

After living with us uneventfully for over a year, my dog (let's call him "Harry") began showing signs of aggression toward my husband. The first sign of aggression occurred when my husband entered a room, waking Harry and me from our nap. I didn't think much about this at the time, thinking, "well, let sleeping dogs lie."

But things escalated, going from growling to teeth baring, to lunging and snapping. Cluelessly, I thought Harry was guarding me, "protecting" me, and I even felt a little flattered.

But when Harry bit my husband and began to snarl, lunge and snap at him even when I was nowhere near, it was clear we had entered another realm, which was serious, frightening, and potentially dangerous. I called our breeder, whose first words were, "Call Emma. Now." And so we did.

Harry, my husband and I began to work with Emma via Zoom. She listened intently to everything we said, and asked a lot of questions. I always found her to be professional, knowledgeable, intuitive, and above all, interested in Harry's well-being and in our quality of life as a family. She helped us to understand more about what was going on in Harry's little terrier mind and instincts, which helped with my anthropomorphism. We made progress in several areas. Unfortunately, Harry continued to manifest aggression, although in new and different ways.

Eventually, the subject of re-homing came up. Had Emma not created such a safe-feeling, judgment-free zone, I don't think I could have seriously even discussed re-homing, let alone consider it. I had felt tremendously guilty that I hadn't been able to do for Harry what he needed in order for him to be able to live happily with us. And

there was an element of shame, too, at what I felt was abdicating my responsibility to him, and for waiting longer than I should have to address his escalating behavior. We had reached a point where we could not go on as we had, but secretly, I had feared that there would be no alternative but euthanasia, and I loved my little guy too much for that to be something I could even contemplate.

Emma did not advocate for or against either re-homing or continuing to do training work with Harry. Instead, throughout all our discussions, she gave us information based on her experience, expertise and insight, which was essential to our making a good decision for Harry and for us. She compassionately helped us to accept that re-homing was not a selfish or negligent act, as I had secretly feared. She helped us understand that there were families who would love to share their lives with Harry, and who could do things for him that we hadn't been able to, making us realize that he could have a positive and happier future. Emma was always direct and frank, while always being kind and compassionate, as we navigated these difficult waters.

Once we reached the point of accepting that a suitable match for Harry could be found, and that his life could be better, much of our anxiety and fear went away. We were able to move forward with re-homing with a sense of confidence that this was the best thing for us and for Harry. He would have new opportunities to thrive, and a new family could fall in love with him the way we had. Through the combined efforts of Emma and our breeder, a new family was found, vetted, interviewed and approved. They have experience with similar dogs, their life styles are perfectly suited to Harry's and they are committed to the course of training that we would not have been able to carry out.

The time since Harry has been gone has not been easy. We miss him and our hearts are heavy for his absence. But we have had absolutely no second thoughts about the course we chose, because we believe in our hearts that this was best for him. Frankly, we are a little envious of Harry's new family for the joy they will have with him, but we take great satisfaction in knowing what happy times they will all have together.