



Episode #1: Introducing the Believe in Your Dog Podcast

Sharing your life with a dog who suffers from separation anxiety isn't easy. your neighbors complain about the incessant barking. your house gets destroyed when you're away. You come home to find your beloved companion clearly in a state of panic. Maybe your dog has even injured themselves during periods of being left alone.

Separation anxiety is a heartbreaking behavior challenge that can be really tricky to resolve. There is SO MUCH conflicting and even harmful information out there. It can be a really overwhelming topic to navigate.

Welcome to the believe in your dog podcast, where you'll be able to find the most up to date and factual information about separation anxiety.

I'm Jackie (a certified separation anxiety trainer, an advocate for dogs, and the creator of believeinyourdog.com)

I'm here to help you decode separation anxiety so that you can increase your dog's welfare, quality of life, and gain back your freedom and peace of mind.

In each episode, I'll take you on a separation anxiety deep dive so that you can gain the confidence needed to help your dog feel safe when left home alone.

Welcome to the first episode of the believe in your dog podcast! I am super excited to finally be bringing this to life and want to thank you so much for joining me. In this episode, I just want to take some time to introduce myself and talk about what you can expect from this podcast.

So, I'm Jackie, I'm your host and the creator of Believe in Your Dog. I live in New Orleans, Louisiana with my lovely partners in crime (boyfriend: Forrest, and dog, Drake).

I've been working professionally with dogs since 2013. My first real job with dogs was as a dog walker, here in New Orleans. It was hot. It was exhausting. The pay was not good. BUT I really thrived when I spent time with dogs - and I think we can all relate to that.

After Hurricane Katrina, I relocated to Boulder, CO where I worked in a dog daycare for a hot minute. I hired a trainer from this dog daycare to help me with my own dog and everything that was recommended to me, felt SUPER.WRONG. But I didn't know any better. And so even though in my gut, it felt bad and wrong and uncomfortable, I went along with it, because I had no IDEA how to advocate for my own dog. And I had no idea that there was another way.

Fast forward a few months; I wanted a change. I just wasn't happy working in that environment anymore and so I landed a job as an adoption counselor at the humane society of boulder valley (shout out, AWESOME shelter with amazing awesome humans at the helm - seriously, if you're in the Boulder area and you have a puppy or dog, I highly recommend checking out their group classes.

Shelter work was grueling. Literal blood sweat and tears. Shelter work was also super rewarding. HSBV has a training & behavior department. All the trainers are credentialed - they apply force free/positive reinforcement/evidence based training - and I had NO IDEA what any of this meant. But, it was exactly what I needed to be exposed to at that moment in time. When I was exposed to this type of training, it's like everything clicked. Light bulbs went off, the sky parted and angels sang. And it changed the trajectory of my life forever. You can read more about this type of training in the show notes.

I was SO inspired, and probably a little obsessed with this new-to-me way of approaching dog training. I started gaining some training skills as a volunteer in the training & behavior department. I got my first behavior certification from the academy for dog trainers which is a FANTASTIC 2 year intensive training and counseling certification program. I became an employee of the training and behavior center. I worked with shelter dogs who were enrolled in our behavior modification program and. Over time, I gained a few more certifications and started doing private training consultations and teaching group classes.

And then one day, I walked Malena deMartini who put on a 2 day seminar on separation anxiety. the behavior challenge that many dog trainers do not want to touch with a ten foot pole. Why? It's HARD. It's complex. There's a stigma that it's unresolvable. So, of course, I was intrigued.

The things that really stood out to me from that seminar:

1 -Malena said that “the clients are the most dedicated, patient, committed in the world -
2 - Gradual exposure without food - this just fascinated the behavior nerd in me - as positive reinforcement trainers, we are often - usually - using food as rewards when we are training. And often we are using DS and CC when we’re working with fear or anxiety. Not so with separation anxiety training -which just blew my mind. I had to know more.
And 3 the icing on the cake: you get to work from home in your pajamas

I immediately signed up for Malena’s certification program and became a CSAT. I started taking cases as an independent contractor with Malena’s team. It was a really bumpy first year; my first cases were particularly challenging. I almost quit many times. And the cases just kept showing up, and I kept showing up. Now here I am, 4 years after becoming a CSAT, and literally all I do - and all I ever want to do - is separation anxiety training. It is SO fascinating, it’s SO rewarding, and Malena was 100% right, the clients are the most dedicated, most compassionate people you will ever meet.

Many of you may know that I have struggled with mental health issues in the past. The things I’ve learned in my work with humans and their dogs has greatly helped these challenges. In my journey to recovery, and in my work with dogs, there are countless parallels.

In both areas:

We learn to slow down, we learn empathy, we learn selflessness, we learn to pause and breathe, we learn to change behavior, and most importantly, we learn to really celebrate incremental success. We celebrate the small wins on the road to recovery.

So much that I have learned through my mental health journey has benefited my work with dogs and so much that I've learned in my work with dogs has benefited my mental health journey.

MY GOAL WITH THIS PODCAST

I want to share with you everything that I’ve learned from both these areas of my life: from home alone training/or dog training in general and from my mental health journey - these two areas intersect on a daily basis.

I hope to provide you with a solid foundation to start - so, our first few episodes are going to be super foundational - you may already know a lot of what we’ll be talking about, but I promise

there will be new nuggets of information here and there that will help you on your journey and build that strong foundational understanding is critical to really enjoying the more messy stuff we'll talk about down the road.

We're going to talk about what separation anxiety is, what it looks like, and how to determine whether or not your dog will benefit from the guidelines offered in this podcast. We'll talk about the key ingredients that will set you and your dog up for success. There's actually more to it than suspending absence and working at your dog's pace.

Once we get through the foundational stuff, we're going to start going down that messy & fascinating separation anxiety rabbit hole.

We're going to talk about the more complex parts of home alone training. We'll talk about noise phobia, puppies, senior dogs, data tracking, enrichment, the myths surrounding separation anxiety, and more. and we'll talk about how, during the home alone training journey, we can show up to advocate for our dogs, meet their needs, help them feel safe, and just improve you AND your dog's welfare and quality of life.

And ultimately, my goal with this show is to provide free educational content so that you can feel more comfortable embarking on home alone training without trainer support. Trainer support is not cheap. We often have really long waitlists. And so, I want to empower you to take the reins on this, on your own.

A little DISCLAIMER that i want you to hold in the back of your mind when you listen to each episode. Every single dog is a study of one. You are a study of one. Your home environment is a study of one. What this means is that you need to take everything that you learn on this podcast, and look at it through the lens of your individual dog, your individual life, your individual home layout, everything. In the show notes, you'll find a link to my blog titled the 'adherence to the study of one; a disclaimer'

I'm so excited to be embarking on this journey with you all. In our next episode, I am going to be answering the somewhat confusing question: what IS separation anxiety.