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Dominance Marking

or

Tinkle, Tinkle, Little Star

Dominance marking is when your dog leaves a sprinkle of urine on your couch, a tinkle on the chair, a spritz on the side of your bed or even – Heaven forbid! -- on your mattress. It is definitely *not* a housebreaking problem; it is 180° away from an accident. It's probably the most "on purpose" thing your dog could do. And it's *very* rude. The chronic leg-lifter is a true canine criminal. Usually it's a male, although a very dominant female will mark and even lift one leg just like a male.

Dogs use their urine and feces to communicate with the world. It's a kind of canine graffiti. When they pick a spot to piddle, they are saying to the world "I've been here, and I'm all that." The next dog that comes along will smell that spot and leave his own deposit on top of the first dogs, saying "I'm all that, *and* a bag of chips." When your little criminal picks a spot in *your* house to mark, he's saying a lot more than that. He's claiming your territory as his own. He's tinkling on *you*, by way of your possessions. He is ruining your furniture and rugs and smelling up your house. And if all that isn't enough, every sprinkle on your rug, your furniture, your whatever sends the message loud and clear, "I'm the top dog here. You're not."

There is good news and bad news about dogs with dominance marking problems. The good news is, they can be cured. The bad news is, this is a long-term problem. It's going to take some time, possibly even months. You must have patience and willpower, be Dedicated to the Cause and diligent in your efforts. And just when you thought it was safe, he's going to test you again. It's in his nature. You must be committed to following through till the bitter end or it's better not to even start the battle. If you give up halfway through, your dog will know that he has won the war, and he will only escalate his marking and really take advantage of you. But, we promise you, the closer you follow the plan, the shorter will be the war.

The Battle Plan

Preparation: When your dog is out in the yard or some other place where he can't watch you with his beady little eyes, clean up all markings that you can find. (If your dog sees you cleaning up where he's marked, it will dramatically lower your status in his eyes. Don't kid yourself – he knows *you're* cleaning up after *him*. Right now we're trying to raise your status, so give him a quarter and send him to the movies). Use a product specially designed for this, like Natures Miracle or Simple Solution. These products are made up of zillions of enzymes that actually eat the odors. If it's an older stain or a spot that has been hit repeatedly, they will take longer – maybe up to 2 weeks – to work, but don't give up. They do work and they will eliminate the odor. Don't use ammonia or vinegar (which is acidic) to clean because, besides leaving a whole host of new odors behind and not doing a very good cleaning job, two of the scents that dogs key on the easiest are ammonia and acid. He will find those spots and hit them again. Don't give him the ammunition. If you plan to clean the carpets to get rid of the odor, wait until the Nature's Miracle has done its job. If you put water on top of urine spots, it reactivates the urine and then you *really* have an odor problem.

Strategy: OK, this is the hard part. From now on, until this problem is completely under control, Bobo no longer gets free run of the house. If he wants to mark in somebody's house, let him get a job and buy his own. *Until then, free run of your house is a **privilege**, not his **right**.* You have given him freedom that he did not respect or deserve. Now he's going to have to *earn* the privilege.

Weapons: You have to use a crate or a tiedown. There is no getting around it at this point. The way to get this problem under control is to go about it the same way you would housebreak a puppy. So what we're going to do is confine him every single second that he's not directly in our sight. You may also need to get kiddie gates for bedrooms or figure out some way to block off the parts of your house that are out of sight. You don't want Bobo spritzing on your bedspread while you're watching Must See TV in the living room.

Itinerary: You must also put Bobo on a strict schedule and adhere to it religiously. Use the same schedule you would for a small puppy. As a general guideline, dogs usually have to eliminate when they wake up, when they eat or drink, and after they play. Restrict his water so he can't use *that* as an excuse. Remember: what goes in on schedule will come out on schedule; constant eating or drinking means constant elimination. Unless it's a scorching hot day, he doesn't need water on demand during the retraining period. Give him as much water as he wants four times a day, then watch him to see how long it takes to go through him. For our dogs, it takes about 45 minutes to go through the puppies and an hour to an hour and a half to go through the

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adults. Puppies may have to go twice in the same amount of time. If you give him water, make sure you're able to let him out to potty when he's ready to go. And don't give him water after about 7:00 pm, just like a toddler.

