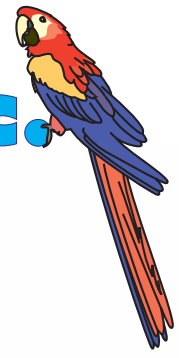


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Who's the Leader of the Pack?

1. Do you feed your dog first, before you eat?
2. Does your dog growl at you or other family members who try to touch its food bowl or toys?
3. While on a walk, is your dog out in front, pulling you down the street?
4. Does your dog go through doors or gates ahead of you?
5. Does your dog sleep with you?
6. Do you wrestle or play tug-of-war with your dog and let it win?
7. When visitors arrive, does your dog greet them before you do?
8. Does your dog put up a fight if you try to cut its nails?
9. Does your dog bump or nudge your hand to get petted? Do you then pet it?
10. Do you let your dog choose the time and place for relieving itself?
11. Do you have to repeat commands to get your dog to listen to you?
12. Does your dog run off with your things and then play keep-away?



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Problem Prevention Through Understanding Your Dog's Nature

by Carol Lea Benjamin
Dog Problems
Howell Book House, 1989

Human nature being what it is, and dogs being as clever as they are, it is fair to assume that, for as long as man has been dwelling with dogs, some dogs have discovered how to gain and keep the upper hand. This doesn't happen because they don't love us. It doesn't happen because they are, by nature, mean. It happens because, like wolves, they are pack animals, and it is an integral part of the nature of a pack animal to rise to the highest level he can.

A pack is a group of animals that live together, each dependent on the others for survival. In the wild, the pack provides protection, companionship, mates, baby-sitters for offspring, comrades for the hunt. There is a fierce loyalty within the pack and each member has a strong affection for the others. There is but one leader, usually a male, and until he is deposed by a stronger, smarter wolf, he calls the shots. Often the leader is the only male to mate. The female he chooses, the best around, will be the leader of the female subpack. He and she will mate for life.

This arrangement, made without any help from man, eliminates the possibility of overpopulation, of weak, sickly offspring, of starvation. Left to their own devices, the wolves maintain the balance of nature. Since usually only the "best" wolves breed, the health, strength and survival of the pack are well ensured.

Like his wild brother, the dog, too, is programmed for pack living. He must lead or be led. There is neither democracy nor anarchy in the canine world. His nature as a pack animal can be your biggest plus or his greatest minus. If leadership falls to him instead of you, you've got yourself a dog problem. If you take command, his penchant to follow a strong leader, an instinct which remains intact through domestication, can be the happy instrument by which you train him and take, once and for all, the upper hand.

Since your dog *must* have a leader, dear friend, you are elected – unless you want a dog to run the show at your house. It's really very simple. If he takes over, bullies you or bites you, he won't do it because he's perverted or disturbed, or because he doesn't love you. If he does it, he will do it because he is a pack animal with pack instincts. He will do it because he is a dog and something in him demands fulfillment of ancient programming. The drum beat he marches to has not changed much in thousands of years.

Since the dog is not built to live without a leader, what happens when this is the case? Being orderly by design, he seeks to end the chaos and anxiety caused by living in a manner incongruent with his nature – so he applies for the job himself. Making his stand with creatures of his own kind, he quickly finds out, with a growl, a push, a shove, a display of fangs and hackles, a strut on his toes, a step out of line, who the smartest, strongest dog really is.

Vying occasionally, even with you, for a higher position in the pack is part of the work of being a dog. Don't take it personally. When there's something important he wants to do, or when you've let your guard down for too long, or if you've set no limits or standards of behavior for him at all, he may try to juggle around the pecking order. More than likely, he'll do it without guns and tanks. His first display may be very subtle – a failure to come when called, a gentle nip, a small, almost inaudible rumble in his throat when you approach his dish, a sprinkle of urine on the side of your Bloomingdale's couch. If you let it go by, he'll continue. It's anyone's guess where it will end. That will depend on how assertive he is and how often you turn your back on his attempt to do anything he can get away with.

Long before tossing his hat in the ring, he'll have noted your strengths and weaknesses, your ability to be firm, your inconsistencies. In fact, shortly after joining your pack, your dog became the world's leading authority on you. His dependent position makes him observe you well. He's also well equipped to do so because he was raised in a different way than human beings.

To be a good pack leader, you'll have to learn to read your dog, just as he reads you. Then you can use the information available to train him and understand him. It will help you to know when he's in trouble and when he's faking; when he's fighting mad and when he's just being a bully; when something is urgent or when he's merely giving it the old one-two. *He'll know you know. A smart dog is smart enough to know when he can gain some ground. He's also smart enough to know, in short order, when he cannot.* You'll be on top, and that's exactly where you belong.

Knowing his place, his limits, his leader, will give your dog a sense of order and security, but how can you communicate your status to him? You can do it his way – you can shove, bully, walk on your toes, you can raise your hackles, your eyebrows, your voice, a ruckus – or you can do it in a very simple, orderly, practical, human way. You can obedience train your dog. The basic commands will give you the basis of communication with your dog. He will learn first to focus his attention, then to listen to words, next to concentrate for longer and longer periods of time and, finally, to work. His attention will turn to you. He will understand rapidly that *you* call the shots and he will be more than just a happy dog. He will have the kind of language and manners that allow him to live well with

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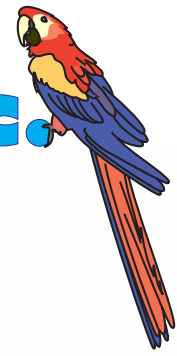
humans, sharing space and pleasures, being neither a menace nor a pest. Training ensures your role as top dog and can be used periodically to remind him of that reality when he decides it's time to test you *again*. It is, therefore, the most essential element in dog problem prevention.

Will he pine away for want of a role he cannot have? Will he hate the hand that trains him? No. He's not genetically programmed to grow bitter and spend his life on could-have-beens. The same clever architect who built us to act in the way we do, a way we refer to as human, built him to act the way he does, in a way we refer to as not human. He won't resent you for being in charge. In fact, the more confident and firm a top dog *you* become, the more secure he'll feel and the happier he'll be. Functioning within the limits you set for him gives him the anxiety-free life he needs. In gratitude and awe, he'll "dog" your footsteps and look upon your face with a devotion you'll never find in another human. That's not because we cannot love as well. The reason is that we are not pack animals and, despite the evidence of our history, we are not built to worship authority. Your dog is – so use this characteristic and enjoy it.



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Mother Knows Best



Mother Knows Best: The Natural Way to Train Your Dog
by Carol Lea Benjamin
Howell Book House, Inc., 1985

We need good communication in order to educate our dogs. Untutored, they can no longer fit well into our busy, complicated lives. Modern dog must walk at our sides without pulling, stay put when told, bark at the door, stay off the furniture, come when called. He must learn not to urinate on the rug, run away, eat the couch, growl over food, act as if he still lived in a cave! Time has changed our style of living and in order to keep our dogs safe and ourselves sane, we need some control. We need to teach the dog manners, commands, limits. We need to communicate efficiently again. We need help!

Help, my fellow humans, has a hairy chest and whiskers on her chin. She has already taught your puppy much – to accept leadership, to handle praise and correction with equanimity, to heed meaningful sounds, to play gently, to wait his turn, to deliver and receive affection, to copy her sterling example whenever he was able. She was a remarkable teacher, so graceful, accurate and self-contained that to watch her would take your breath away.

We can learn from her, too. We can find out how to be brief yet eloquent, effective yet kindly, civilized as well as natural. The human race can learn the secrets of natural communication by watching, understanding and copying, either in spirit or in kind, the way a mother canine raises and teaches her young. In this way, we will be assured that whatever we do to train, to praise or correct, to relate to our dogs will be effective, efficient and, beyond the shadow of a doubt, humane.

