



Rob's Top 10 Articles

DOG TRAINING TIPS

THAT AVOID FUTURE BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS.





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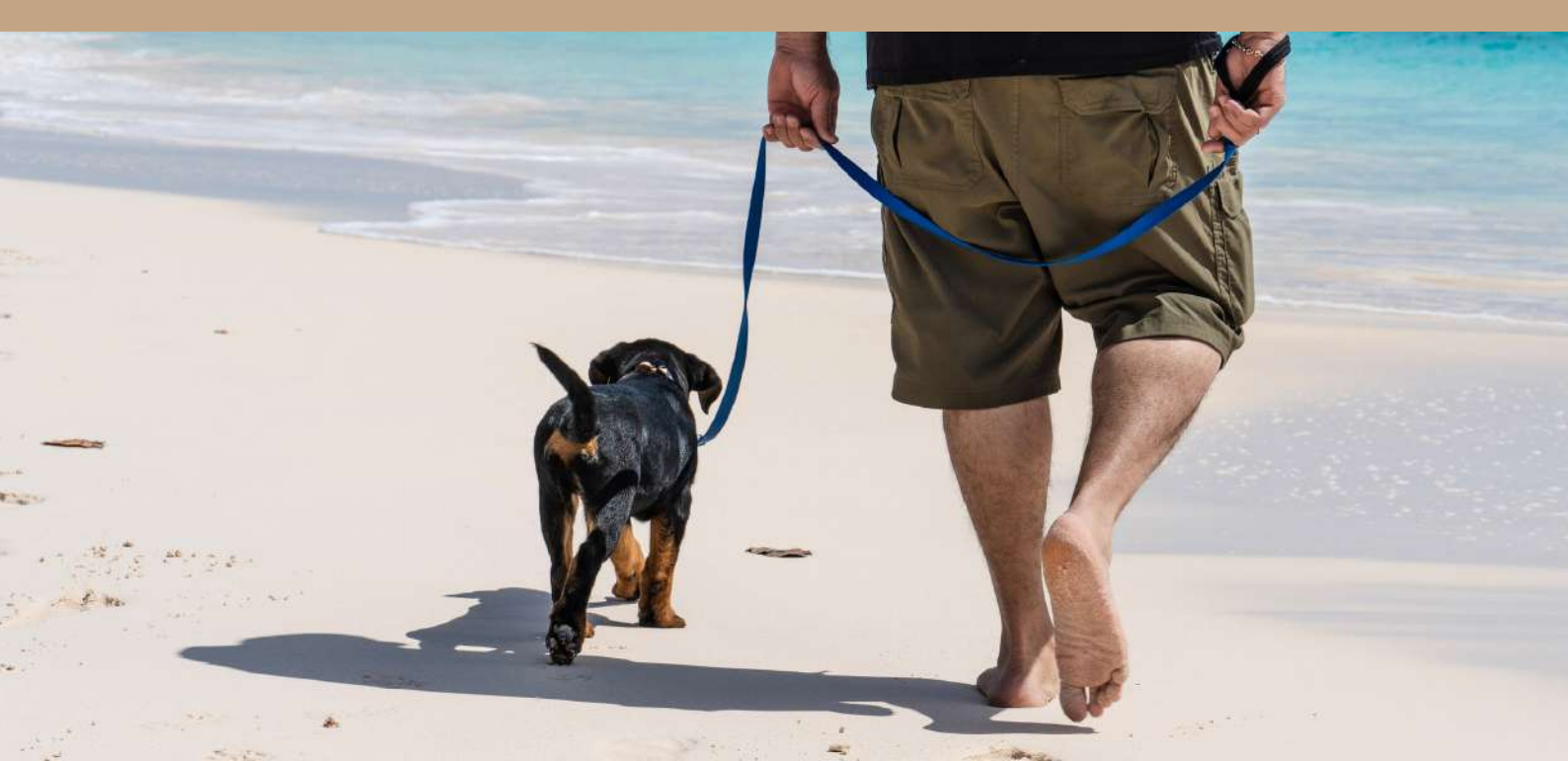
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CHAPTER 01

THE NO.1 RULE OF DOG TRAINING!

When dealing with your dog, consistency is very important. And I'm talking here about both the initial teaching/training of your dog, and also the reinforcement of those teachings throughout your dog's life.

It's essential for your dog's mental wellbeing for you to be consistent when disciplining, playing and just simply spending time with your dog. But it's also important for other members of the household (and even frequent visitors) to treat your dog in a similar manner where possible. This is particularly so if your dog has any behavioural problems such as jumping up at people. If you don't also ask your family and your visitors to make it clear to your dog that this is unacceptable, your dog is unlikely to curb the jumping altogether. And this may simply perpetuate the problem.

A very important time to be consistent is feed time. You should always feed your dog in the same manner. Example: Put food in the bowl. Make your dog sit and wait calmly for you to put the bowl on the ground. When the bowl is on the ground make them wait another ten to thirty seconds before

you give the command to eat. Make sure everyone in the family knows how to feed the dog. Even if you are in a rush you should try to keep feed time consistent.

Another good area to be consistent is when you go for your walks. I like to grab the leash from the wall and walk to the gate or door. Then stand still and wait for my dog to settle down and calmly sit in front of me waiting for me to put the leash on. Once the leash is on, I then make them wait for me to open the door and for me to walk through the door first. Once I am through the door, I call my dog and then we are on our way. I do it this way because I never want my dog to rush out on the street when I open the door for visitors or to leave.

Dogs that experience consistency tend to be better behaved dogs, and guess what? Better behaved dogs are happier dogs, and happier dogs are healthier dogs!

So, you know what to do – love your dog, spend quality time with your dog, and make sure you are consistent!



CHAPTER 02

THINGS WE DO THAT STRESS DOGS OUT

Stress is something humans often feel. In fact, most of us probably feel stress every day. For this reason, humans tend to think we have the monopoly on stress. After all, what does a dog have to feel stressed about right? They have a home, meals that come every day, a bed to lie in and someone to play with them, all for free. Sounds like a stress-free life to us. However, dogs do feel stress. And, often, without meaning to, we are the cause of that stress. In this first part, we look at things we do when training or working with our dog that can cause stress.

CHANGING THE RULES

Dogs are creatures of habit and do best with routine. Notice how your dog always knows when it's time for dinner or go on their potty walk? A huge stressor in training comes from when we change the rules. Maybe you decide your dog is allowed to sit on the couch, but then family comes over and you decide you don't want him on the couch that day, so you yell at him to get off. The next day, you are inviting him up on the couch. And then the week after that, you decide he shouldn't be on the couch. Inconsistencies like this cause stress – your dog never knows what he is allowed or not allowed to do.

Imagine being told to perform a task at work without being given any rules? You do the job, every day, but sometimes your boss yells as you that's it's wrong. And sometimes he doesn't. But you don't know why it's wrong. You can see where the stress of not understanding the rules comes into play. And while you can go and ask your boss what is going on and what is the right way, your dog can't ask you. Decide on the rules before you start training and keep them the same. (You will also find training much easier this way!)

CHANGING THE CUES

In the same vein as changing the rules, changing the cues is also stressful to a dog. Remember, they

do not speak English. It takes a dog a long time to figure out that noise you are making is related to him doing or not doing a certain behaviour. The most common example of this is Down and Off. Let's say you use Down when you are wanting your dog to stop jumping up, but then start saying Off, and expect your dog to stop jumping, you are going to have a very confused dog. Later, you say Down and expect your dog to do a lie down. Now he is even more confused and stressed.