When you take him out to go, if you are absolutely sure that his little gauge is on empty, he can have *very limited* freedom in the house under your watchful eye. This means he must be in the same room as you at all times. If you leave the room for even 30 seconds, he goes back in his crate or on his tiedown. If he doesn't potty or you're fairly sure he's reserving something for the house, he goes back in his crate. He may fuss. He may whine or howl or bark at the moon. He may give you sad booboos and try to make you feel guilty. It doesn't matter if he threatens you with a gun – *you* stick to *your* guns. Don't give in. Get earplugs. Soundproof the house. Whatever it takes, but he stays in his crate. *It's his own fault he's there.* If you feel yourself weakening, think about your house – *before* he did such a number on it.

The only exception to this is if you are absolutely, positively, without a shadow of a doubt, sure that he never, ever, *ever* marks in the house when you're home. This is pretty rare; believe me, just because you don't see him doesn't mean he's not marking when you're there. But if you're sure he isn't, he can have limited freedom when you're home, but he must *always* be confined in his crate or on his tiedown when you're not home.

The Artillery: Now, what to do if he marks in front of you? Simple. Make as big a fuss as you can. Gasp. (Done right, you'd be surprised how effective that sharp intake of air can be.) Tell him "NO! BAAAAAAD DOOOOOOG!!!!!!!" in your best "How *dare* you?" voice. Shake him by his collar or the scruff of his neck, just like Mother Dog would do if he marked in the den. Make a huge display of anger. Bang on the floor. Bang on the walls. Send up flares. Launch cans at him. Launch grenades. Let him know that you have *NEVER* in your *WHOLE LIFE* seen a dog with *WORSE MANNERS* than him. BAD DOG and SHAME SHAME him. Then take him out and walk him. (Why walk him if he's already gone in the house? It reminds him that *this* is where he goes potty. It's part of the process.)

When you come back in the house, "discover" his crime again and correct him all over again. Tell him "*Did you do that?*" Make a fuss again. Then put him in his crate and completely, totally ignore him until his next scheduled walk or potty break. Clean up the spot immediately. Leaving it till later sends him the opposite message from what you intend to send.

What you want to accomplish with all this fuss is, first of all, to get his attention. Chances are he's been marking in your house so long he's turned a deaf ear to you long ago. You want to dazzle him. Keep him guessing and off balance. You want him to sit in his crate and think to himself, "Wow, *that* doesn't usually happen."

The End of the Beginning: If you follow the plan and all goes well, with no major transgressions after 2 - 4 weeks (which will seem like a hundred years), you can begin to let your errant pooch have a *few minutes* of freedom at a time. *Don't rush the process or be in a hurry to give him too much freedom too soon, or to let him have the run of the house, or he'll go back to his old behavior.* Check on him frequently by checking his favorite tinkle spots or by walking barefoot (yech!) on the carpet. At the slightest slip-up, at even the hint of a damp spot, he loses all his freedom again for 2 weeks. Show him the spot – he'll recognize his own scent. (Don't rub his nose in it because that's just icky.) Ask him, "*Did you do that?*" Make a fuss. By now you're getting good at this.

The Beginning of the End: This problem can take months to cure. The more diligent you are, the quicker it will go. If you are inconsistent, if you watch him like a hawk some days and relax and let him roam the house others, if you get lazy or you just can't deal with it some days, it will take forever and he may never be cured. If you're inconsistent, he wins. That there's the law.

Curing the chronic marker is tedious and boring. It will seem as if a large portion of your life is given over to watching the wrong end of your dog. But it's worth doing. Think about how wonderful it would be to reclaim your home, to be able to invite your family and friends to your home again without embarrassment, to be able to walk in your front door without being assaulted by toxic fumes. It *is* possible. You *can* do it. Don't give up. Just don't let the booboos get to you.