With all the assurance, serenity and natural wisdom of her species, a mother dog teaches her young with a dazzling economy of effort. She almost never has to repeat her action a second time in order to be effective. She never loses patience, gets frustrated, gives up. Yet, neither does she harm her puppies with an inappropriate use of force or an unnatural withdrawal of her affection. She knows just what to correct and precisely what to ignore. Her timing is sheer perfection. Her priorities are admirably fitting. Each mother keeps her puppies safe and, in a few short weeks, teaches them much of what they have to know in order that their survival be ensured. It is easily evident that mother knows best. She is a sterling example of teaching and loving at its finest.

When you want to know the best way to reward or correct your dog for behavior you want him to repeat or eliminate, look to his mother. Her swift and fair rewards and punishments communicate clearly to the young puppies which behavior may be repeated and which should be dropped, fast. Rarely will the puppies misunderstand, willfully disobey or turn a deaf ear, so adept is she at getting her message across.

If you work in the style of the mother of your puppy, you will be assured of communicating with him. Without communication, there is no learning.

Verbal communication is well within keeping of your dog's educational heritage and his capacity to understand. The bitch uses a variety of sounds with which to communicate to the puppies. Some of the sounds relay her affection. Some call the puppies to rally around her. Some warn of danger, some of her fierce, protective anger when danger is a possibility. The puppies understand and respond.

Physical communication is very much a part of the way the mother teaches her young. When they begin to see and hear and stumble about, she keeps them together, allowing only minimal exploration at first. If a puppy should stray outside the circle of safety his watchful mother prescribes, her foreleg lands on his neck and slams him to the ground. And he'll have to work at getting back in her favor, though never to the point of going long without her forgiveness.

Although domesticated, tame, selectively bred to retrieve, point, herd, protect, your puppy's pack instincts still survive. The punished puppy will anxiously lick beneath his mother's chin, signaling her that he clearly understands her pack position as his superior. She, too, will speak eloquently in the old language of the wild, gently biting him back across the top of his muzzle or even taking his whole head softly in her mouth. "Benevolent, but Alpha," she says. She is the boss. Her puppy understands. Order is reestablished and peace reigns.

No matter how the pup transgresses, no matter how angry the bitch becomes, she never denies him his nourishment. He never goes to bed without his supper. Nor does she offer tidbits of food, treats beneath the table, extra portions of dessert to reward good behavior. Eating is eating and education is education. Mother knows best.

Watch a puppy, any puppy, learning at his mother's knee. He'd give her the world to hear the right tone sung from high in her throat, to be allowed to cuddle, to be petted by her smooth tongue. Moreover, his motivation to learn is built in. There's a world he's dying to explore. There are things he'd like to know. He watches everything. He experiments. He tries and tries again to meet each challenge, to learn, to expand his world, his skills, his knowledge. Like any fledgling, his curiosity triggers learning. Each subsequent experience with education will draw him. While he does have a side to his personality some might call willful, while he does want to do things his way and in his own good time, still there is that pull, the curiosity to find out what the Alpha person wants, what the new word means, to test his intelligence and to feel accomplished.

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When the bitch corrects a pup, she does so with no more harshness than is needed to get the point across. She does not prolong the correction for more time than is necessary. She is not so mild that the pup gets cheeky and continues to misbehave. She is right on target, always. You can be, too. You can find the power needed with your dog to bring him up short when he is doing something wrong, something disobedient or something that endangers his safety or your sanity. You can be as clear, swift and accurate as his mother, using either verbal corrections, physical corrections, or both.



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Rewards

*And when she was good
She was very, very good . . .*

Punishments

*But when she was bad she was horrid.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

	<u>Mother Might</u>	<u>You Might</u>		<u>Mother Might</u>	<u>You Might</u>
Puppy is good Explores new area Follows you Plays with his toys Comes when called indoors	Coo lovingly Lick puppy Loving eye contact Pant	"Good dog!" Pet puppy Loving eye contact Smile	Puppy is bad Nips Soils (when untrained) Chews furniture (when untrained) (other mistakes)	Make a warning sound Block puppy's path Give a warning look	"NO!" Give a warning look "Don't even think about it!"
Puppy is very good Responds to his name Walks on leash Executes a command after a reminder	Play with puppy Take pup's head in her mouth Coo, make approving sounds	Play with puppy Hug puppy "Gooooood dog, that's my good dog!"	Puppy is very bad Runs away when called Nips repeatedly Spoiled barking (Other willful disobedience)	Growl Make harsh eye contact Slam puppy by placing her paw on his neck	Give harsh verbal Correction: "NO! BAD DOG!" Make harsh eye contact Collar and leash correction
Puppy is very, very good Executes command on his own Goes to door to go out to potty Comes when called outdoors	Coo, lick, play, frolic	"That's my good dog!" Kiss, pet, play, act silly, call your mother, alert the media Clap, hoot, whistle	Puppy is Horrid Growls Bites Eats couch Soils on rug (after training) (other major war crimes in puppies over 5 mos. Old)	Grasp pup by scruff of neck and shake Alpha roll, harsh eye contact, growl	Shake pup by grasping collar & moving him back & forth a couple of times Grasp pup by cheeks, his paws come up off the ground, use harsh eye contact and firm voice correction

Nota Bene: Mother dogs do not reward and correct their puppies for the same things we do. Mother's rewards and punishments above are for that *level* of activity. Ours are for that *exact* activity.



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Leaders Eat First



This is one of those tiny, seemingly insignificant things that can mysteriously make a huge difference in some dogs all by itself. And it's one of those things that Mother Nature, in her infinite wisdom, set in place for us. And by golly, we're going to take advantage of it.

Have you ever watched your dog gulp down some special treat in one bite without even tasting it? You'd probably never guess that there is an elaborate feeding ritual that your dog is programmed for, with as much protocol and etiquette, and as many rules, as a state dinner.

Imagine, if you will. You're at the Big Company Christmas Party with all the big company mucky-mucks. In the middle of your bosses Merry Christmas toast, do you lean over to him, tug on his sleeve, and say "Excuse me, Bob. Are you going to eat that pork chop?" Of course not. Do you push ahead of him in the buffet line? Of course not. Do you reach over and swipe the dessert off his plate? Of course not. If he bumps into your plate, do you then stab him with your salad fork? Of course not. Yet this is essentially what your dog is doing every time he grabs food off your plate or off the counter, every time he growls when you come near his bowl, every time he eats before you do, every time he paws you all through dinner or interferes with your meal in any way.

If you had to sum up the top 10 things that your dog knows instinctively when he comes into this world, it would be that ***The Leader Eats First***. Your dog understands instinctively that the Pack Leader eats first. *That is his Right*. There are *no exceptions* to this in your dogs mind. We've seen how the Alpha dog is usually the biggest, strongest, and smartest in the pack, often the only one to breed and pass on his genes. The survival of the Alpha dog is critical to ensure the survival of the entire pack; therefore, he *must* eat first. Your dog understands this in every fiber of his being because Mother Nature set it up that way.

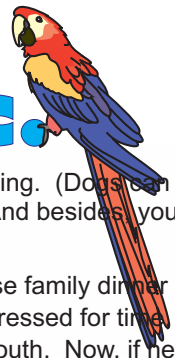
Now, the order in which the pack members eat says literally everything about their status within the pack. The sooner you eat, the higher your status. The Alpha dog eats first because it is his right. It says to everyone, in and out of the pack, that He Is The Leader. He is Someone of Importance. He eats as much as he wants and if there's anything left, his mate will eat, and then their offspring. Their survival is most important for the survival of the pack and the species, so that their genes are carried on. This is known and understood by all pack members. Feeding then continues down the chain of command, with those dogs most important to the survival of the pack (i.e., bigger, stronger animals that can help most with hunting and defending the pack) eating before those of lesser status (animals that are older, weaker, or sickly). Once the Alpha dog is done eating, he goes off to a high spot, kicks back, and oversees the rest of the feeding. He does not interfere with the other dogs that are eating; his job is simply to make sure, through his Mere Presence, that everyone follows the rules. Why is this whole feeding ritual necessary? Because if the members of the pack ate like teenagers in a college dorm, the whole hierarchy of the pack would fall apart. If the hierarchy falls apart, they lose the ability to hunt, defend themselves, and raise their young as a team. It is this ability to work as a team that ensures the survival of the pack. *Anything that upsets the hierarchy of the pack threatens the very existence of the pack.*

In the wild, dogs rarely eat every day. They usually go days between a kill and can go up to two weeks or more without eating if prey is scarce. They may travel up to twenty miles a day just *looking* for prey. If it's a rough winter, many of the lesser pack members may not get to eat at all. Period. Mother Nature, although wise, is not always kind. It is Survival of the Fittest at its most elemental. So when they do get to eat, it's quite a Big Time, with lots of celebration and excitement and napping later on.