What happens if you say something different but expect the same result? You get frustrated, maybe start repeating it, raising your voice, while your dog's stress level raises as he frantically tries to figure out what you are expecting him to do. Pick cues your entire family can remember and keep them the same. Putting the list on the fridge is a great way to ensure consistency!



RESTRICTING INSTINCTS AND STRESS

As an animal, your dog has instincts that are born into her. Things like sniffing, chasing, barking, and chewing – these are “dog” things. It's in their nature. Unfortunately, these are the very things we humans try and stop our dogs from doing, which can cause stress. While we do have to train our dogs to not bark at everything, or to chase the cat, giving them outlets for these instincts is important to have a stress-free dog that is not destructive. Take him or her out on walks where you allow him to sniff (you can even put it on a cue, so he knows when it's okay to take the lead and go where his

nose goes). Let him chase a Frisbee and give him a meaty bone to chew on. Otherwise, your stressed out and bored dog will find his own outlets....and that will cause you stress.



PULLING ON LEASH

We teach our dogs to not pull on the leash, but then we do it ourselves. Imagine someone having you by the wrist, or the neck, and constantly tugging at you. Now imagine you are trying to find a spot to go to the bathroom while they are doing it! Yes, this will definitely cause stress. Instead, get your dog's attention if you need to move on by saying her name or a cue like “Let's Go.” Remember, dogs like rules and consistency. If he can't pull, neither can you.

YELLING NO

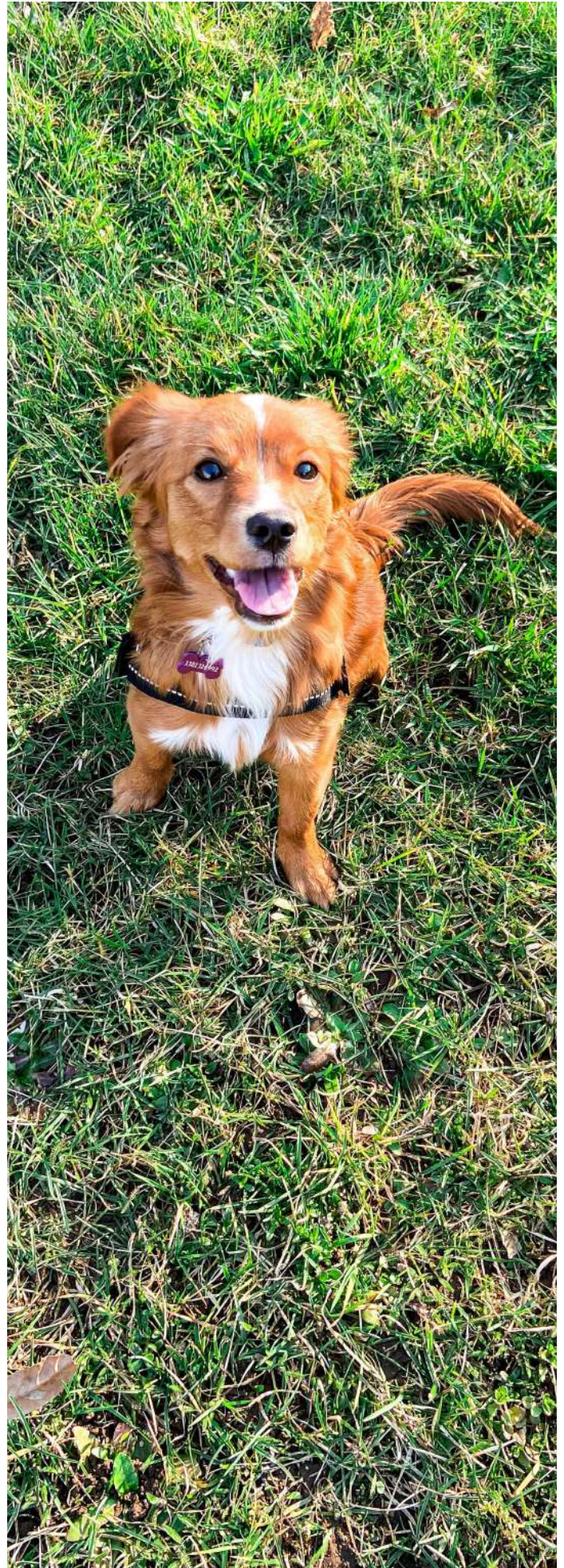
Humans love the word “No.” In fact, for many children it's one of the first words they learn. However, to a dog, a human yelling No, body bent over them, often pointing a finger, is a stress inducing action that gives the dog no clear idea of why we are doing it. Instead, it triggers a stress response that humans mistake for the “guilty dog” look, making us think our dog knows what it did wrong. So, we use No more. The reality is that the guilty dog look is a HUGE stress signal made up of several fear/anxiety signals and it's caused by what you are doing, not by whatever your dog was doing to cause you to react.

Instead, if you see your dog doing inappropriate behaviour, make sure it's not being reinforced (say being petted when jumping up or getting food off the counter) and then redirect your dog to a behaviour that does get reinforced – for example asking for a lie down and then petting them or asking for a sit stay while you eat and then giving them praise or their own dinner as a reward. Dogs are opportunists and repeat behaviours that get them what they want. You can completely remove the stress-inducing No from your relationship with your dog and actually have a better-behaved canine because of it.

It's important to note that not all of these are stress triggers for every dog – just like humans, each dog has their own stressors. However, realizing that stress could be there is a good first step. Pay attention to your dog's body language and make changes to your routine if you notice the following stress/fear/anxiety signals:

- Ears out and/or back (depending on their natural position)
- "whale eye" (showing the whites of their eyes)
- Bulged out eye
- Cowering and/or shaking
- Panting
- Licking the lips
- Furrowed brows
- Slow movements
- Yawning
- Won't eat
- Pacing
- Hypervigilant (looking in many directions at once)

If you see your dog doing any of these, it's time to change up your habits to make your dog more comfortable, which will result in a better relationship with him.





CHAPTER 03

THINGS WE DO THAT STRESS DOGS OUT PART 2

Dogs can get stressed just as easily as humans. And often, we are the cause of that stress. In Part 2 of this series, we are look at thing's humans do to our dogs and their environment that can cause them stress. Knowing how we affect our dog can help us have a better relationship with them. A dog with less stress in their life will be happier, healthier, and less likely to do unwanted behaviours.



BRINGING IN A NEW ANIMAL

Being social creatures, humans often think “the more the merrier” and bring other animals into our house without thought. However, for some dogs, this can be a real stressor, especially if the dog has lived alone for most of her life. Not all dogs want to share their space with another animal, whether a dog, cat, rabbit, etc. Before bringing in another animal permanently, trying to have one visit and see how your dog reacts. Does she show signs of stress? Some prefer the solitary life and forcing them to co-habitat can not only cause stress but lead to fights.

LOUD NOISES

Dogs can hear four times the distance of a human with normal hearing. This means things that are kind of loud to us – vacuum, blender, lawn mower – are downright ear piercing to a dog. Loud noises can really stress out a dog as they are scary, but it can also cause pain and damage. Be respectful of your dog's keen hearing and, whenever possible, don't have him in the same room as you if you are being loud. You can also help your dog get over scary noises through counter-conditioning (pairing the noise with something good, like food or a toy). Even after counter-conditioning, though, it's nice to keep your dog at a distance from loud noises when you can.

