

## Relationship Exercises

Over the years, I have compiled ideas and successful training methodology from Animal Behavior College, the Dog Whisperer, various books, articles, and tips from successful dog handlers, groomers, and trainers. Every day I learn something new as I delve deeper into the world of purebred dogs. The information included in this handout goes back to basic dog behavior, and practicing relationship exercises aka leadership exercises (being the pack leader) will strengthen the bond between you and your dog.

Back in the day, dogs had a job. Nobody ate for free - especially not animals. They were members of the pack, not “children” or “babies.” Dogs lived in a consistent social order of the household, rarely being let on furniture or being doted over.

Even though our dogs are adorable, we must resist the temptation to treat them like humans - it is very confusing for them! They do not have emotions like humans do. They don't dwell on stuff.

It is important for you to be strong, dependable, trustworthy, consistent, and kind. These are the hallmarks of a leader. If you are not viewed as the leader by your dog, he or she will assume that role and to most dogs it is a stressful role. A dog with a more dominant personality will often challenge the leader for the role ; this is why it is best to pair these kinds of dogs with experienced owners. This is a dog that should not be allowed to get bored.

Some examples of dogs assuming leadership roles:

pushing and forcing themselves into your personal space

jumping , running ahead of you through doorways

disobeying, guarding food, assuming the highest sleeping position

barking incessantly

The number one reason dogs are surrendered by their owners is behavioral problems.

OK! So how to avoid?

Establish rules and be consistent. Is your dog allowed on the furniture? That is a personal decision. Mine are allowed only if invited. They never are allowed to just claim a spot. I discourage this for the simple reason that they cannot become territorial of a spot they are not accustomed to.

Some GREAT habits to start Immediately:

Feeding - feed your puppy age 2-6 mos 3-4x/day, 6+mos 2x / day or break into 3 small meals depending on convenience. Since this is a breed prone to bloat, it is desirable to feed smaller, more frequent meals to avoid distention of the stomach.

Prepare dog's food and set aside while you eat your meal. He can eat when you (leader) are done. If you don't plan to eat, just take about 5 minutes and have a glass of water or nibble a few crackers. Completely ignore the dog while you eat, I know how cute he is, but don't pay him any mind. When he is calm and quiet, he can eat.

First get him into a sit and put food bowl down only when he is sitting quietly. Don't tell him to sit, just expect it and raise the food, which may cause him to raise his nose and butt should go down. When he does sit, tell him "good." Start to bring the food down. If he moves, say "no" and bring bowl up out of his reach. Once he is sitting, put the food down but block him from it when he dives for it. Only when you say "OK," can he then eat the food. This teaches the dog patience. You will be amazed at how quickly they learn. It is much like teaching a child to say "Please" when they ask for something. Clearly, this exercise does require patience on the part of the trainer, but if you enforce these behaviors early on, you will have a well-mannered dog at feeding times and he will look for your approval prior to eating stuff. This comes in handy on walks, too when he sees that 3 day old sandwich on the sidewalk!

Now - give him about 15-20 mins to eat and then pick up the food bowl. You should have no problems taking the food. If you do have a food aggressive dog, it is imperative that he back away from the bowl. Do not pull it away or push him away; stand over it and in this way you are claiming it. This is what a pack leader does. It is best not to talk. Just remain calm and claim your spot as the pack leader.

If you are trying to discourage certain behaviors that have already developed, keep a leash on the dog indoors for better control. Never leave a leash on a dog unsupervised. I love leashing a dog when you are training house manners. It never has the opportunity to jump up on people, counters, etc and you don't get embarrassed when people come over. Your dog actually doesn't mob them because you aren't allowing it to.

Crate Training

The dog should stay in a crate, especially when young, whenever you are not home or cannot be in the same room to keep an eye on him. Whenever letting the dog out of the crate, immediately bring outdoors to the preferred elimination area and wait patiently.

Important things to remember about crates:

Dogs are not meant to live in them. Don't leave them in there too long or housebreaking may regress. They naturally don't like to poop and pee where they sleep, but if left in a crate too long, it's inevitable. I like to give a small treat when putting the puppy away. This lets them know they are not being punished, but rewarded for going in the crate. It eventually becomes a den, and dogs will often spend time in the crate on their own. I like a comfy, washable bedding and one or two toys in the crate with my dogs. If it's really hot weather, a small aluminum pail of water can be clipped to the door. It's way cleaner than a bowl, but don't put too much. It's just mean to make a dog have to pee when it's stuck in a crate for hours.

You can feed the puppy in the crate to get him comfortable in it, but be sure to anticipate elimination needs. Once your puppy is on a predictable schedule, housebreaking just got much easier. Whenever the puppy is loose in the house, always watch for telltale signs that they need to potty: sniffing, circling, suddenly stopping playing, barking at you. If your puppy has an accident, clean it up with a very good odor eliminator and vow to keep a closer eye next time. That's about all you can do. Don't freak out. Be patient, be consistent, and use lots of praise. Many times they don't know why they are outside, but soon they will make the connection.

### Teething

Puppies need to chew. Their first teeth start to come in around 5 weeks, fall out, and are replaced with adult teeth over a period of a few months. By about 6 months, your puppy's adult bite can be accurately noted. To start, don't take teething personally. It's not that your dog wants to attack you, it's just that your flesh feels good in his itchy, irritated gums! However, you must always have proper chew toys on hand. If your puppy grabs ahold of your skin or clothing, tell him "no" and redirect the behavior with the proper chew toy. Try to avoid rawhide, as it is not digestible and swells when it becomes wet, creating a choking hazard. I like ropes, pig ears, natural bones, kongs stuffed with tiny treats or peanut butter, and soft toys they can carry and shake.

If you have a really serious chewer, buy a bottle of bitter apple or similar product and douse anything valuable to you like table legs, molding, shoes, but remember, your dog should not have the opportunity to destroy stuff because you

are always watching, and when you aren't he is in his crate, right?! Right. But occasionally we as humans do drop the ball a little and this is an extra step in keeping your leather shoes intact. Also, encourage the dog to play with his toys. He doesn't always know what you have in mind for him with that \$15 Petco frisbee. Also just keep an eye on those bones that are edible. They can cause diarrhea. You can soak nylabones or gumabones in broth, spread peanut butter inside of kongs, and toss ropes chews around. All of this fun stuff is available at pet stores or online in the some of the stores I mention in my Links I Love page.

One thing about fetch - it's a bad idea to play tug. If your dog wants to hog the toy, simply get another toy or tiny treat and "trade" him for it. Problem solved!

### Practicing Leadership Every Day

Teach your dog the command "wait" and practice at doorways. You can start with a leash and if the dogs pushes through the doorway, give a simple correction, put him in a sit, and tell him to wait. Go through the doorway and when you release with the word "OK" he knows he can go. If your dog is going somewhere with you and gets really, really excited as a result, make sure you wait until it's calm before heading out. Never reward or try to teach when the dog is excited. Your best response is to be calm and assertive and patiently wait until he is calm. Don't forget to reward your pet when he is being good!! Have a little treat for him every time you call him and always say his name in a happy tone, not to fuss at him.

Leaders eat first

Leaders set the pace and direction

Leaders stay calm and in control

Leaders never step over the dog

Leaders' personal space and boundaries are respected

Every day is a new day! If you are having problems, call me. I will help you find a solution.

I