We know what you're thinking. You barely have time to have a family meal together, let alone worry about when the dog eats. Why do we care about how the pack feeds in the wild? We care because this is the oh-so-simple way we're going to send the first message to our dog that We Are In Charge. *We* are Someone of Even *More* Importance. This could not be easier for us, really. And this is how we're going to do it. Just a few easy-to-follow steps.

No more free-feeding. Your dog should not be allowed to free-feed (where food is left out for him to eat as he pleases). We know it's much easier to leave a bowl of food out for the dog and have one chore out of the way. But it's a really bad idea for several reasons. First of all, your dog doesn't know that his kibble comes from the store. His instincts are telling him that he's got to track down some game, coordinate a hunt, and bring down a deer every day if he wants to eat. Then we come along and suddenly, every day, food just appears in his bowl from nowhere. He doesn't have to hunt or track. He *barely* has to get off the couch. How much easier could it get for him? Kibbles & Stuff just magically appears every single day from the Kibble Fairies. (Note: these are the same fairies your husband thinks clean the house.) How cool is that? At this point, *you* have become unnecessary and insignificant to him. You also lose an easy opportunity for major Leadership Points. And dogs that free-feed tend to be overweight and can become picky eaters. Their appetite is usually poor and, since food is always available, they're not food motivated, so we lose that option as a training tool. And – this may not sound like much but it's a key point – dogs that are free-fed don't have much to look forward to. Really. His main job in life is sleeping. If food is always left out for him, how exciting is that over time? Remember all the excitement when the pack gets to eat? Eliminating free-feeding will

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increase Bobo's appetite and you can then use this increased food drive to motivate him during training. (Dogs can become amazingly focused if there's a chance you may drop a steak on the floor at any moment.) And besides, you'll give him something to look forward to. So go ahead, give him a thrill.

Your dog should see you eat first, *before* he eats. This doesn't mean you have to cook a six-course family dinner and all sit down and eat it before you can feed Bobo. Do whatever is convenient for *you*. If you're pressed for time, just have a snack, or a cracker, or a jelly bean. Just let him think you're putting *something* in your mouth. Now, if he begs or pesters you during your meal, put his leash on him and wrap the other end around the sofa leg or the coffee table leg so that he can see you eat but cannot interfere with your meal. (A subordinate member would never even *think* of interfering with the Leaders meal.) He should be about 6 - 8 feet from you. If he barks or whines or fusses, use the can to correct him. Shake the can, and tell him "No! Quiet!" Then ignore him. Repeat as necessary.

Absolutely no table scraps or anything else from your plate. Your dog knows what's going on. He knows you're taking food off *your* plate and feeding it to *him*. Not good. Remember, one does not take the dessert from the bosses plate, nor does one cut in front of him in the buffet line of life.

Your dog must always earn whatever food or treats he is given. From now on, nothing in your dog's life is free. Let's face it, life is rough for all of us. Most of us have to work a lot of hours to be able to have the things we really can't afford in life. But here's the thing: Dogs are *working animals*; almost without exception, every breed of dog was bred for a specific job or type of work. Great thought and foresight was put into the development of some of these breeds. (Yes, even the poodle. Even that ridiculous poodle *haircut*, if you can believe that.) Working is an instinct. They *need* to work to feel useful and good about themselves, just like we do. They respect the person that works them. So let's just take advantage of this. A simple sit or shake is not too much to ask of them before they get a treat. Then Bobo has *earned* his treat and it becomes a reward for following a command, rather than you catering to his whims. When you feed him his dinner, give him his release word ("take a break," "at ease," etc.) as you put his food bowl down. It won't mean anything to him now, but after we teach him the "stay" command it will be easy to teach him to sit and stay for his dinner.

Handle your dog's food bowl fairly. Although you have the right, as the Pack Leader, to pick up your dog's bowl without any threat from him, you must be fair about it. Remember that in the pack, once the rest of the pack is eating, the leader does not interfere with their meal. That would be unfair, and the pack leader is always fair.

If you have more than one dog, they should be fed in order of dominance. How do you tell who's in charge of your group? Watch your dogs interact and notice which one consistently goes through doors first, initiates playtime, or greets visitors first. Put the dominant dogs food down first. Let him start to eat, and then put down the next dogs bowl, and so on. (It's not necessary to wait until one dog finishes eating before putting down the next dog's bowl.) This shows your dogs that you respect the top dog's dominance over the other dogs and that you understand the dynamics of the pack. Feeding subordinate dogs first, on a regular basis, could be seen by the dogs as very disrespectful and can lead to dissension among the ranks.

The exception to this is if your dominant dog either does a Very Bad Thing or shows signs of trying to take over the Top Position in the pack (your position). In those two instances, you would feed that dog last. Dead last. After the baby, after the other dogs, after the hamster and the goldfish. Put him in his crate or tie his leash to the coffee table and let him watch you feed everyone else while he waits. Make him sweat it out for awhile. For all he knows, it's been a real rough winter. Then feed him with absolutely no ceremony. Just plunk his bowl down and walk off. If Bobo has just been a Bad Dog and committed a minor misdemeanor, feed him last for the next feeding and then go back to feeding as usual. If he has been a very, *very* Bad Dog or is trying to take over, let him watch you feed everyone else first and then skip Bobo's feeding entirely. **He will not starve.** But *you* – you, my friend, will make Major Leadership Points.

Then feed him last at every single feeding for as long as it takes to notice a difference in his behavior. This can take anywhere from a day or two, to three weeks or more, to the rest of his natural life, depending on how stubborn your dog is.

Now, will you feel guilty for not feeding your dog? Maybe. Probably. I always do. But that's because, as a human, you have that little guilt-inducing voice in your head that's telling you you're a bad parent. Dogs do not have that particular voice. (They hear other voices, but that's a whole other handout.) Think about this way: If your dog came upon your supper, sitting unattended, and gobbled it all up, how long do you suppose he would feel guilty? The answer is, he *wouldn't*. Not at all, not for one moment. Oh, he may *look* guilty. But that's because, from his point of view, he tracked down a delicious hot supper, which he thoroughly enjoyed, and then you suddenly started waving your arms around and hollerin' at him for no good reason he can figure out. You have obviously gone over the Deep End. He looks guilty because he's trying to figure out what *mental hospital* to put you in. So take your example from your dog and try not to feel guilty over what is, after all, nothing personal. It's only a Big Deal if you make it a

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Big Deal.

Can you intentionally alter the dynamics of your Pack? In other words, can you use this feeding ritual to increase the status of a more submissive dog or bring a dominant dog down a notch or two? The answer to that is, Maybe. Somewhat. If you have a very dominant dog and a very submissive one, you can alter the feeding to send a message to your dominant dog, but you will probably never consistently, successfully be able to move the more submissive dog much higher up on the hierarchy ladder. Some dogs are just not comfortable eating before a “superior” dog does. Some dogs are just meant to be (and are happiest at) the bottom of the ladder. Be grateful. These are the easy ones.