WAKING THEM UP

Anyone who has had to wake up an older dog that is going deaf probably already knows this. You can see the fear in their eyes as they jump up, frantically trying to gain their bearings and figure out what is going on. The old adage "let sleeping dog's lay" came from the truth that often, a dog scared awake will bite. So, whenever possible, let your dog sleep. If you do have to wake them up, like sometimes you do senior dogs to take them out to go the bathroom, try to wake them as easy as possible. Say their name as you approach before touching. If it's a deaf dog, tap your foot on the ground near them, so they feel the tremor under them. If they are on a bed, tap the bed. Try to wake them without touching to reduce stress and avoid the possibility of a bite.

HUGGING AND KISSING

Hugging and Kissing are human signs of affection, but to many dogs, especially little breeds, they are super scary. Imagine something ten times your size coming in, grabbing you without your permission, pulling you to them and sticking their face in yours. Yeah, that's scary. And that's how a lot of dog's feel about hugging and kissing. It's much nicer



to pet them, give them a scratch behind the ears and a meaty bone to say, "I love you." Your dog will understand that far better and not associate you with stress and fear.

ALLOWING STRANGERS AND STRANGE DOGS TO GREET THEM

Along the same vein of hugging and Kissing is the idea that your dog needs to say "Hi" to every person and dog they meet. Do you say hello to every person you pass in a store? How about at the mall or walking across the park? No. So why should your dog be made to greet every dog and human they see? And for many, it's a stressor. Dogs on leash, especially, tend to be more stressed about greeting other beings, because they have no way to escape. The leash adds to the tension, and it is why many dogs are reactive (bark, lunge, bite) on leash but are fine off leash at the dog park. Just remember to watch your dog and if he doesn't want to greet, don't force him.

STARING

Dogs have soulful eyes, and many have beautiful faces that make us want to stare at them forever. Especially dogs with blue eyes or unique markings. But to a dog, a long stare is a challenge that



can mean, "I want to fight." For them, staring is uncomfortable and if your dog is already stressed or nervous, a long stare can push them into an action you are not looking for, such as a lunge, barking fit or even a bite. If you happen to have a puppy with a face that is going to get a lot of stares (blue eyes, merle markings, etc.), you may want to teach a "watch me" cue that conditions your dog to stare back at you without getting riled up. You can then generalize the training for non-cued stares with strangers. This can help ease the stress of this behaviour that is, in canine language, very rude.

It's important to note that not all of these are stress triggers for every dog – just like humans, each dog has their own stressors. However, realizing that stress could be there is a good first step. Pay attention to your dog's body language and make changes to your routine if you notice the following stress/fear/anxiety signals:

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If you see your dog doing any of these, it's time to change up your habits to make your dog more comfortable, which will result in a better relationship with him. Most dogs that bite do so out of fear or stress more than aggression.



CHAPTER 04

UNNATURAL BEHAVIOURS WE EXPECT FROM OUR DOGS

We humans tend to expect any animal living with us to conform to our ideas of proper behaviour. Let's face it – we are a pretty demanding lot. Dogs are expected to be model citizens, not animals, not humans, but something in the middle. The problem is, they ARE animals. Thousands of years of domestication has not changed the fact that they are a predatory animal with strong instincts.

It's worth thinking about before you get a puppy, or the next time your dog does something that makes you cringe (or want to yell), or when you get stuck in your training and can't figure out why your dog just won't stop doing a behaviour you find revolting. (Put simply: it's not revolting to him!)

Here is just a sampling of things we expect from our dogs that really are unnatural:

EATING HARMONIOUSLY WITH OTHERS

I've had people tell me they can't feed raw meaty bones because one of their dogs will attack the other one.... Of course, they do! Dogs, like most animals, have a very strong survival instinct which puts food at the very top of their basic needs and therefore is valued most. So, it makes sense that one dog would want to steal another dog's food. It really is survival of the fittest.

(Of course, this can easily be solved by feeding your dog's separately, in crates or different rooms of the house. This also ensures one of your dogs does not get overweight while the other gets skinny).

SHARING

Along with this idea of stealing food, comes the idea that dogs should share their toys, beds, and even people. Yet, again, dogs value resources! Anything your dog sees as a resource she may be inclined

to guard. This is natural instinct! In extreme cases, it can be a real problem, for example guarding their owners from other people in house, or not allowing people on the couch. However, in most cases, it's just a dog that won't share their toys or dog beds with the other dogs in the house or won't let the others drink out of their water bowl.

(For the latter, a simple solution is to always have at least one extra of everything. So, if you have two dogs, you have three beds, three water bowls and several toys out. This way the resource guarder will always have "something." For the extreme cases, it's best to consult an animal behaviourist)

may want to down the road. Hunting breeds will be more likely to have a strong prey drive versus a dog from the non-sporting group. Young puppies need a lot of appropriate socialization with other species – and the help of a professional dog trainer can make the process more successful.)

NOT CHASING PREY

Similar to co-habitation with other species, expecting a herding, hunting or terrier breed to not chase other animals is a big ask. Not only does their prey drive tell them to do it, humans have actually bred more of this instinct into them to better serve our purposes of hunting, herding, and retrieving



CO-HABITING WITH OTHER SPECIES

Dogs are predators and yet we expect them to live with other prey animals nicely – rabbits, guinea pigs, and whatever else we have as pets. Even cats, another predator, are prey to a lot of larger dogs. We expect the animal kingdom to change its way because it's inconvenient for us, but the fact of the matter is, many dogs see these animals as dinner, not friends.

(One solution is to separate your dog from other pets if his prey drive is too strong. To prevent this situation, chose your breed of dog carefully if you already have other pets in the house or think you

over generations. But now that most of us no longer hunt or herd, we expect our dogs to give up it just like that. Not going to happen in most cases.

(A solution here is to again, choose your breed carefully before getting a puppy. If you don't want to have to worry about a dog that wants to herd the cat or kids, chase every bird from the yard or endlessly retrieve balls, rule out those breed types when searching. Otherwise, you will need a lot of patience and a way to give your dog an outlet for this instinct – as you CANNOT remove the instinct or train it out of them. That's like saying you can train your body to not react to a reflex test.)

MALE DOGS NOT MARKING THEIR TERRITORY

Again, we are fighting against animal instincts here. Your male dog sees absolutely no reason why he can't mark the house he lives in – after all, that is exactly what his instincts tell him he should do and no amount of shouting from you is going to make him understand that. Why some male dogs seem more prone to marking in the house is a bit of a mystery. Many people have male dogs that never mark, whether neutered or not. It could have to do with the dog's confidence in himself – a less confident dog may feel the need to mark their territory more often.

(If you have a male dog that is a marker, a canine behaviourist may be able help you find out what is triggering the instinct – sometimes it's something as simple as a change in your schedule or a move to a new house. Otherwise, you may be happier making him wear a belly band.)

