden, assuming she might need a wee after her long trek from Wales. Thankfully, the sun was shining, and the air was warm. I opened the crate and put a bowl of water and a little bit of food just near it. I kept popping out to check, and my every movement was followed by a pair of soulful eyes. It was nearly 2 hours from having got home that I heard a noise and went to investigate. Miri was in my conservatory and looking to head into the kitchen. I stepped to try and help her over the threshold, but sheer panic saw her leap indoors.

At least she was now inside, but I sensed she was still not ready for any human contact. I left her in the kitchen but, confidence growing, a short while later she waddled through to the lounge. Progress was being made, though she remained constantly on alert until a few hours passed, when her eyes started to get heavy, and her head went down for a snatched slumber.

I made no attempt to force any attention on Miri but, when sitting, I held my hand down and, before too long, a little wet nose approached and sniffed it.

As the day passed, occasional tickles were permitted, with obvious pleasure on her face, before pulling the shutters down again and sending a warning rumble.

The poor girl was clearly affected by her weight. Her breathing was stertorous and mobility difficult. Her abdomen and chest rubbed on the ground when she walked and there were folds of skin on her back legs which were furrowed, dry and hairless. Her tail was firmly tucked away.

Settling in for the evening, the wood burner lit, Miri found a spot in front of it and fell asleep. Any movement from me, though, still triggered alertness, but eye contact was now being made and there were even a couple of times when the tail appeared and showed a slight quiver.

The food I had put down when we arrived home had remained untouched, but I placed it near her. This time she ate, not voraciously, as I had expected she would, but very delicately and slowly.



photo credit **Jean Fitch**

The next challenge was how to get her outside to do the necessary before lights-out. When she started walking around the room, I guessed it a sign she needed to go. Slowly, I approached and, bending down, took my hands either side of her, an absence of growling being taken as a sign she was alright with this. I braced myself and lifted her, taking her outside to the garden. Rain was now falling, and she stood like a statue for a while, but then walked a few steps, did a wee and followed me back indoors.

I woke several times that first night and could hear rasping snoring from downstairs. Besides the noise of her breathing, though, there wasn't a peep out of her all night.

I woke early and headed down to greet my new guest. Miri had taken herself into her bed and was snuggled with a blanket. I sat on the floor beside her, and she let me stroke her back. She, then, tipped her body over to reveal a bit of her substantial belly and allowed it to be tickled. Trying to pick her up to take her outside was a step too far though, and a slight warning rumble made me step away and leave her to settle again.

Attempts to attach a lead to her collar were also thwarted until, whilst being permitted to tickle her ears and chin, I was able to rotate the collar and attach the lead. Amazingly, she immediately trotted along very happily. Adopting the same technique, several short trips out into the street ensued so she could have a sniff of her new neighbourhood.

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"I think dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me, they are the role model for being alive."

— Gilda Radner (comedienne)

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'On the Ground'

Slow Dog Movement Stories from our Worldwide Community....

'Miri' written by Jean Fitch *continued*

The evening saw a huge breakthrough. It was clear she craved fuss and attention and each time I dropped my hand down she now came for what she, being the Welsh girl she is, would call a cwch (Welsh word for 'cuddle'). I had seen a couple of slight tail twitches earlier in the day but what happened next was delightful. As she stood looking at me, I patted the sofa beside me, and her tail went into an almighty wag. After witnessing the same reaction several times, I decided she was giving me permission to lift her up. The rest of the evening was spent with a snoring Dachshund snuggled up to me, taking up the vast majority of the couch. She then rolled almost full over and demanded a belly rub.

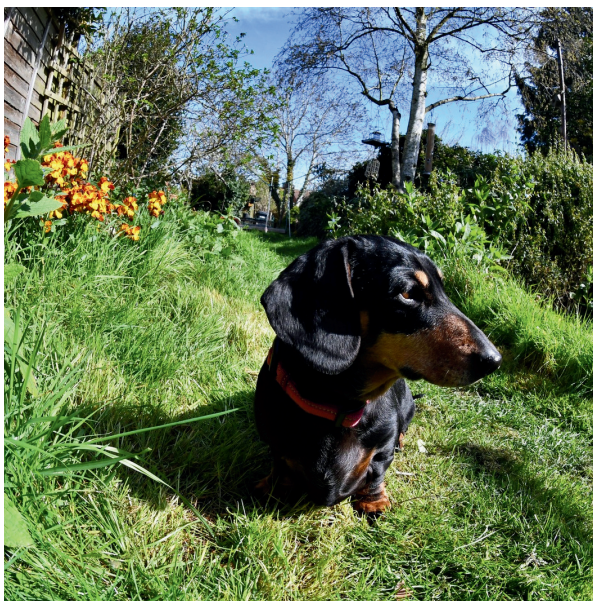


photo credit **Jean Fitch**

The following morning, I was greeted by a wagging Dachshund. From that moment onward, the tail has not stopped waving, often going into overdrive. It is very clear fuss is top of her agenda. She frequently demands belly rubs and is an absolute lovebug.

As regards her weight, paperwork from when she was 5 years old shows her at 12.5kg. The journey to restoring Miri to good health began and, clearly, diet was going to be key, her ideal weight being estimated at under 6kg. This was managed in close collaboration with the veterinary nurses, gradually reducing Miri's intake over a 6-month period to maintain a steady weight-loss.