If your dog is aggressive, very dominant, or guards his food, you need to send him an immediate “we know what you’re up to now” message. To do this, you need to feed him all of his food by hand for as long as you can stand it. Two weeks is ideal. Here’s how to do it:

Get your dog a new food bowl so that he isn’t possessive of the bowl itself. Pour your dogs food into the bowl and set it on a table or counter, out of his range. You must either be standing or sitting in a chair that is higher than your dog. (This is important for doggy psychological reasons we’ll get into later.) Sit your dog in front of you. Take a handful of food from his bowl and then let him eat it right out of your hand. Wait until he finishes all of it *and then looks to you for more*, then get another handful and feed it to him. Feed him all of his food, every last drop of it, one handful at a time, until it’s all gone. Now, what if he doesn’t eat? If he won’t eat food from your hand, he’s playing games with you. He’s letting you know that he will not take food from a subordinate. That’s fine. Let him think whatever he wants to, *but he goes hungry that night*. And the next night, and the next, until he takes food from you. A few days without eating is not going to hurt him, and I promise you, he is not going to starve himself to death to prove a point. First of all, dogs are not that silly. Secondly, their self-preservation instinct is too strong. You just need to outlast him. Eventually, he will eat. You have Time and Mother Nature on your side. Those are pretty good allies.

* This “you must eat all your food from my hand” treatment is a Powerful Secret Weapon. Use this when your dominant dog gets too big for his britches or challenges you. Not as an all-purpose correction, but as a “don’t forget, *I’m* the one in charge,” reminder.

If your dog is very aggressive and you don’t feel comfortable getting your hands close to his teeth, trust your instincts and don’t push it right now. You have plenty of time and we’re in no hurry to rush this along. Instead, drop a handful of food on the floor, and then wait for him to eat it *and look up to you* for the next handful. Do this for the whole bowl of food.

This hand-feeding technique is boring, and tedious, and time-consuming, and you will get dog slobber all over you. But by hand-feeding your dog, he is never really allowed to actually possess his food; it is coming directly and unmistakably from you, the Pack Leader. This is a critical foundation for a very dominant, bossy dog and can make a huge difference in his behavior all by itself. And it’s much easier on us to outsmart him at his own game than it is to fight and argue with him every day.



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Leaders Greet First

When a person, real or imagined, comes to our house, both dogs charge violently at the front door barking loudly enough to shatter glass, because they know, through instinct, that there is a bad guy out there and they MUST PROTECT THE HOUSE. So when we open the door, no matter who is standing there – a neighbor, a delivery person, Charles Manson holding a 4-foot machete – the dogs barge RIGHT PAST HIM and race outside, looking for the bad guy, who for some reason is never there, a mystery that always causes the dogs to come to skidding four-legged stops and look around with expressions of extreme puzzlement. Foiled again! He's a clever one, that bad guy!

Dave Barry

Sound a little familiar? Does your dog tap you with his paw to get your attention, or lean against you while you rub his head, or rest his head in your lap and give you sad puppy dog eyes until you pet him? Does he run up to greet you when you come home, and dance up and down, and bark and yip and go out of his way to be adorable until you pay attention to him? Isn't he just too cute? No, he's not. These are just a few of the many ways a dominant dog will initiate a desired behavior from a subordinate (*you*). In other words, these are all subtle, manipulative little ways he's figured out to get you to do what he wants. (He's not too cute anymore, is he?)

The Leader of the pack has the right to approach any other pack member and interact with that member on *his* terms. He has the right to determine when these interactions begin and end and to control what happens during them. He has the right to expect lesser pack members to groom him, pay attention to him, play with him, cater to his every whim, and then leave him alone when he's had enough. He decides when he wants to eat, eliminate, play, and howl at the moon. We lesser pack members just go along for the ride. The Leader will occasionally hang out with us lesser mortals, but more often than not he just kinda kicks back, plays it cool, and lets lesser members fawn all over him. What a life.

The Leader also has the right to initiate interactions with strangers. It's his responsibility to ensure the safety of the pack and to assess the potential danger strangers may pose. He has the sole right to determine whether this stranger is wanted or unwanted by the pack. And he has the right to make this stranger leave his territory by whatever means he feels are necessary.

If we devote our attention to our dog without first asking him to do something to earn it, if we let our dog greet visitors before we do, if we let him chase the mailman off every day, he instinctively interprets these seemingly innocent gestures on our part as a sign of his dominance over us and the rest of the pack. So how do we let Bobo know we're in charge now? That's easy. Piece of cake. Here's what we're going to do:

You need to initiate all your dog's interactions for now, and supervise his interactions with others. Most dogs really don't want to be in charge. And most of them are very poor leaders because they lack the confidence and the ability to handle the stress involved. Let's face it, being a leader is a stressful job. That's why the bigwigs in Fortune 500-type companies make truckloads of money. Your dog may initially protest as you begin to control interactions, because he doesn't yet have confidence in your leadership skills and because he may have a lot invested in staying in charge, whether he's any good at it or not. As you take the responsibility of having to control everything back from your dog, it greatly reduces his stress level, helps build his confidence in himself and in you, and it elevates your status in his eyes. What you need to do is get a 6 - 10 foot lead, preferably nylon or clothesline or something similar because they're cheaper to replace if Bobo decides to chew on it. Attach it to your dog's collar and leave it on him anytime you're home and can watch him. (Take it off if you leave or if you can't keep an eye on him so that it doesn't become caught on something and hurt him.) This little leash trick is going to accomplish several things. First, it gives you a way to control his movements, keep track of his location, and keep him stationary if you need to. Second, it gives you something to grab on to if you need to get ahold of him quickly. And third, it reduces or eliminates leash frenzy. You've seen those dogs that go absolutely berserk when they see their leashes because they know they're going bye-bye? If he gets used to his leash just being there, at the end of his collar, it ceases to have any special meaning to him. Sometimes he goes bye-bye, sometimes he doesn't. Sometimes he just wanders around with a leash on. Sometimes a leash is just a leash.

Once your dog is reliably housebroken, you decide when he goes out to potty or to play. Most adult dogs in good health that are truly housebroken should be able to get by with 3 or 4 trips outside a day. Obviously, this does not apply to dogs that are sick, in poor health, or have upset tummies. If you have a doggie door, you should keep it closed during this retraining time so that you control his trips out. What we want to avoid is *Bobo* training *you* to let him out every time he thinks he hears a squirrel, or the mailman, or the wind.

Petting is a form of praise. Therefore, your dog must earn it. Two rules apply here:

1. All physical contact between you and your dog must be initiated by you, and
2. It must be earned by your dog.

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If your dog tries to get you to pet him, tell him “that’s enough,” or “stop it,” and ignore him. If he persists, and he will, continue to ignore him or get up and walk away. He will continue to try to get your attention, because up til now he thought he had you pretty well trained. You’ve never misbehaved like this before, so his first thought is maybe you just didn’t *notice* him, so he escalates his antics. Your attitude through his whole “Let me remind you your true mission in life is to rub my belly” performance must be that you can ignore him longer than he can be obnoxious. You just need to outlast him. Try not to interact with him at all; negative attention is better than no attention, so he’ll take whatever he can get. Totally ignore him if you can. If you do this consistently, eventually he will consistently give up and wander away. It may take a while at first, but it will happen. And you must always end the petting yourself. Just tell him “that’s enough,” and either ignore him or walk away.

Groom your dog. This can be as simple as lightly running a brush over his coat a few times. Many dogs do not want to be groomed. It’s boring and exhausting and you keep insisting on giving them all this attention they’ve already told you they don’t want. The key is to make it a positive experience. Hold some treats in your hand and give him one now and again. Some people put a glob of peanut butter or Cheez Whiz on the outside door of the refrigerator. Let Bobo lick it off while you groom him. It’s easy to clean off the frig and it may keep him entertained enough that he hardly notices he’s being groomed. Dogs feel strongly that food is a very positive and entertaining experience. Anything involving food can’t be all bad.

Clip your dog’s nails. This is easy to do if you know how to hold his paw properly, but it’s not for the faint of heart. (We’ll be going over how to do this in a later class.) Most dogs don’t like having their feet touched or restrained. It’s an instinct, and it’s because their feet are their primary means of escape in any given situation. If you immobilize the feet, you threaten the safety of the animal. But nails that are allowed to grow too long cause the dog to distribute weight on the backs of his feet, which can distort the alignment of the structural (skeletal) system and can cause, or contribute to, all kinds of bad problems including arthritis and hip dysplasia (these are both painful, often debilitating, and expensive.). So if you can’t quite bring yourself to cut his nails, at least have your groomer or vet clip them. Try to have them done at least once a month. Ideally, you should not hear his nails when he’s on tile or linoleum. It could save your dog all kinds of aches and pains in his “golden years” and you all kinds of money in vet bills. If your dog is a puppy, touch his feet frequently so that he gets used to it and accepts it. (Note: some dogs just **will not** let you clip their nails. Some of them feel *very, very strongly* about it. Leave them to the paid professionals. It’s much easier on *you*.)

Check your dog’s mouth and ears. The color and response time of your dog’s gums is the fastest way to check for signs of shock. You and your vet need to be able to safely open Bobo’s mouth and check his gums and teeth without any threat from him. Regularly cleaning and checking your dog’s ears can cut down and prevent infection, odor, and ear mites.

Teach your dog to greet people properly. This is one of the main reasons we teach our dog the sit / stay. It’s what is referred to as a “control exercise,” which means that Bobo has to learn to control his behavior no matter how wound up he is inside. We are going to teach him to wait politely at the front door and not just go running out like a wild animal, and to sit politely when greeting friends or strangers. Remember, in the pack, dogs that cannot control their behavior can threaten the safety of the pack by drawing unwanted attention. Uncontrolled behavior would not be tolerated by the pack, so we are within our rights to insist that Bobo become civilized.

Tone down greeting and departure rituals. We want Bobo to take his cues from us. If, every time we come or go, we fuss over Bobo, and worry, and feel guilty, and go on and on about how much we love him and will miss him and be home soon kiss kiss kiss, all we really accomplish is getting Bobo all worked up and worried. This is unfair to him because all he understands is that you, the Leader, are concerned about something. And if *you’re* that worried about it, then he’s *really* in trouble. Then we go off to work for the day and leave Bobo alone with all this tension and stress built up. He can’t have a cigarette or a drink or take a fistful of Prozac to calm himself down, so instead he does the only thing he knows to do to release tension – he digs up the sprinkler system, he chews up the sofa, he barks non-stop at nothing for hours. The long dramatic good-bye makes *us* feel better and may alleviate some of our guilt, but it’s not fair to get Bobo all worked up. Instead, a few minutes before you leave, put Bobo wherever you normally leave him – yard, crate, living room – and when the time comes, just go. No scene, no long good-byes, just go. And when you come home, ignore Bobo for the first few minutes. Go about your normal routine and completely ignore him as if he didn’t exist. His antics will increase at first because he’s never had so much trouble getting you to mind before, but eventually he will calm down, if for no other reason than to try and figure out what’s going on. *This is when you greet him.* Very calmly, no big deal, just as if you were saying “Hi, how’s it going?” to a neighbor. If you only pay attention to him when he’s calm, cool and collected, you reinforce this as the appropriate behavior.

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Leaders Go First

This week is easy. It's a breeze. You're already more than halfway home on this one. Remember the game "Follow the Leader" that you played as a child? The Leader Leads. That's it in a nutshell. The begin-all and end-all. Amen.

When it's late at night in the wolf pack and there's a strange noise, when they sense danger nearby, when a stranger approaches the pack, when a gnat passes gas in a forest far, far away, who ya gonna call? Who are you going to send to check out the problem? Well, you're definitely not going to send the second stringers because those guys don't have a clue what they're doing. And you're going to feel much more confident charging into battle behind General Patton than you would Pee Wee Herman. So you're going to send the most qualified candidate, the one who has the experience, the wisdom, the ability and the confidence to deal with whatever may hit the fan. You're going to send (drum roll please) *Alpha Dog*.

Now, your dog understands this instinctively. Mother Dog taught him this as a tiny puppy. She was primarily concerned with his safety, because she couldn't protect him properly if he was way out in front of her. *Every time* he tried to get ahead of her or go through doors or gates before her, she would growl at him, bop him on the head with her paw, nip at him, knock him over with a shoulder block, shake him by the back of the neck. And by doing this, not only did she keep him safe, she also instilled in him a respect for age and experience and authority. And since his safety was at stake, she corrected him *every single time* consistently. No "good enoughs," no "I'm too tired today," no "well, buts." Safety is safety and there are no compromises, only consequences. He understood this as a puppy, so he's perfectly capable of understanding it now.

When we bring Bobo home, after all Mother Dog's hard work, and let him pull us down the street by the leash, charge through doors before us, or ignore us when we call him, we're telling him, loud and clear, that he is the Leader, the Top Dog, the one most qualified to handle whatever life throws our way. We're also telling him that we're the second stringers. We don't have a clue what's going on.

Well, there are a couple of things going on here that we need to know about before solving the problem. First, besides signaling leadership, dogs that pull us down the street or dash out doors are just reacting. It becomes a habit and they don't *think*, they just *react*. Doorbell rings, dog goes nuts. We want to slow him down and get him in the habit of thinking again. Second, we are concerned about his safety too. We don't want him dashing out the front door and getting hit by a bus. A lot of scientists with a lot of our tax money have determined that dogs have the reasoning ability of an 18-month to 24-month old child. Therefore – and here's why you care – *he is capable of understanding cause and effect, and consequences*. But he is not always capable of accurately assessing the potential for danger in a situation. That's up to us, as the Pack Leader. This is not to say that he won't protect us in a dangerous situation; but we want it to be as a strong, confident subordinate coming to the defense of the Pack, not as a pushy, out-of-control brat that thinks he's in charge. Who needs that.

There are 3 situations when the Leader absolutely must go first. They are:

1. **When walking down the street.** (Heeling on a *loose* leash) You already have a great start on the Heel. We just need to work on coordination and polish it up some. The reason it must be on a *loose* leash is because we want him to think. If he's pulling you down the street on a taut leash, he knows right where you are. He's got you right where he wants you – *behind him*. If he's on a loose leash, he has to focus on you and what you want. He can't *feel* where you are so he actually might have to pay attention to you. Also, a taut lead sends a variety of signals to your dog, most of them bad. It teaches him to react instead of thinking, to sense fear or apprehension where there is none, and can even bring out latent aggression.
2. **When coming to you when you call him.** (Recall) We've got a great start on the recall too, but a lot further to go with this one. It's really hard work to get a reliable recall out of your dog, but worth every moment. Most dogs won't come when called. This is largely because they just don't respect the owner as the Leader. So then we have to chase the little scoundrel down, which further erodes our position in the dog's eyes. Believe me, he's laughing all the way to the kibble bowl. When you're working on the Recall, don't set yourself up to fail. Bobo should never have the option of *not* coming to you. This means never giving him the "come" command when you cannot enforce it. Tell him something else, snap your fingers, make kissy noises, throw food, whatever gets him to come to you, but **DON'T EVER TELL HIM "COME" WHEN YOU CAN'T ENFORCE IT**. Just one time – and we're not kidding, just once – teaches him that he doesn't have to come to you, and there's nothing you can do about it. Chasing him just becomes a game to him and lowers your Alpha status immeasurably. Also, it teaches him that he's faster and quicker than you. The easiest way to make sure he's going to come to you is to just keep his regular lead or, depending on the circumstances, an 8 or 10 foot lead, on him as much as you can when you're going to be home to watch him (so it doesn't get caught on something and injure him). Not only does this desensitize him to his leash so that he's not a whirling dervish every time he sees you with it, it gives you something to grab onto in a hurry if you want him to come to you and he can't be bothered. Just pull him to you if you have to.