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Bite Busters: Playing It Safe with Dogs

Dog Bite Prevention Safety Program

How to Tell If a Dog Might Bite

- *His mouth will close.* This is the first sign that the dog has alerted to something.
- His ears may be laid back.
- He may stand very still and stiff
- He may stare at you
- He may hold his tail stiff or up in the air. He may even wag his tail.
- He may growl, snarl, show his teeth, or bark.
- The hair on his back may stand up.
- *Some dogs may not give any signs.*

What To Do If You're Bitten By a Dog

- Tell your parents or an adult immediately.
- Wash the wound out with soap and warm water.
- Go to your doctor or a hospital for treatment.
- Report your bite to Animal Control, the Health Department, or the police. Tell them as much as you can about the dog. What did he look like? What color is he? How big is he? Was he wearing a collar or tags? Where were you when you were bitten? What direction did the dog go?

Meeting a New Dog With the Owner Present

3 Steps:

- 1) Ask the dog's owner for permission to pet the dog.
 - 2) Slowly approach the dog from the front. Stand quietly and still. Make a fist and let the dog smell the back of your hand.
 - 3) Pet the dog under the chin.
- **DON'T** move quickly or reach over the dogs head to pet it.

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What To Do If You Are Approached By a Stray Dog

- **FREEZE. Stand Like A Tree.** Stand very still and try to be calm. Don't scream or yell.
- Count to 10 slowly and silently.
- Don't stare – this means “I dare you to bite me!” in dog language.
- Don't run, jump, or wave your arms around. Don't make any quick movements or sudden or loud noises.
- Try to stay until the dog leaves. Then back away very slowly until he's completely out of sight.
- If you fall or if you're knocked down, curl into a ball with your arms over your head and neck. Don't scream or roll around.

Additional Tips For Older Children:

- Be aware of where the dog is at all times. Don't turn your back, but don't stare him in the eyes.
- Don't scream, yell or talk. If you have to talk, speak very firmly and calmly.
- Don't throw anything at the dog or hit him.
- If a dog does attack suddenly, “feed” it your jacket, purse, bike, anything that may distract it and give it something to bite beside you. Get something between you and the dog.
- If you're riding your bike and a dog chases you, stop and place the bike between you and the dog.
- If the dog comes up to sniff you, let him sniff your hand. Move your hand very slowly and don't jerk your hand back suddenly. This could startle him. Usually the dog will go away when he decides you're not a threat to him.

Things You Should NEVER Do Around a Dog:

- **NEVER turn your back on a strange dog**
- **NEVER stare into a dogs eyes**, especially one you don't know. That's how dogs challenge each other to fight, and it can trigger an attack.
- **NEVER disturb a dog that is taking care of puppies**, even if it is your own dog.
- **NEVER disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping.**
- **NEVER go into a yard where there is a dog you don't know.**
- **NEVER run past a dog** you don't know, or turn your back and run away from a dog you don't know.
- **NEVER reach through a car window or a fence to pet a dog.**
- **NEVER pet a dog that is tied up or confined.**
- **NEVER try to break up a dog fight.** Tell an adult.

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Do's and Don'ts For Dog Safety:

Don'ts

- Don't touch a dog's "stuff," such as his bowl, toys, bed, etc.
- If a dog is acting like he's sick or hurt, leave him alone – even if it's your own dog.
- Don't walk up behind a dog, even one that you know, and pet him if he doesn't know you're there. Don't pet a dog if he can't see you.
- Don't hug or restrain a dog.
- Don't wrestle with a dog, even your own dog.
- Don't corner a dog or walk up to a dog with a group of people. Make sure the dog has a way to escape.
- Don't make fast or jerky movements, especially near the dogs head or eyes.
- Don't put your face near a dogs mouth unless it's your own dog.
- Don't "sic" any dog on someone else, even in play.
- Don't jump around, wave your arms, or scream, even when you're playing, if there is a dog nearby.