Logic also suggested that exercise was going to be important, and I started building up the distance I was walking Miri, trekking her over local fields and footpaths. The issue, in this regard, was that her back legs were buckling under her weight, there was no clearance between her chest, belly and the ground, her breathing was under strain, and she couldn't lift her head up due to excess fat deposits. Furthermore, Miri came to me in October, meaning the winter months in England were looming ahead of us. It was at this fortuitous moment, whilst searching the internet, I came across the **Slow Dog Movement**, and I had an epiphany – slowing right down was the answer. Far from feeling guilt at ceasing with the boot-camp style marches, my discovery enlightened me to discover that the opposite was what was required, and that slowing down was exactly what Miri needed. Indeed, it was clear that continuing to impose the prior regimen on Miri was not actually in her best interest.

The **Slow Dog Movement** showed me that Miri could exercise and be stimulated in a far more beneficial way for her. It turned out the new approach held huge bonuses for me, too. Being a keen nature photographer, I spend much time in my garden or out in the countryside, by rivers or in woodlands. Sitting, or walking slowly, opens my eyes to things I would otherwise miss when going at speed. It was apparent that continuing to do this was not only possible, but perfect, for Miri too. Whilst I'm delighting in my surroundings, Miri can spend her time following her nose, something that is very important to a hound, whilst strolling or running about at a pace of her own choosing. This approach has enabled her muscles to strengthen gradually, and in a way that has promoted improved positioning of her limbs. Between her meanderings, Miri will simply come and sit with me, taking in the view and the scents. When she wants, she can climb aboard my lap and settle for a cuddle and a snooze, before resuming her adventures. It's a win, win.

The, now, svelte Miri has been with me for 2 years, and I'm not quite sure where the time has gone since she came into my life, it has flown by. It's hard to imagine life without her, and I could not have wished for a better soulmate. And there's no need to guess where she now sleeps at night.

A note from Jean: *'I'm not able, as yet, to use a harness for Miri, as she still has loose skin from having been so big and a harness would chafe her. I did manage to remove the choke chain she arrived with, after a few weeks, once she would allow, and replaced it with a soft collar, using a leash or allowing her to roam free, depending on location.'*

Jean Fitch and Miri live in Bedford - they have been members of our FB group for 2 years.

'On the Ground'

Slow Dog Movement Philosophy *written by Santos Salcines Nazabal and Laura Dobb*

The #slowdogmovement aims to foster deeper relationships between dogs and humans, educate by 'showing the right way' (Turid Rugaas), and grow a like minded worldwide community of dog lovers embracing the value of SLOW.'

The **Slow Dog Movement® C.I.C.** is a social movement. We promote ethical values within the dog/human relationship. In keeping with the human ecosystem, we cultivate our respectful coexistence. We consider the deep knowledge of the physiology and needs of the dog.

The **Slow Dog Movement® C.I.C.** is not a forum to find "quick solutions" or "how-tos." Or to deal with a specific problem without knowing the dog, the family, and the environment in situ. For this reason, it is risky for us to answer these queries. They need a complete review by a friendly canine education professional. On many occasions, they should also include a multidisciplinary holistic approach.

The **Slow Dog Movement® C.I.C.** promotes self-knowledge and emotional development. Members can learn through 'master scenarios.' These are where each dog can display the entire repertoire of known natural behaviours. Due to lack of experience, some dogs do not even know these yet.

Dogs and humans often find slowing down complicated. Dogs may have the feeling that they need to protect themselves. How can they be aware when they don't know that they can feel otherwise?

Many dogs do not know that going outside can be slow. They do not know that they can go for a walk without pulling on the leash. Without barking. Without a concerned human accompanying them during the walk.

The **Slow Dog Movement® C.I.C.** promotes and shares values such as:

#circleoftrust
#beyourdogsbestfriend
#forestbathingwithyourdog
#inpraiseofslow
#inpraiseofslowness
#slowwalks

And other 'non-hashtag' ideas!

We also support initiatives like @streetdogsarefamilytoo in India and <https://www.sensorygarden4dogs.com/>, a worldwide project.

What we suggest as guidelines within our philosophy:

- The relationship with our dog is the primary focus.
- It's a dog's choice – choice to walk, speed, play, meeting other dogs, humans, chews, sleep, contact etc. Choice builds confidence and is a dog's right.
- Slow enables observation. It's important to observe a dog and what they are communicating.
- Humans must slow down so that their dogs can do the same.
- Studying the 'dog ethogram' and support of natural dog behaviours.
- The 90% calm, 10% aroused ratio is a suggested aim.
- Focus on movement and activity that supports a healthy body and brain.
- Respect for our dogs as sentient beings and individuals.
- Appropriate equipment – well fitted harness and long, loose leash, minimum 3m.
- Ask yourself why it's important to you to engage in training/commands, whether it be 'positive' or 'fear free.'
- In terms of dogs and sports/hobbies, ask yourself, would your dog engage in these activities if left to their own desires?
- Always fulfil the basic needs of your dog and remember to check their emotional requirements as well.
- Slow walks and other recommended activities on our page can really help rescue dogs and dogs with fear and anxiety.
- Take your time to get to know your dog and support their individual character and needs.

How to find us at the Slow Dog Movement® C.I.C.

<http://www.slowdogmovement.org>
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FB, IG & Twitter:
[@slowdogmovement](#)
[#slowdogmovement](#)

This '**On the Ground**' ZINE is published quarterly and available via our website as a limited edition copy for **£5** or at a reduced rate if you become a member of our community. *Details coming soon!*

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'On the Ground'

“ *They are also social sleepers. They don't necessarily have to be in physical contact with one another, but definitely in the presence of other dogs (or people). Dogs that are alone tend not to sleep very well.* ”

— **Dr Amber Batson, BVetMed MRCVS**
Nordic Dog Symposium 2018



Photo credit **Samantha Winslow**