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3. **When going in or out** of doorways, gates, car doors, elevators, time zones, whatever. (Wait) OK, this is the one that most of us have trouble teaching our dogs because we can't be tough enough. But this is the one that's going to save his life, so we're going to have to suck it in and tough it out. Get your strength from Mother Dog. She would never wimp out if it had to do with Bobo's safety, right? Right. So, take a few deep breaths. Here we go. What you need to do is put your dog on a sit / stay right in front of the door, and hold on to his leash with your right hand (assuming you are right-handed). Tell him "wait," and with your left hand, open the door 4 - 6 inches or so (a screen door is perfect for this because it makes a big loud banging noise). Bobo will, of course, start to charge out the door. Now, timing is critical here. What you want to do is tell Bobo, "NO! Wait!" and, at the same time, quickly slam the door shut with a lot of noise and fanfare, missing his nose by the merest fraction of an inch. **WHAM!** Surprise him, dazzle him, stun him. Ideally, you want to slam the door shut a split second before he gets to it. But if you're a split second too late, the worst thing that's going to happen is that you're going to catch his nose in the door. It's OK. It may hurt for a minute. He may yelp. He may give you "How could you do this to me?" booboos. It's still OK. And yes, you will feel guilty if you catch his nose in the door. But not *nearly* as guilty as you will if he's run over. Even if your timing is off and you catch his whole entire body in the door and he yelps for a week, it's going to be a **lot** less painful than being hit by a bus as he charges out your front door. There is nothing worse than seeing your dog hit by a car right in front of you – unless it's your *child* seeing your dog hit right in front of him. So, set him up, and do this every single time you go in or out of doors. *You* must be consistent if you want *him* to be consistent. Mother Dog set the precedent for us. If she could do it, so can we. Remember, it is the responsibility of the Pack Leader to keep the pack safe. It's not fair for us to accept the privileges of the position without also accepting the responsibilities. And if you feel guilty, remember: if he had only **listened** to you the Bad Door wouldn't have been able to get him.

Remember: Lead, Follow, or Get Out of the Way!



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Leaders Talk First

“What we have here is a failure to communicate.”

From the movie *Cool Hand Luke*

The primary way that dogs communicate with each other is by body language. It is a fascinating, universal language that is understood and spoken by every dog everywhere in the world. It is clear and concise – there are no double meanings and no hidden messages. Since dogs are definitely an “English as a second language” group, and they are never going to be able to learn our language, as the Pack Leader we owe it to them to learn to communicate in a way they can understand. So let's just jump right into this thing and act like we knew what we were doing.

If you “talk” with your body, you're never *not* saying something. Just about every movement your dog makes has purpose and meaning. Nothing is random. Some of it is very, very subtle with nuances and meanings that we could hardly guess. For instance, when your dog suns himself on the deck and watches you while you garden, it's not because he wants to be close to you. It's because that's where *he* can sit at the highest point and still look down on *you*. Now, I don't know about you, but the last thing *I* need in this life is my *dog* looking down on me. We're going to put a stop to that right now. So until you fully regain the Alpha position, Bobo must never be higher than you. If you are standing, he's sitting. If you're sitting, he's laying down. You get the idea. Watch him especially around stairs. They're sneaky and like to lay on stairs because then you have to go around them. Or fall *over* them.

Eye contact among dogs is almost a whole language unto itself. And fortunately for us, it has “rules” that we can learn and adapt for our purposes. Eye contact is a powerful indicator of many things, including confidence and status. A subordinate dog cannot maintain eye contact with a more dominant dog for long without risking some kind of confrontation. Now, by this we don't mean the kind of look-to-me-for-Leadership bond we've been trying to form with our dogs from the beginning of class. This is a whole other can of worms; this is a staring contest. You can tell the difference because your dog's body language will change. If it's going to be a staring contest, he will probably quit panting and close his mouth. He will become very still and very focused and his ears will probably come forward. This is a challenge. When two dogs who are close in status decide to challenge each other for dominance, the first thing they usually do is start a staring contest. Think of two men in a bar, staring each other down. Eventually one of them will go up to the other and say something terribly clever like “do you have a problem?” And then things will usually escalate from there and the fight is on. Dogs, having more sense than most men in a bar, usually decide the matter based on the staring contest alone; the more submissive dog will usually look away and break eye contact after a few seconds. The moment one dog looks away, the challenge is over and the issue is settled. The challenger is forgiven but ignored for the time being. No one is injured. The outcome is understood by everyone in the pack and life goes on as before. If the staring contest wasn't enough to decide things, they go on to more physical displays, such as strutting, mounting, false charges, leaning on each other, and mouthing. The hair on their neck and possibly also their back will stand up, they'll bare their teeth, their ears and tails will be erect and forward, and they will make slow, deliberate movements. They may or may not also growl, but this warning growl is usually so low you may not even be sure you heard it; it's almost spooky, it's so low, like a whisper. Actual fighting is rare in a pack, and when it does happen, fights usually last only a few seconds and will ultimately decide the matter of dominance. (The reason dogs in a pack rarely fight is because fighting would jeopardize the survival of the pack. If they were running around fighting and injuring each other they couldn't effectively hunt, defend the pack, or care for the young.)

What to do if you find yourself in a staring contest with your dog: You must not break eye contact first. I'm serious. That's how important this is in your dog's world. That's how many Leadership Points are at stake here. Do whatever you have to do to get him to look away first. Extend your arm and snap your fingers. Have someone else call his name and distract him. Wave your arms. Clap your hands. Drop something on the floor. Send up a flare. Whatever it takes. Then, as soon as he looks away, walk off and ignore him completely. You say much more to your dog by saying nothing than if you scolded him.

Our domestic dogs use the same body language and movements, sounds and facial expressions as wild dogs and wolves. A dominant dog may lean on you, step on your toes, jump up on you, mouth you, stand over you, jump into your lap, block your path, and, in extreme cases and especially towards children, show mounting behavior. (Yikes!) In Bobo's defense, he's only doing what he thinks he has the right to do – correct or direct the behavior of a subordinate. But it's a shaky defense and court is no longer in session 'cause here come the Judge (you).

If you're sitting on the couch and Bobo comes over and leans against your leg or steps on your tootsies, it's not because he wants to be as close to you as possible. Don't kid yourself. He's subtly trying to control you with his body. Dogs do it to each other all the time. Anytime your dog leans on you or steps on you, tell him “No, Off,” and ignore him or walk away. If he keeps it up, push him away from you. If you're standing up, push him away with your

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shin or knee. Don't kick him. Just show him with your body that you understand what's going on and you're not going to play into it. And continue to ignore him until he can present himself like a gentleman. *Then* pet and praise him.

“Play Biting” (Mouthing)

Mouthing is a serious problem. Puppies mouth each other for several reasons, but first and foremost because that's how they learn to gauge their bite pressure. (This is called Bite Inhibition.) Puppies nip and bite each other during play. This is how they learn what it feels like to be bitten and, more importantly, how to inhibit their bite pressure to keep from causing damage. Now, he can only use this as an excuse until he's 11 weeks old. *Any time after 11 weeks of age that Bobo puts his teeth on you is a sign of dominance.* Pure and simple. I'm sorry, but there are no exceptions to this. If Bobo has his teeth on you and he is over 11 weeks of age, he is not play biting. And it does not matter if he happens to be playing at the time he has his teeth on you. This still does not make it play biting. There is no such thing as play biting. *And there is no reason or excuse that justifies your dog having his teeth on you – ever.* So, this is what we need to understand about mouthing:

- 1) The main reason mouthing is so serious is because – listen carefully, because this is the essence of the problem – *we are always teaching our dogs something.* If we let Bobo get away with mouthing us, we are teaching him that it's OK to have his teeth on us. A month from now, a year from now, five years from now when Bobo bites us, he's only doing what we've “taught” him it's OK to do. Now this does *not*, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, make it OK. But Leaders are fair, so we have to admit our part in this.
- 2) Another reason mouthing is serious is because *in the absence of any limits or options, behavior will escalate over time.* Mouthing, play biting, growling, snarling, and snapping will all evolve into biting at some point. What he is basically doing with all these behaviors is warning you – *leave me alone.* After he feels he's given you enough warnings, he will bite. It will happen. It is the nature of the beast. Because in his eyes, all he's doing is correcting a subordinate for inappropriate behavior. (Nothing personal, you understand.) Look at it from his point of view. He's given us plenty of warnings, over and over again – how generous of him – and we're just not getting it. He's tried to be patient with us. Apparently we're just not too bright.
- 3) You must be honest about 2 things. First, if your dog has a mouthing problem – or play biting or whatever you choose to call it – you have to be honest and admit it's happening. It *will not* get better or go away if we ignore it. And second, you *cannot* make excuses for his behavior any longer. Mouthing is biting, period. *There is no legitimate reason that your dog should ever have his teeth on you*
- 4) Understand that your dog knows *exactly* what he's doing. His teeth never once left his head. Your hand did not accidentally end up in his mouth. And he knows exactly how much pressure he's using. He's not play biting you. He's *warning* you.
- 5) We hate to bring this up, but someone's got to do it. We're talking about the “L” words here: *Lawsuit* and *Liability.* We know people who have been sued over a dog bite and lost hundreds of thousands of dollars – and their homes, businesses and everything else. Courts are more and more finding *against* the dog owner. You have to protect yourself and your family. Stop this behavior now before it escalates into something *really, really bad.*

So, what to do if your dog mouths you? The first couple times, you need to let out a yelp. As high and as squeaky as you can. (This is much easier for women.) You want to sound just like a puppy. Remember, this lets him know, in his own language, that he's using too much pressure. He will look at you funny and tilt his little head like he's trying to figure out the answer to the Universe. He will probably try it again. Yelp again. For some dogs, this is all they need to get the message. But this is a Puppy Felony, and if he keeps it up, we're done fooling around with him. What you want to do is quickly smack him under the chin, tell him “NO!” in your DON'T YOU EVER EVEN THINK OF DOING THAT AGAIN voice. Do this as quickly as you can, before he can figure out what's going on. The element of surprise here is as important as the correction. Stun him. Dazzle him. Then *ignore him.*

Until you have possession of the Leadership title again, you shouldn't let your dog jump into your lap. If he does, toss him off. (Remember, a *controlled* toss.) Keep doing it until he gets the picture. Someday, once you're *sure* he knows you're in charge, if you want him in your lap, that's fine. But, like any good guest, he must wait for your invitation. It should be *your* decision, not his. Every time he tries to jump in your lap without an invitation, toss him off.

Playtime and Such

Playtime isn't just playtime to your dog, of course. That would be too simple. Playtime is yet another time when your dog works out his place in the pecking order. Now, even leaders play. But there are big differences when the leader plays. The leader gets to:

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DOG SPEAK

by Carol Lea Benjamin
Mother Knows Best: The Natural Way to Train Your Dog
Howell Book House, Inc. 1985

It will enrich your relationship with your dog by leaps and pounces, offering you previously hidden comedy, pathos, and information.

- 1) **Play Bow:** When either stretching after a nap or expressing friendly sociability, the dog will assume an elongated position, forelegs on the ground, rump in the air. This stretch position is one of the chief ways your dog invites play. Almost all dogs can read this posture, even if it is done awkwardly by a human being. (*Note: your dog always has the right to decline an invitation to play.*)
- 2) **Pawing:** Pawing is a submissive, friendly gesture, also used as an invitation to communicate or play. Paw back - and while you're there, tell him SHAKE and you've got an instant trick.
- 3) **Panting:** Your dog pants both to cool his body (because he does not sweat through his skin as people do, but rather via his tongue and the pads of his feet) and to express his friendliness. If you pant back to him, he will either respond in kind or he will translate. That is, he'll either pant back, or he'll play bow, paw at you, wag his tail. DogSpeak, like English, has synonyms.
- 4) **Mobbing:** Mobbing and subsequent mouth licking are most often seen in puppies when their mother approaches. Your puppy may mob you when you come home, and for similar reasons. In the wild, and sometimes in the tame, when mother is mobbed and her lips are licked, she regurgitates her half-digested meal for her babies. You, on the other hand, can merely pet Buddy when he mobs you. There's no need to get carried away with this. (*Note: when your dog mobs you, he is also indicating submission to you.*)
- 5) **Submissive posturing:** Submissive posturing begins with the ears back, tail tucked, hind leg up, a roll over onto the back, neck and tummy are exposed, tip of the tail is wagged, dog may urinate. This is language you should understand since you will be training and correcting your dog. This is not language you should "speak" as it is not appropriate for someone of your species or station.
- 6) **Tail Wagging:** Tail wagging is an indication of friendliness. If wagged low, it is an indication of submission. When only the tip of the tail wags, your dog is not sure if you will be happy about what he is doing - but he hopes so.
- 7) **Tail Tucking:** Submission and fear are expressed with a tucked tail. The female will also tuck her tail to protect herself from amorous males when she is not in season. When ready to mate, she flags with her tail, tossing it high and to the side.
- 8) **Hackles Raised:** The expression, "Don't get your back up," should let you know that raised hackles mean anger. If you see a dog with everything going out and forward - hackles raised, ears forward, tail high, up on his toes - that's an angry dog. Fear is expressed by a pulling in - ears back, tail tucked, rounded back (tummy tucked). Mixed messages - ears back, hackles up - could mean a shy, sharp dog or a fear biter. This dog, the one expressing ambivalence, is less predictable and can be more dangerous than the aggressive dog.
- 9) **The T Position:** The more dominant of two dogs will form a T by leaning on the submissive dog's back with his muzzle or even his paws. (*Note: any time one dog puts his paws on another dog, this is a dominant gesture.*)
- 10) **Mounting:** Mounting is used for mating and also as a display of dominance. A dog wishing to vote himself Alpha will mount another dog of either sex as an act of self-assertion. There is no appropriate reason for a dog to be allowed to mount a person.
- 11) **Submissive grin:** This is a caught-in-the-act grin acknowledging submission.
- 12) **Laugh Face:** An open-mouthed happy look invites play or shows that the dog knows he just cracked a particularly worthwhile joke.
- 13) **Meaningful Sounds:** As you add the posture to the sound, you will be able to interpret the variety of utterances your dog makes. His voice can express a range of feelings - sadness, boredom, joy, anger, friendliness, pain, a call to gather, a kind of "ahem" to get your attention, loneliness, exuberance.
- 14) **Eye Expression:** You can see what a dog is feeling by looking into his eyes, just as he will know what you are feeling by looking into yours.

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Dominant Behaviors: Signs That Bobo May Be Trying To Take Over

- Laying across entryways, stairs, doorways, the kitchen floor, etc., so that you have to step over or around him
 - Growling or snapping if you try to move him from where he's comfortable
 - Laying on the couch, bed, or other elevated furniture
 - Not being all the way down and relaxed on down or sit commands; "hovering"
 - Leaning on you *
 - Nudging or bumping you or your hand for attention *
 - Jumping up on you or otherwise putting his feet on you
 - Marking (urinating a small amount, whether your dog is male or female) in your house or on your things
 - Growling or snarling when you come near his food bowl, toys, or other things he considers his property
 - Going through gates or doorways first
 - Greeting visitors first
 - Chewing, tugging, or pulling on his leash after he knows how to heel
 - Stealing food off of tables or counters
 - Staying ahead of you on walks
 - Barking (sometimes)
 - Scratching the ground after eliminating (males *and* females)
 - Stepping on your toes *
 - Mouthing – also known as play biting, nipping, etc.
 - Mounting behavior (whether your dog is male *or* female, & whether the other dog or person is male or female)
 - Laying his head on your hand or leg * (while giving you big sad puppy dog eyes)
 - Refusing to do a command you're sure he knows; becoming suddenly rigid when being placed in a sit or down ("I won't do it, you can't make me.") *
 - Selective hearing, or being struck suddenly and completely deaf to commands *
 - Begging for food; nudging or pawing you during meals
 - Sleeping in your bed
 - Refusing to let you clip his nails, brush him, look in his mouth
 - Playing keep-away with your things
 - Lifting one leg when urinating (males *and* females)
 - Initiating sniffing of other dogs
 - If you have more than one dog – fighting among the dogs (fighting among the troops indicates dissension in the ranks, meaning there is a perceived lack of leadership in the pack – there is usually no fighting in a pack with a clear leader.)
- * These are more subtle dominant gestures used by certain types of dogs or in certain situations, such as:
- ◇ by a more submissive dog or a dog that doesn't appear to have much confidence; (we say "doesn't *appear* to have much confidence" because some of these dogs are actually Little Napoleons – dogs with a cast iron will who have learned, over time, that they can get away with anything if they come across as oh-so-timid and shy)
 - ◇ this is frequently *testing behavior* by a dog to see exactly how far he can push you or to determine where you are in the Chain of Command in relation to him
 - ◇ occasionally seen in dogs who are playing "Po' Po' Pitiful Me" and whose performance really should be up for an Award come Oscar Night

This is by no means a complete list, and none of these behaviors *by itself* necessarily means that your dog is trying to take over the Leadership of the Pack; but the more of these signs that your dog displays, the more dominant he is, the more he may challenge your leadership, and the more you'll have to keep an eye on him.