GREETING EVERY STRANGE DOG/PERSON

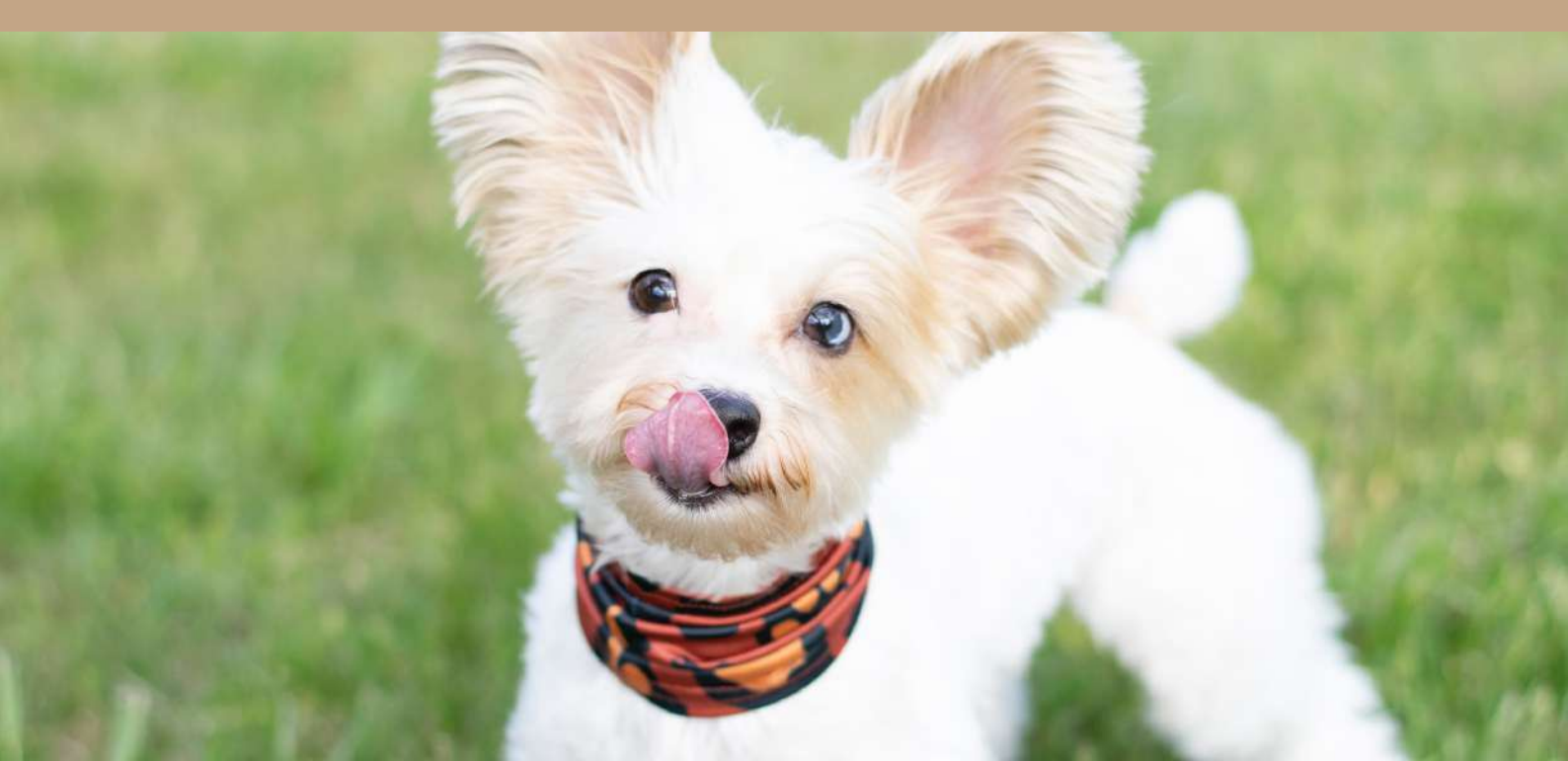
For some reason, we have this weird idea that our dogs should LOVE to say hi to every dog, person, cat – whatever – they come across while out and about. But why? We humans don't even do that! And we certainly don't get all up in each other's

personal space upon first meeting! And neither do wild dogs, wolves, coyotes, or pretty much any other animal. In fact, usually in the wild animals only go up to strange animals for a couple reasons, including mating, fighting over a resource, or to eat the other animal. So, it's no surprise many dogs – especially leashed dogs that cannot escape – do not want to greet everything that comes by, and some respond by getting reactive.

(The solution here is an easy one – if your dog doesn't want to greet, don't make him! If you are planning on having your dog, be a therapy dog that visits hospitals and such, pick a breeder that breeds for temperament, especially outgoing and friendly. And respect your dog if it turns out he is not suited for that type of work. If you don't, it can lead to biting and other behaviours that are even worse than a dog that doesn't want to greet.)

These are just a few things we expect of our dogs every day that go directly against their instincts. Being aware of this can help us be better dog owners. Instead of getting angry when our dog does something, we think is inappropriate, we can step back and ask, "why did he do it?" and "what can I do to give him an outlet for his instincts that is more appropriate to me?" This will lead to a better relationship between dog and human.





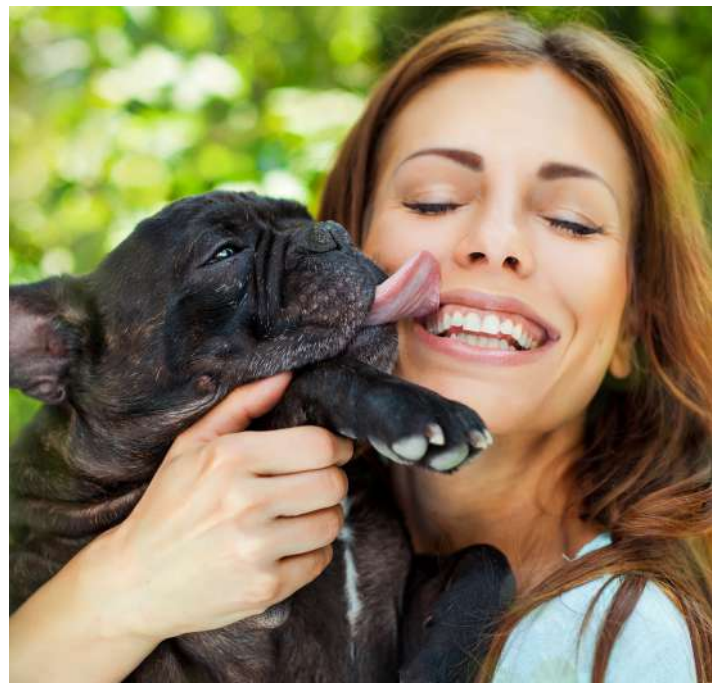
CHAPTER 05

WEIRD THINGS OUR DOGS DO THAT ARE PERFECTLY NORMAL BUT GROSS US OUT!

Ah, the life of a dog. Most of us think they have it pretty good. They get to lay around all day on the couch, don't have to go to work (at least most of them don't!), meals are prepared by someone else and the extent of "doing the dishes" is to lick the bowl clean. But there are some things about a dog's daily routine many of us find gross, even though they are perfectly normal for our dogs.

LICKING (THEMSELVES, US, REALLY ANYTHING)

A dog's tongue is much more than just something he uses to taste what he eats and help it go down the throat. Like all animals, canines use their tongues as a way to clean themselves. And that means cleaning every part they can reach. You may find it gross that your male dog licks himself (especially if he then wants to come give you a kiss) but it keeps him clean. They will also lick their own wounds, for the same reason. However, we all know too much licking is not good, hence why we use the cone of shame on our dogs.





ROLLING IN STINKY THINGS

Another thing that may make you rethink life as a dog is their desire to roll in stinky things. We did a whole article explaining this [here](#). Let's just say, it's perfectly normal for your dog to want to roll in smelly things, or a dead thing, though the exact reason is not known. And besides what's the big deal if they lick themselves clean afterward, right?



