Dogs are best friends for a whole lot of us for some really strong reasons. They’re always delighted to see us, they’ll follow us anywhere, and they’d never run off with somebody else. Those traits are hard to find in another person.

So what can a pet parent do if the dog who has stolen their heart damages their house while they’re away? Dogs with separation anxiety can be hyper-attached causing them to freak-out when home alone. It’s more than frustrating; this severe behavior disorder can damage or even break the bond they’ve built with their beloved friend.

I’ve dealt with hundreds of dogs with separation anxiety. It’s the second most common canine behavioral condition.1 (Aggression is No.1.) Research has shown that it affects up to 17 percent of dogs in the United States.2, 3 Their owners struggle with the daily angst of coming home to face, well, sometimes hundreds of dollars of damage. They need help right now. Reconcile®, a chewable, FDA-approved brand of fluoxetine, is the antianxiety medication that can make the difference. It certainly did for Ruby.

This well-loved dog was a 2-year-old Australian shepherd when she was adopted by Susan and Pat. Ruby immediately attached herself to her new family. They described her as sweet, loving and well-mannered. There was no history of why she’d been surrendered to the shelter but it didn’t take long for them to deduce the cause.

When alone at home during her first two months, Ruby had torn her way out of two crates, dug through the carpet all the way to the concrete, destroyed doors and ripped down window blinds. Pat told me she could “do $1,000 of damage in no time.” She couldn’t get out of the house but, if left outside, she escaped the fenced yard. Susan and Pat were making plans to raise the wall that surrounded their half-acre property in order to make it “escape-proof”.

Videos of dogs with separation anxiety provide clear evidence of overwhelming panic. Our job is to diagnose, explain the cause, and get treatment started. I told Susan and Pat that, rather than investing in escape-proof crates

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Vomiting. For more information about Reconcile safety and effectiveness, see the full product label at Reconcile.com.

A 3–4 week delay in the onset of medication effectiveness was expected with Ruby’s treatment. To make this period easier, I urged her folks to drop her off at a doggy daycare facility on their way to work for the first month. By getting their dog started on foraging from food toys while they were home with her, Ruby transitioned well. Once the whole family was in step with their new daily routine, and with Ruby’s anxiety improved, she did much better.

Susan and Pat reported that Ruby was focused on her food-dispensing toys and puzzles as they walked away in the morning and that they were no longer assaulted with over-the-top exuberance when they returned home. Their house was no longer getting trashed and, best of all, their dog’s quality of life had improved significantly.

Thorough medicine can make winners of everybody. Pet parents who see results like this keep their dogs, and their veterinarians get to hold onto their patients.

References: