



## **BARC Fearful & Shy Dogs**

Here are some suggestions and tried and true techniques for gaining the trust of your new Bernese Mountain Dog.

Some of our Berners are scared and timid after rescue. This is a very common problem in dogs rescued from puppy mills that were not properly socialized. Please do not take it personally, as hard as that is to do! Be patient, it can take several months for these dogs to begin to relax and feel comfortable in new settings with new people. Being more afraid of men than woman could be because men are larger with deeper voices or it may be the dog has had bad experiences, or no experiences at all, with men in the past. In the end, it doesn't really matter WHY, you still need to help your dog understand you mean no harm; in fact, you will give him all the good things in life.

***Technique 1:*** Leave a leash attached to his collar all the time. He can drag a 6-foot leash around the house and outside in your yard. This way you can simply step on the end and gently guide him where he needs to go. You will never have to corner him and grab his collar to get him.

***Technique 2:*** Hand Feeding. If you can hand feed all his meals, that would be great. If he will not take food from your hand, at least sit quietly on the floor with him in the same small room while he eats his meals.

***Technique 3:*** It is a good idea to spend quality time alone with him in a small room. Just sit on the floor and read a book or newspaper for 20 minutes or so. Ignore him. Don't force yourself on him but, from time to time, speak softly and toss a tasty and smelly treat in his direction. If he comes over to sniff you, ignore him. Do not reach to pet him. Let him explore you on his own and feel comfortable being close to you. Let him come close and move away again and repeat this as many times as you can.

***Technique 4:*** Carry a small plastic baggie of tasty, smelly treats around with you in your pocket. At random intervals hand him or gently toss him a treat. This needs to be good stuff such as chunks of cheese or slices of hot dog. He will soon start to associate you with good things.

***Technique 5:*** Use body language that speaks canine friendliness and harmlessness. Make sure you do not lean over him or make direct eye contact. Do not face him directly or stare into his face. Look at him out of the corner of your eye, or glance quickly at him, then away. Have a soft, friendly expression. Always move slowly and deliberately in his presence, no sudden moves or loud voices. Do not try to pet him on top of his head or body. Instead, touch him under his chin or chest.

***Good Luck and Don't Give Up!***