SNIFFING REAR-ENDS

This is the dog equivalent of a handshake. While a person may get arrested for harassment if they did this (and honestly, why would we want to?),

to a dog, this is the polite way to greet. In fact, a dog that doesn't go around to the rear-end is one that should be approached with caution, or not at all. Dogs that are going to react out of fear or aggression, will stand stiff and stare at the front of the other dog, or sometimes just past their shoulder, to the side, rather than circling around.

REGURGITATING AND EATING IT

Yeah, no reason to explain why we think this is gross. But for a dog, this is completely normal. Many dogs gulp their kibble without chewing, so it's still in big pieces, their body is programmed to cough back up the partially processed food so they can re-chew it, making it easier to digest. Read this [article](#) here for more information on the many forms of vomiting in dogs.

EATING POOP

And of course, there is poop eating. This is a no brainer why we think it's gross. And, while some of the time for dog's this is also not normal, but rather a sign of something wrong nutritionally or medically, there is one time in a dog's life when this is perfectly normal – motherhood. Bitches eat the poop of their puppies as a way of “cleaning up” the den before they are able to leave and go potty outside the den.

While these things may seem a bit unsettling to us, to a dog it's just part of being a dog. Maybe it's a good thing to be human after all???



CHAPTER 06

GETTING YOUR DOG TO LISTEN WITH DISTRACTIONS

Does your well-trained dog suddenly stop listening to you when guests come over or you take her somewhere? Don't worry, you are not alone. It's pretty common and is something you can fix. But first, you need to understand why your dog is not listening. (Hint: it's not because he is stubborn or doesn't feel like it).

The way a dog's brain works affects if he is able to respond to your human cues. If he is feeling nervous, overly excited, threatened or is in predatory (chase) mode, your dog is physically unable to respond. That's because the thinking side of his brain has switched off and he is being controlled by his instincts.

At this point, training is done. If he is gone over threshold, there is no point in giving him cues or trying to "make him listen." Instead, remove him from the environment. (This by the way, is the state most dogs are in when they bite whether out of fear or aggression. So, to prevent bites, don't ignore the warning signs!)

Regardless of why your dog is not responding –

anxiety, over excitement, feels threatened or is in "chase mode" – the way to teach him to stay under threshold is the same.

TEACHING HIM TO FOCUS ON YOU

To get your dog listening during distractions, you need to gradually build them up. Start with small, simple distractions and train your dog with those. If she is successful, add more distractions, new places, etc. For each dog, the level of distractions and what is considered difficult is different, so you need to watch your dog for signs that they are reaching threshold and adjust your training. For example, a ball-crazy dog will have a hard time with a ball being bounced nearby. But a dog that

has no interest in toys may not find that distracting at all.



SIGNS YOUR DOG IS APPROACHING THRESHOLD:

- Any stress signal – looking around frantically, trying to hide, yawning, lip licking, panting, tail tucked, whining, white of eye showing, etc.
- Any excitement signal – lunging at people, jumping on you, mouthing, air humping, demand barking, etc.
- Any reactive signal – hard staring at people/objects, barking, stiff body posture, growling, etc.

If you start seeing these signs, reduce the distraction. Move away from it, take it out of site, etc. It means your dog is approaching threshold. Learning takes place under threshold only. To get your dog to listen with distractions, you need to slowly move that threshold higher.

In all cases, if your dog will no longer take food, you are above threshold! Even if you don't normally train with treats, having food with you as a tester in these cases is a good idea.

At this point, training is done. A dog's adrenaline remains in his body for 24 hours. So, it's a good idea to stop and wait until the next day to try again with lesser distractions.

ADDING DISTRACTIONS

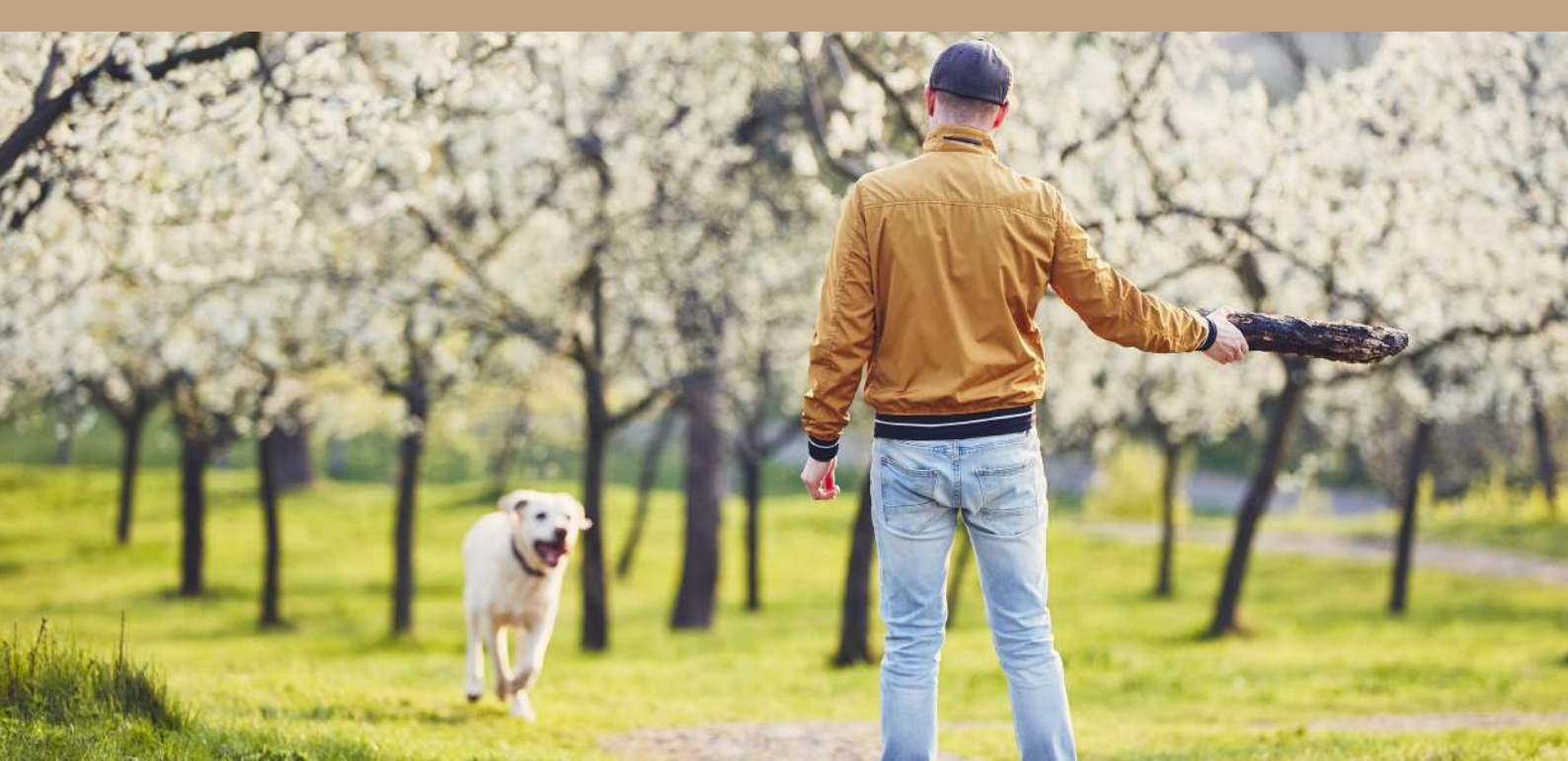
When adding distractions, do so slowly. Remember distance makes a difference, so if you know it's something your dog will really be distracted by, start further away. Let's take the ball-crazy dog as an example. You may have to start with someone bouncing a ball 10 feet away in order for your dog to still focus on you. Conversely, you can start with someone who is closer to you, but is just holding the ball, not bouncing it (as the movement makes it more exciting for most dogs). Then as your dog continues to work you slowly increase the distraction – bring the dog closer to the ball and/or start moving the ball slowly.

