



Building a Relationship

We want our dogs to be well adjusted in our homes. Imagine living in a home in which you are expected to know the rules without guidance, or in which rules changed from time to time. By spoiling or constantly correcting a dog, your dog may become stressed or unsure. The more structure, kindness and consistency we provide, the more it increases confidence and good behaviors in dogs.

Often dogs do not receive any positive input when offering every day good behaviors. Example: Your dog is lying calmly at your feet for an entire movie, without a word of praise or a reward. In contrast, during the movie, your dog decides to chew on your favorite shoe. Instantly we are off the couch chasing the dog to get our shoe back. What has the dog learned?

Calm quiet behavior = lack of attention.

Destructive behavior = attention (even if it is not positive.)



The more frequently behaviors we like are rewarded, the more often the dog will offer these behaviors. The rules are consistent, easy and appropriate for a dog of any age or training level. No harsh corrections or outdated methods are used, making this safe and enjoyable for everyone in the family (children with supervision) to incorporate. Here are easy examples of how to implement this into your daily routine:

- Preparing for a walk- Example: When preparing for a walk, your dog can learn to sit while waiting for the leash to be clipped on. This helps with obedience and self-control. At the very least, do not clip the leash on until he has all paws on the ground.
- Ignore rude behaviors. - Example: If your dog barks for attention, turn away. If the dog does not stop barking, put the dog away for a few seconds without saying a word (Remember: If you reprimand, the dog is still achieving his goal: attention). After a few

seconds, if your dog is quiet, you may let him out. If he begins attention barking again, back away he goes. When starting out, this may need to be repeated until the dog understands that rude behaviors will not grant him the attention he seeks.

- Specific feeding times: By granting your dog access to his food bowl all the time, the perfect opportunity to train is missed. Example: If you ask your dog to sit for his dinner and he does not, put the bowl away and wait a few seconds. Try again. He will catch on that polite behavior gets him the meal. Hand feeding is a great way to jumpstart proper etiquette for meals. It only takes a few moments longer and helps your dog to understand that while resources are provided, they are not free. Hand feeding also will teach a dog to take food nicely.
- Affection/attention- Example: If your dog paws at you for affection, who is really training whom? If this happens, simply stand up and ask (or just wait) for a sit. If your dog sits, pet him.
- Entering or exiting -Rushing out the door is not the ideal or safe way to begin a walk, sitting to check in with you is ideal. Example: Your dog will not get to go outside for his walk until he offers you a sit. Once out the door, wait for an additional sit with eye contact. This will help to keep focus for training while on a walk and also help to lower excitement levels, making for a more enjoyable walk. Throughout the walk, reward for sits!
- Access to couch or bed- Example: Dog should not climb onto furniture when they please if they do not get down when asked. Allow them to be with you on the couch or bed when you ask them to come up. When you ask them to get down, they should willingly oblige or access is no longer granted. Teach them that "off" is more rewarding than "on". How? When dog is on the couch or bed, toss treats on the ground while saying "Fido, off" in a cheerful voice. Repeat. This is a fast, fun way for your dog to learn that relinquishing space is beneficial and fun.



Tips:

Praise and reward your dog. A lot! Acknowledgment for doing something right will help them understand what behaviors are acceptable and which are not. If good behaviors are not reinforced, but attention is given (even if it is not good attention) for bad behaviors, the dog will begin offering bad behaviors for attention. One of my favorite training games is to load up with tiny food rewards. For one minute, catch your dog doing something good and at LEAST ten times, rewarding each time. In this game do not tell your dog to do anything. Just wait for something good such as: not barking, not pulling, eye contact, automatic sits, etc....

Have patience! Dogs do not understand English. Some dogs have had years of learning bad behaviors and years of being reinforced for offering behaviors that we do not like. It is up to us to teach them!

This contains information from the books Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Small Animals by Dr. Karen L. Overall, Dogs Behaving Badly by Dr. Nicholas Dodman, methods by Cinamon Clark as well as my own methods.

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