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Instincts and Drives

Your dog came into this world with certain parts of his personality already formed: his instincts and his “drives”. These aspects determine two very important things: how he *perceives* the world, and how he *reacts* to it. Instincts and drives are inherited, and there isn’t much we can do to change them. And although every dog is an individual little soul in a fur suit, their instincts and the intensity of their drives are what determines most of their behavior and their personality.

Instinct is defined as “inherited genetic knowledge.” This is the knowledge your dog is born with, the knowledge that he has inherited from thousands of ancestors. It’s sort of a doggie “collective unconscious” that he taps into, that little whisper in his mind that tells him what to do in certain situations. It tells a herding dog to herd, a guard dog to guard, a retriever to retrieve; it’s the voice that tells a first-time mother how to raise her puppies when she don’t know nothing ‘bout birthing no babies.

We can control the intensity of certain instincts to some degree through careful breeding. If you breed 2 dogs with a strong instinct to guard, in theory, their offspring will have a stronger guarding instinct, and so on through generations. Instincts can be bred into or out of a line of dogs in just 5 generations. (That could be as little as 5 years.) Now, dogs can be trained to ignore certain instincts; for instance, a herding dog can be taught not to nip at children’s heels. And some of our dogs instincts are beneficial to us, like barking when strangers come to the door. But some of them are not. Some of them make us crazy. And the thing about instincts is, your dog will always revert back to them. Terriers will dig, huskies will run, and beagles will bark because that’s what terriers and huskies and beagles have *always* done, bless their furry little hearts. So be forewarned, and research your dog’s breed. And then you must not be surprised if your terrier digs you a basement. You can be *really annoyed*, but not surprised.

A **drive** is something that your dog is, well, *driven* to do. He can’t help himself. This is the obsessive / compulsive part of his personality. “Drives” are inherited behaviors that are loosely grouped into three categories: Prey drive, pack drive, and defense drive. Defense is further broken down into “fight” mode and “flight” mode. (Dogs are “fight or flight” animals; in other words, when cornered a dog will tend to either fight back and defend himself – a “fight” response; or flee to safety – a “flight” response.)

Prey Drive is the drive that governs behaviors associated with hunting and killing prey. Prey drive is triggered by motions, sounds, and smells, and can be seen in puppies as early as 6 weeks old. Prey drive is usually where your dog gets himself into trouble. This is the little voice in his head that tells him to chase the paperboy, rip up your shoe, bury cookies in the couch, kill the cat. (This is not the same voice as Instinct; this voice is the little devil on your dog’s shoulder, whispering evil thoughts into his little mind.) Prey drive is what a dog is in when he chases a ball, tracks lost children, or searches for drugs. Dogs like prey drive; prey drive is much fun and dogs are comfortable in prey drive because they don’t feel threatened. The good (?) news is that prey drive will diminish as your dog tires, and playing with him will both tire him out and release the stress involved with prey drive.

Some of the behaviors associated with prey drive are:

- Scenting
- Tracking
- Stalking
- Chasing
- Pouncing
- Shaking
- Biting
- Growling
- Killing
- Carrying
- Ripping
- Digging
- Burying
- Jumping
- Tearing
- Higher pitched bark
- Tail up & wagging

Pack Drive governs behaviors associated with being part of a group, being able to live by the rules of the group, and replenishing the group (reproduction). This is the part of your dog’s personality affected by “peer pressure.” He must be part of a team in order to survive. To be part of the team he must fit in. To fit in, he must follow the rules, adhere to the chain of command, and be able to communicate properly with other dogs. If he can’t live by the rules, he can’t be part of the team. Pure and simple. And he’s in for a long, cold winter in the wild. Pack drive is triggered by the dog’s rank within the group. A dominant dog is allowed to initiate behaviors that a submissive dog is not. Some of the behaviors exhibited by pack drive are:

- Physical Contact
- Playing
- Communicating through body language
- Breeding and being a good parent
- Reproductive behaviors, such as licking, mounting, washing, and “courting” gestures

Dogs with a strong pack drive tend to follow you around from room to room, love to be with you, and enjoy being petted and groomed. They are the Velcro of the dog world. Dogs with *very* high pack drive also tend to show more signs and symptoms of Separation Anxiety.

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Defense drive is governed by self-preservation and survival instinct. A dog in defense drive is not a comfortable dog; he feels the need to protect himself from some perceived threat. (Notice it is a *perceived threat to your dog*; he may feel threatened by your vacuum cleaner.) True defense drive can begin to appear as early as 4 - 5 months old, when your dog starts to bark at strange things, but doesn't really start to show until he reaches puberty, often as late as one year old. It doesn't fully develop until he reaches mental maturity, which is usually 2 - 3 years old. (This is why police dogs are often around 2 years old when they begin their working careers; not because there is so much to learn – although there is – but because the dog's natural defense drive doesn't kick in completely until about 2 years old.) Not all dogs will develop fight drive; only dominant, confident dogs with a strong prey drive will develop a fight drive. (This is why so many dogs are unsuitable for police and protection work.) Defense drive *does not* diminish as the dog tires – a dog will not lose the instinct to protect himself. A dog in defense drive will bark deeper and more seriously, his hackles may be up, he may snarl or show his teeth, and his tail will be held lower and will wag very slowly.

Fight Drive is where prey drive and defense collide – it has the forwardness of prey drive with the intensity of defense drive. A dog with a strong fight drive believes that the best defense is a strong offense. An adult dog with strong fight drive is very confident in all environments and circumstances.

Signs of a dog in fight drive are:

- Raised hackles from the shoulder forward only
- Standing his ground or going forward
- Guarding – food, toys, territory
- Indifference to or dislike of being petted or groomed
- Putting his head or paws on the shoulder of another dog
- Standing very tall and staring at other dogs or people
- Going up to unfamiliar objects
- Growling at people or dogs
- Lying in front of doorways, etc., & refusing to move
- Biting people or other dogs

Flight Drive is basically extreme defense drive – total avoidance. A dog with strong flight drive believes that the best and safest defense is a hasty retreat. Flight behaviors indicate that a dog is unsure of his abilities in the situation he's in; it indicates a general lack of confidence. Young dogs tend to exhibit this more than older, mature dogs.

Signs of a dog in flight drive are:

- Raised hackles the full length of the body, not just at the neck and shoulders
- Tail tucked
- Scared or terrified look
- Dislike of being touched by strangers
- Hiding or running away from new things and situations
- Ears back
- Submissive urination
- Flattening of the body when being greeted by people or other dogs

“Freezing” in a given situation is flight drive taken to an extreme and is referred to as “inhibited flight behavior.” It is the same response as the deer that freezes in the headlights. He really wants to run and hide, but he's so darned scared he can't.

A *flight response* is different from an *uncertain response*. A dog taking a step back to evaluate the situation is not the same as a dog in retreat; his tail will not be tucked, although he may carry it low; and he may look confused, but not scared. Taking a moment for evaluation is fine as long as he overcomes his uncertainty and learns how to deal with the situation. Then he comes away a more confident dog.

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