FOR NEW PLACES.

In these cases, start when the place you are visiting is quiet. So, the park mid-day on a weekday, when there are less people and other dogs. Stick to the quieter parts of the park and then slowly build up to busier times.

Have just one quiet guest over to your house and then build up the five grandkids visiting.

As long as you reward your dog for focusing on you, increase distractions slowly, and pay attention to her body signals that are letting you know when the distraction is too great, you will be successful. Your end result will be a well-mannered dog no matter the circumstances.



CHAPTER 07

THE SECRET TO MAKING YOUR DOG COME EVERY TIME YOU CALL!

Teaching a dog to come is very important. It can save you time and frustration when you need your dog to come inside so you can leave for work, and they just don't want to. It can also save their life, like if they are running toward the street, for example.

But "come" is a very boring cue for your dog. In most cases it means the end of the fun they were having. Maybe it's time to leave the dog park or come in from the yard. Maybe you are calling them to come because they are getting into something they shouldn't, like digging under the fence. These are just a few reasons why many dogs do not come when their owners call.

COMMON OWNER MISTAKES THAT RUIN A DOG'S RECALL

Of course, your wandering hound is not solely to blame if he decides not to come. There are many mistakes we humans make that poison our come cue. Here are a few of the big ones:

Calling them to us and then punishing. If someone called you to them and then scolded you, would you run to them happily? No, and neither will a dog. No matter how mad you are, never call your dog and then scold them.

Repeating the cue. Do you sit there and say "Come" (or your dog's name, "Here", whatever word you use) over and over until your dog decides to finally saunter over? You are teaching your dog that he doesn't have to come to that first word. In fact, for many dogs what ends up happening is they see the cue as "come, come, come," and won't respond until you have said it that many times (or however many times you have gotten in the habit of calling out). From now on, you will need to say it that many times before he responds.

Calling them for something they hate. It's easy to want to call our dog to us and then give them a bath, groom them or trim their nails. But if your dog hates those things, all you are really doing – in their mind – is punishing them for responding to your cue. For things your dog dislikes, it's best to just go get them rather than risk ruining your cue.

Now that you know what NOT to do, here are a few games that will strengthen your dog's come cue.

SOME GREAT GAMES TO TEACH A GOOD RECALL!

The key to these games is to make running to you the best thing ever. So, that means you should act excited and happy every time your dog comes to you during these games and give them lots of praise and attention when they respond promptly to your cue. Start with no distractions and then as your dog gets better start including new smells and people in the area.

Note: If you have already made some or all of them mistakes listed above, you may find it's easier to just start over teaching your come using a NEW CUE, rather than try to fix the old one.

Puppy Ping Pong. This requires two or more people. Stand facing each other like you would to play catch. Start out fairly close together, maybe just a few feet depending on the level the dog is at. With an easily distracted puppy, definitely start close. Take turns calling the dog to you. Be sure to have a "party" when the dog comes. You can use verbal praise, petting, treats or toys. After a few second "party" the other person calls the dog back. Most dogs really love this game! You can add more people as your dog gets better at it.

Hide 'n' Seek. This is just like the game you used to play when you were young. Distract your dog with some kibble or a toy on the floor and then hide. At first, make it fairly easy for your dog to find you by

staying in the same room or hiding behind a nearby tree. Then call your dog. For most dogs, suddenly realizing you have disappeared will make them wonder "where did she go?" and they will quickly seek you out. Remember, big party when they find you. Choose trickier hiding spots as the dog gets better at finding you. You can also add people and have him find each in turn as they call him.

Catch and Release. This is for those dogs who have learned that come means all the fun is stopping. Maybe you try and call your dog at the dog park or the beach when it's time to leave and they run in the opposite direction, knowing you are calling them to go home. This game is going to fix that. Call your dog to you and then reward them for coming. Be sure you physically catch your dog. Put your hand on their collar, leash them up, etc. Then, release them to go play again. You should use a cue to do this, so they understand that you are giving them permission to leave you again. You can use the cue you must release your dog from his stay, or another one such as "go play." If you do not use a release cue, your dog may learn that Come means "run to my owner, get a reward and sprint off again." That is definitely not what you want.

Note: How to encourage a dog that won't come

- Get down closer to the ground in an inviting stance, arms open, crouched or kneeling
- Turn slightly away from the dog, avoiding eye contact (especially for shier dogs)
- Make silly noises (some dogs get their interest peaked and want to investigate)
- Pat your legs
- Turn and run away (many dogs love to chase, and I find this works best for me)
- Squeak a toy (this is a tool that will have to eventually be faded away, but sometimes necessary at the beginning for dogs who only care about toys)

Avoid the above mistakes, play these games and your dog will have a solid recall in no time that will make life much more pleasant, not to mention safer, for both you and your dog.



CHAPTER 08

ANTHROPOMORPHISM - WHAT IS IT AND HOW IT CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR DOG OWNERS

Do you have dogs instead of kids? Do you consider yourself a pet parent? While these terms are cute and really do not do any harm – the mentality behind them may be the reason why you and your dog don't have the relationship you want.

A growing trend in society is to equate dogs to humans, specifically kids. And this is where anthropomorphism comes in. What is that big word? It simple means to give human traits – including behaviours, motivations, emotions, characteristics – to non-human objects, animals, or even natural phenomena ("The sky is angry," says the little girl as lightning crashes down).

Anthropomorphism is a totally natural thing humans do to help us understand things that are different from us, and we use it as a way to describe things. The little girl above is just trying to understand what lightning and thunder is all about. Some of us see a splattered painting and the colours on it may induce comments such as, "It looks sad (blues), or angry/passionate/in love (reds)."

But there is a problem when we do this with other living beings. Those living beings actually do have their own set of characteristics and behaviours and they are not the same as ours. To project upon them our own emotions and motivations can have tragic consequences.

Another injustice is people teasing or scaring their dogs because we think it's funny. The problem is dogs don't understand humour (they don't laugh) or that you were "just joking" when you scared her so badly, she practically jumped out of her skin.

How does all this affect dogs? Scientists believe anthropomorphism is one of the causes of bad



"The dog was smiling, I thought it was happy," says the woman just before she gets bit. The problem is, dogs don't smile. They do have a submission grin and an aggressive grin (snarl) that can be hard to distinguish between. Or the dog's mouth may have been open because it was stress panting or about to stress yawn.

Another disservice we do to our canine companions is giving them our emotions. Rampant on social media is the "guilty" dog. "My dog knows what he did – look how guilty is." However, scientific studies have proven dogs don't feel guilt.

That look many humans describe as "guilt" is actually your dog being stressed (compare the "guilty dog look" with signs of stress in dogs) or even fearful because track record tells them that when you raise your voice, or come at them hastily, a correction is coming. Your dog can read your mood as soon as you step into the house – too bad we can't do the same for them.

behaviour. A study by Topal, Miklosi, and Csanyi showed that owners who anthropomorphize have dogs that are more dependent (including separation anxiety) and have decreased problem-solving abilities.

