

Translating Passion Into Action

A Special Interview With Essie Dube

By Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

Dr. Karen Becker:

I'm Dr. Karen Becker, and I'm so excited that today we have Essie joining us for a game changer. She's been nominated for a Game Changer award, and she's joining me today to talk more about the amazing work with rescues that she's doing. So, Essie, welcome and congratulations on your Game Changer award.

Essie Dube:

Thank you very much, Dr. Becker. I'm a classical pianist, and I'm celebrating my 40th year of rescue this year. I absolutely love dogs. My life is not complete without them.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Well, this is so wonderful, Essie. Back up and tell our listeners and our viewers how you translated your love of dogs into action in terms of saving, rescuing and rehabilitating them. Walk us through how you got started putting your love of dogs into action.

Essie Dube:

I was a night volunteer at a local shelter here, North Kingstown Shelter. I would unlock the shelter at 10:00 to 11:00 every night and let all the dogs out to pee so they didn't have to hold it until 9:00 the next morning. There was a rottweiler in the shelter at the time. I just absolutely fell in love with him, and he became like the impetus for me to rescue rottweilers for 37 years of my life. I went through North East Rottweiler Rescue. They were all love bugs. I also do cageless boarding for dogs here in Rhode Island, and I had 143 dogs and their owners over a six-year period.

My rottweilers accepted every single dog in person with no aggression at all. That's how I got started. And now after I lost both my male and my female in the last three months of 2019, I decided I just couldn't go through another bone cancer death. I have two rescued, mixed-breed rescues right now, whom I love to the moon and back, Gizmo and Ladybird. Gizmo just won a photography contest. He's going to be on a 2023 calendar, and I'm sure it was his eyes that did it. Because 10 seconds after I looked into those eyes, I rescued him.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Essie, are people still calling you? Talk to me a little bit about how you meet the dogs that you're fostering or rescuing. Do people call you? Does the Humane Society call you? How does that work?

Essie Dube:

I have a Facebook webpage call Doggy Delight Daycare and Boarding, and people contact me through that. I have them bring their dog here for a meet-and-greet to make sure the chemistry

will work between the two dogs. I have a lovely big backyard that is on the other side of woods in a stream and it's all fenced in. We have the dogs go up there. If there's no aggression at all, then I will accept the dog for boarding. That's the way I do it.

Dr. Karen Becker:

How long have you been actively doing both foster, but then also doing some boarding for people in your community? How long have you been doing that in your home? Ten years? How long have you been doing that?

Essie Dube:

40 years.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Oh, my goodness! That's wonderful. After you fell in love with your rottweilers volunteering at the Humane Society, you have been bringing dogs and rescues into your home ever since?

Essie Dube:

Yes. There's a video on my Facebook page that shows 12 dogs that I had boarding in my home at the same time, and I asked people to decide whether it was insanity or a love of dogs.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yes, yes.

Essie Dube:

It's the latter. I really love them. I think they're God's best gift to us. That's the way I feel.

Dr. Karen Becker:

I couldn't agree more. Essie, if you have a dog that is homeless or in need of a home, then how do you go about finding an appropriate forever home for them?

Essie Dube:

I belong to a huge volunteer group from Anchor Paws Rescue here in Rhode Island. We don't have a cement building for the dogs. We arrange for fosters. The minute they get off the transport, they're taken into a home until someone adopts them. It turns out to be a wonderful procedure.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah.

Essie Dube:

They get socialized and they get good food and love before they have [inaudible 00:04:41]. It's a very big volunteer community for a very small state.

Dr. Karen Becker:

It's such an important thing. It's such a gift to the animal to not have to go into a kennel situation that's stressful and loud and cold and cement floors. It's just so much better to be in a loving, caring home. That's a beautiful arrangement. Essie, what do you love most about your work helping and working with dogs?

Essie Dube:

I just love dogs. It started so many years ago and I guess the fact that we get them adopted, that they're not considered things that can be euthanized, that can be disposed of. I understand the shelters have a big overcrowding situation these days because people buy them for Christmas gifts and then the novelty wears off and they wind up in a shelter, which is very, very unfair.

Dr. Karen Becker:

It's completely unfair. I love the fact that you've recognized this issue and you have found a workaround both in your home, your personal life, and also serving your community. It's wonderful. Can you see this little baby right here?

Essie Dube:

A rottie!

Dr. Karen Becker:

She was rescued from my local Humane Society where I have worked for 20 years. That's Isabel. Rotties are near and dear to my heart as well. All of them being rescues, all of them being love bugs. I totally not only share your sentiments, but I understand the overwhelming burden of shelters, as well as the benefit of those dogs being in a home. What you're doing is amazing.

Essie Dube:

And what you're doing is amazing.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Aw, thank you. Essie, you've been on this earth a couple of decades. You have a lot of wisdom. Your passion is dogs. You have seen a lot. You have felt the heartbreak of dogs, beautiful dogs that deserve an amazing home that are homeless. Thus far, in your evolution through life, if you could tell the world one thing, Essie, what would it be? Or if you could share with the world one thing, what would it be?

Essie Dube:

They're not a two-week commitment. They are not a Christmas present. When you rescue a dog, it's a lifetime commitment. The rotties I had never lived past nine, unfortunately. But if you're going to get a cute, little Shih Tzu or a Yorkie, understand that they live 18 to 20 years, and that's the commitment you make. It's not that you get them and the minute you find out they need veterinary care and they need good food and you turn them back to a shelter. That's the worst thing in the world for a dog, in my experience.

Dr. Karen Becker:

I agree with you wholeheartedly, but I would go one step further, Essie, that all life, whether you adopt a hamster or a cat or a dog or a fish, that as guardians that they can't choose, that they deserve the very best care for as long as their lifespan holds true. It's our job to nourish them and provide medical care, emotional care, emotional support for the lifespan of that animal. It goes well beyond a couple of months, or when you get a different job, or when you have to move, or when things change in your circumstances. This lifelong commitment is a little bit like a marriage or giving birth to a kid. You just don't drop them off when times get tough. It's a forever commitment.

Essie Dube:

Amen to that. Amen.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, Essie, first of all, I love the fact that you're using your beautiful, big backyard to save dogs. I also love the fact that you're actually giving dogs that are in need of rescue the opportunity to be together. I have a dog right now, a rescue dog, who is never around other dogs. If he would've had your beautiful backyard with the space needed to play and to move and to learn about new dogs, he would have better social skills. He didn't have that.

I love the fact that you're offering those opportunities to dogs in your area, your neck of the woods and your state. To be able to have a social opportunity to be able to be a dog and move their body and smell great things outside and exercise while being in a loving home waiting for adoption, it really is the best-case scenario. If, God forbid, a dog ends up being homeless, your environment is a perfect space for dogs to wait for their forever home. I appreciate everything you're doing.

Essie Dube:

Thank you, Dr. Becker. One thing I'd like to say is that we don't give them enough credit for the emotion they have. They are closer to us in emotion than we realize. The love you get from a dog that you rescue is worth it all.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Beautifully said, Essie, and a beautiful summary of your heart and your mission and your work. Thank you so much for spending a few minutes with me today talking about the amazing work that you're doing. Congratulations again, Essie, on your Game Changer award.

Essie Dube:

Thank you so much. Thank you, Dr. Becker. It was a pleasure.