Greetings from Joe | May 13, 2020
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Gifford our five month old puppy is the world's most spoiled dog, in a good way. Since his birth on November 29, he has never been alone without his liter mates or his humans, until the other day. Roanne and I were picking up take-out food, Jeff our son, was taking the opportunity to experience the relaxed social distancing guideline on fishing. Gifford would not get in the car. We didn't want to be late to the local restaurant because they bring you the food at a specific time. Gifford is great at the game “chase me” when he knows you want him to do something he doesn't want to do. We drove off leaving him sitting with a perplexed look behind the sort-of-fenced yard that is more of a suggestion to Gifford to stay at home rather than an actual barrier to his desire to escape if he wanted.

By the time we got to restaurant, I was going through the roof with worry. It is only 3 minutes away. We left without putting his collar on, and we had yet to buy a lost dog tag. What if he gets out? What if he is sad? What if he doesn’t understand? What if...What if...What if... I left Roanne at the restaurant as the food was not ready yet, and drove back, probably faster than I should have on our rural 35 m.p.h. road.

I found Gifford asleep in Jeff's bed. He knows how to open our house doors so he must have used his talents to get to his safest and most secure place. He was fine.

The experience reminded me that is through our struggles as learners we grow, find ourselves and develop our resiliency. As educators, sometimes our first thought is to lessen the struggle for students or eliminate it all together, just like Roanne and I tried at first to have Gifford not even experience being alone. We have given Gifford over his first five months of existence a framework of support: home, fence, walks, belly rubs, food, his pack. Trust that you have given your students the same framework of support during the first 2/3 of the year that will allow them to grow, find themselves and develop resiliency as you teach them the last 1/3 of the year.

And, I think it is OK to panic sometimes too; it shows you care.