HOW TO LIVE BETTER WITH YOUR DOG

The best way to live a peaceful existence with your dog, where you are both happy in your relationship, is to treat your dog like a dog. Learn what science has taught us about canine body language and then use this to assess your dog's actions. And please, if you are using Google, make sure the information you are reading comes from a reliable study or expert in the subject area – not someone who just loves their dog a lot and thinks they know what their dog is thinking.

WHAT SCIENCE HAS TOLD US ABOUT DOGS:

They like routine and structure. This means keeping the rules the same (don't allow them on the couch one week and then scold them the next week when they jump up), stick with a training method, and make sure everyone in the house follows the rules.

They do feel pain, love, fear, anger, anxiety, and stress. BUT they don't show it in the same way we do. Learn THEIR signs, don't assess your dog based on how we humans display these emotions.

Dogs are opportunist. Scientists and behaviorists have learned that dogs are opportunists, meaning they do what works to get them what they want. Dog owners witness this with things like counter surfing. Dog gets on counter once, is rewarded with food, and then does the behaviour more and more. This is why positive reinforcement training works. It works with a dog's natural motivations.

Humans work in the same way, technically. But the difference is WHAT we will work for. Your dog doesn't care in the slightest about sitting and heeling for a blue ribbon or points. And it's not likely that your dog sits on the couch wondering how he can please you better and comes up with "I know, I'll sit faster next time!" However, what we have learned is that if the dog is rewarded in a way that has value to that particular dog, he will do the behaviour more often. So, if you reward your dog for sitting, he is going to sit more often. So, learn what your dog likes and use it as a reward for the behaviours you like!

Just remember to stop and think before you end a sentence such as, "My dog is feeling..." "my dog thinks..." or "my dog is acting like he's..." Are you basing the rest of that sentence on scientific fact or are you projecting your human traits on him? You might be surprised at how much you learn about your dog if you start using canine language with him. And you will both be better off.





CHAPTER 09

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT WHEN CHOOSING A PUPPY BEYOND JUST BREED

It's easy to get puppy fever. Maybe your friend brought home a cute fluffy pup and now you want one. Maybe your kids have been bugging you for months to add a dog to the family. Maybe you lost your four legged best friend and it's time to pick out a puppy to fill that pawprint-shaped gap in your life. Whatever the reason, the easy choice has been made. Now it's time for the hard choice: What puppy do I get?

First, go through the usual questions:

Do I want a small dog or a large breed? (Does my housing have size limitations?)

Do I want to groom a long-haired breed or do I want the ease of a short hair?

Do I want a male or a female?

Do I want a jogging partner or a fellow couch potato (remember all dogs need some amount of exercise!)

Do I want something that loves attention and will climb all over me, or do I prefer something a bit more aloof that wants to sit next to me instead?

Do I want my dog to have a "job" like herding, therapy, search and rescue or service work? (Depending on your answer, you may need a specific breed, or a puppy that comes with specific training)

Do I want to do conformation shows so I need a papered purebred, or do I want to rescue a puppy?

Am I okay with a dog that may be more prone to health needs (for example, Bulldog's have special wrinkle care and Chinese crested need skin care), or do I want something with less extra needs?

Are their breed limitations where I live that I need to be aware of?

These types of questions can help you determine the type of dog you are looking for. A great next step is to look up dog breeds on the Australian National Kennel Council or breed association websites, to learn about temperament, health, size, and grooming needs.

Once you have narrowed your list down to a breed or two and are ready to start looking at real puppies, you are at the third and most important step: Choosing a puppy.



TAKE CARE AND DO NOT RUSH WHEN CHOOSING A PUPPY!

It is so easy to see a photo of a puppy and quickly message the breeder with "I want him!" Maybe the colour grabbed your attention, or those puppy dog eyes. But remember, this is going to be a member of your family for 12-17 years. Colour or puppy dog eyes will grow old quick if he ends up not being the

dog you wanted.

Absolutely do NOT choose a puppy off a photo. Ask to meet the puppies in an environment where you can interact with them, and you can watch them interact with each other.

Even better is being able to visit more than once. While visiting, watch the puppies and how they interact with each other and you. Temperament should be at the top of your list once you have decided on a breed. Of course, we all have different desires when it comes to temperament, but, in general, we all hope for the happy, well-adjusted dog that gets along with everyone.

Look for the puppy that seems confident and comes up to you, but will also leave and be interested in his environment. Both the puppy that shies away from you and hides, and the puppy that comes up to you and does not leave to go explore may have fear issues later.

MAKE A LOUD NOISE. HOW DO THE PUPPIES REACT?

Do some go to investigate immediately? These puppies may end up being more forward than you want, or it might just what you want for a working dog!

Does one puppy completely ignore it? This puppy might be a great dog to have around kids or for therapy work. Did one pee or run and hide? This puppy may be a bit fearful.

BRING SOMETHING YOU KNOW THE PUPPIES HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

Do some of them come right up and explore? Do some hide and won't go near? Do some approach it cautiously, but are soon playing with it/climbing on it/etc.?

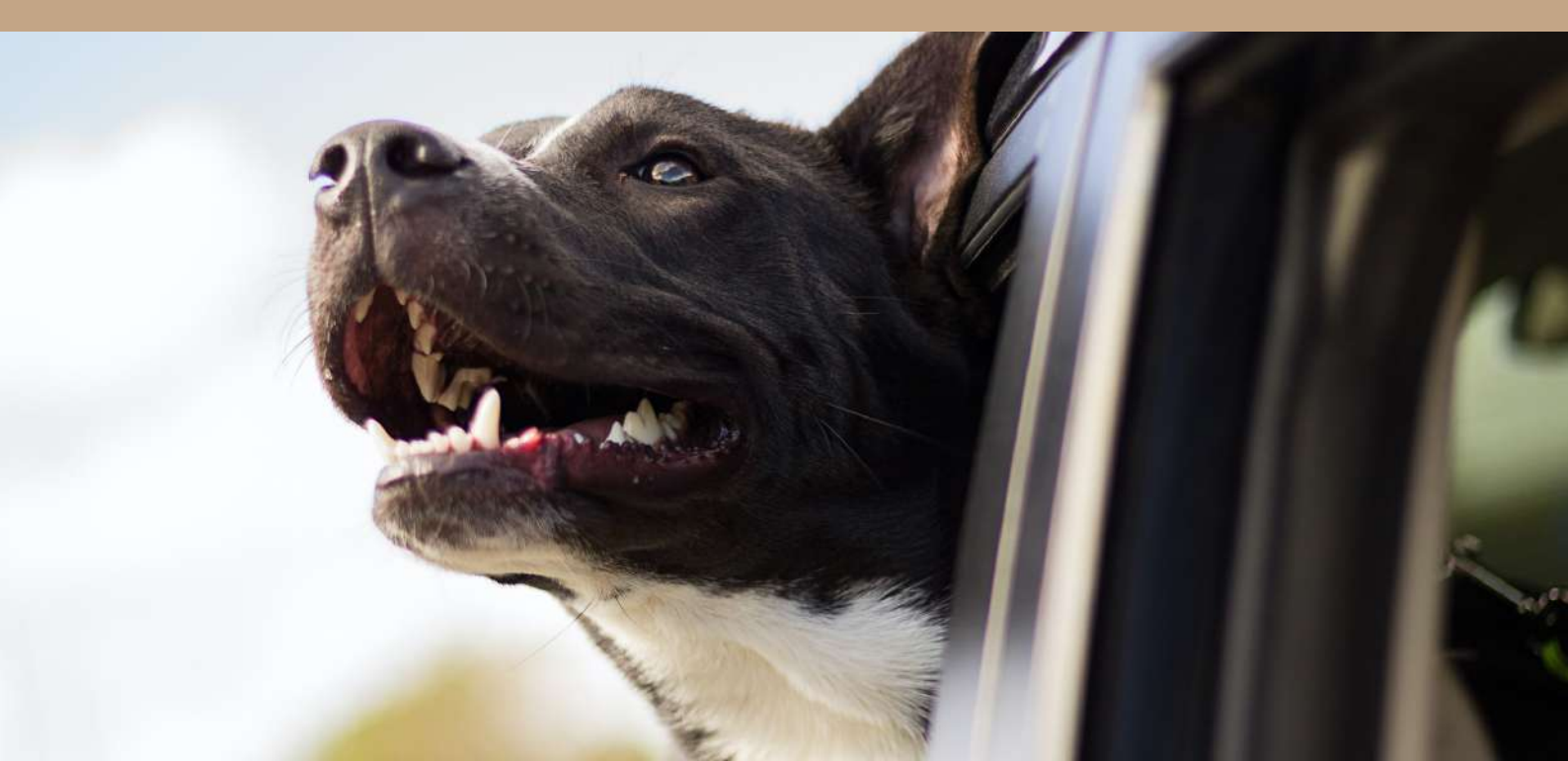
Again, we all have our preferences and things we don't mind working on. You may not mind a bit of a timid dog. But at least this way you will know a bit of what you are getting yourself into.



To help you assess puppies, bringing along another person and a puppy temperament test is excellent. There are many you can get for free with a simple internet search. Some of the tests may not pertain to the puppy you are looking at, depending on age, but you will be able to do at least some of them, and that may help you with your decision. Some dog trainers will even come and help you assess puppies for a fee.

Also remember that dogs go through two fear periods, one of which happens around a year, year and a half. At that time, their temperament may

change, so we are not saying "do these tests and you are guaranteed the dog that is right for you." But it can help you get started on the right foot with training and even what to expect during that second fear period when you will be in charge of how your dog gets through it. Above all, go with your gut. It can be hard to walk away after a few visits and tell the breeder no, but in the long run, it's better for both you and the dog.



CHAPTER 10

HOW TO TEACH YOUR DOG TO LOAD IN THE CAR

If you have a little dog, this may not be as big of a deal, but anyone with a larger dog that just won't jump in the car knows the struggle is real. Or maybe your Great Dane puppy is easy to hoist up...now. But wait a few months. Having a dog that willingly gets into the car on a cue makes getting ready to leave a breeze. It's also helpful if your arms are full of other things, no matter your dog's size.

BEFORE YOU START TRAINING THIS – YOU MUST ELIMINATE THESE CAUSES FIRST

Some dogs are not willing to get into the car because they are fearful of it – they may even get car sick, which means your car has a negative association. If that is the case, check out this blog on [helping your dog get used to the car and getting over car sickness](#) first.

The other thing could be pain. Especially if you have an older dog, they may not want to jump in your car because it hurts them physically. They could

have a leg injury, a bad back or arthritis causing their hesitancy. If there is any reason to suspect a medical reason, have your dog checked by your vet first before proceeding with training.

If you have cleared these reasons, then it's time to train!

There are a few ways we can go about teaching your dog to "load" on cue. You could stand by your car door and hope that he will offer to jump inside, and then reward. Or you can reward for each step toward the car your dog takes (called shaping). But if your dog has no interest in the car at all, these can take a while.

It's easiest to use luring. To lure, you are going to use a piece of your dog's kibble or a healthy treat. Hold the food very close to your dog's nose and move it the direction you want to go (in this case, toward the car). When he takes a step, give him the food, and praise him.

At the beginning, start close to the car, otherwise it might take you half an hour just to get to the car! Start far enough away that your dog has room to manoeuvre his paws to jump or step up into the car, but not more than a couple steps away.

If your dog has never lured before, you will want to start by rewarding for every step at first. If your dog has, you may be able to have him take two or three before you reward. Just remember you always want to reward before your dog disengages, better to reward too often at first, then to lose your dog's interest and have them turn away. (If that happens, go back to where you started with your dog and try again, rewarding sooner.)

Don't move the lure so fast that your hand ends up ahead of the dog's nose – most dog's will stop following the lure if it gets too far out.

MY DOG WON'T FOLLOW THE LURE: If that happens, it may be that your treat is not high value enough, try something else. Or it could be your dog is more fearful of the car than you thought, in which case you may need to revisit desensitization first (see above link to the other blog post!). Have a toy dog instead of a food dog? You can easily use a toy as a lure as well!

Once you have lured your dog into the vehicle, big party! Give her lots of praise and a treat or the toy... you can even play a small game of tug or fetch in the car, to make that space a fun space.

Then, reset. This time, try increasing the number of steps your dog takes towards the car before getting the lure. The point is to try and get rid of the treat/toy lure as quickly as possible, so your dog is just following your empty hand to the car.

TIP: *If you use the lure too many times, it can be hard to get rid of it. Only have your dog lure a few times before "testing" to see if he will get in the car without it.*

If he jumps in, give him a reward.

If he won't jump in, use the lure couple more times and try again.

Repeat this process until your dog is only getting reward when they are following your empty hand all the way into the vehicle.

Then, you will gradually move your hand away from your dog's face, so you can simply point, and your dog will load into the car.

ADDING THE CRATE

We firmly believe your dog is safest when he is confined to a crate in the vehicle, and crash tests back that up. So, once your dog is loading into the car, you can add going into this crate as part of the cue. To do this, use the luring method again to lure your dog into the crate. Once he goes into the crate just by pointing, start back outside the vehicle, and point. If your dog goes all the way into his crate, big praise party! If he doesn't point again (do not reward until his is in the crate).

At this phase, you can add a verbal cue by saying a word such as Load, Car, Up, whatever you wish, right before you signal with your hand. Eventually, your dog will start to respond to the verbal before you signal with your hand, that's when you know he has the verbal down.

Follow these steps, and you will have a self-loading dog that will make car trips a whole lot easier.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WHO IS ROBERT?

Robert is a South African Boerboel Breeder from southwest Sydney and one of the founders of Stay Loyal Dog Food. He has been a dog breeder for 21 years and a dog lover for much longer. In that time, he has learnt that raising and caring for a dog is the subject of much confusion. In fact, people have so many misconceptions about caring for their dogs that he decided to create this blog to help dog owners and their dogs.

Robert looks at things from a dog's perspective rather than from the anthropomorphic view. He endeavours to treat dogs as they want to be treated: as a dog not as a human. This means that many of his techniques and ideas are unconventional yet effective.

In this blog he draws from more than 30 years of experience with dogs, including showing dogs, hunting with dogs, and breeding dogs, plus many years of research into canine nutrition. Many of his ideas are from observing how dogs act naturally—not to mention watching how dogs would live in the wild and using that knowledge to create a better, healthier life for his dogs.

Aside from having over three decades of experience with dogs, Robert sharpens his knowledge on everything dog by reading scientific papers and vet journals. He also constantly communicates with other dog experts. All the information you will read on this blog will be things that Robert has used and found that works for him and his dogs.

You can read more about Robert growing up with dogs by [clicking here](#).