Do's

- Play gently and calmly with dogs. If a dog gets too excited, freeze and walk away. Take a time out to give the dog some time to calm down.
- Always ask the owner for permission to pet the dog..
- If the dogs owner says it's Okay to pet the dog, do it gently and slowly. Stand quietly and still. Make a fist and let the dog smell the back of your hand, then pet the dog under the chin.

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Rabies Fact Sheet

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that can affect all mammals, including humans. Rabies is passed from one animal to another when saliva enters the bloodstream as a result of a scratch or bite; for example, when a rabid animal bites another animal or a person. Symptoms of rabies include: extreme nervousness, paralysis, difficulty swallowing or breathing, and unpredictable behavior. An animal with rabies may become very aggressive, or it may just sit completely still and do nothing. The symptoms only appear during the last 10 – 12 days of the infected animal's life, and passing on the disease can only occur during that time. Rabies is treatable if caught early, before symptoms appear. Once the disease reaches the central nervous system there is no cure.

In North America, foxes, skunks, raccoons, and bats are the major sources of rabies. Although rabies is not common, it has been estimated that as many as one million head of cattle die annually in the U.S. as a result of bat-induced rabies. By law, all dogs in North America must be vaccinated for rabies.

Other Diseases and Parasites that are Transmittable to Humans:

Dogs are capable of transmitting over 60 communicable diseases, infections, and parasites to people. The following are some of the other diseases that are directly transmittable from dogs to humans:

anthrax	mumps	ringworm
amoebic dysentery		Rocky Mountain spotted fever
brucellosis		roundworms
bubonic plague		scarlet fever
chicken pox		
diphtheria	strongylosis	
heartworm	salmonella	
coronavirus	toxoplasmosis	
hemorrhagic septicemia		trichinosis
hookworm	tapeworm	
leptospirosis	tuberculosis	
measles	Melioidosis	
lyme disease		Giardia

While the chances of contracting some of these diseases are remote, some have as high as a 99% fatality rate and no cure. In addition to disease, dogs can harbor as many as 20 different kinds of parasites that are communicable to humans.

Rabies and Disease Safety Tips

If you are bitten by *any* animal, be sure to remember what kind of animal it was. The wound should be cleaned and **disinfected** immediately, and you should then go to your doctor or hospital right away. By law, the doctor must notify Animal Control, the local health department, your government agriculture department, or the police of all dog bites. Report all sick looking animals to local authorities. **Never handle sick or injured wildlife.** Consult your local authorities.



With Love . . . From a Lonely Dog

I wish someone would tell me what it is that I've done wrong.³

Why do I have to stay chained up and be left alone so long?
They seemed so glad to have me when I came here as a pup.
There were so many things we'd do while I was growing up.
The Master said he'd train me as a companion and a friend.
The Mistress said she'd never fear to be alone again.
The children said they'd feed me and brush me every day.
They'd play with me and walk me if I could only stay.
But now the Master hasn't time, and my Mistress says I shed;
She doesn't even want me in the house, not even to be fed.
The children never walk me, they always say, "not now."
I wish that I could please them . . . won't someone tell me how?

All I had to give, you see, was love.
I wish they would explain why they wanted mine
and then left it on a chain . . .

Edith Lassen Johnson

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A Dog's Prayer

Treat me kindly, my beloved master, for no heart in all the world is more grateful for kindness than the loving heart of me.

Do not break my spirit with a stick, for though I should lick your hand between blows, your patience and understanding will more quickly teach me things you would have me do.

Speak to me often, for your voice is the world's sweetest music, as you must know by the fierce wagging of my tail when your footstep falls upon my waiting ear.

When it is cold and wet, please take me inside, for I am now a domesticated animal, no longer used to the bitter elements. I ask no greater glory than the privilege of sitting at your feet. Though you had no home, I would rather follow you through ice and snow than rest upon the softest pillow in the warmest home in all the land, for I am your devoted worshipper.

Keep my bowl filled with fresh water, for although I should not reproach you were it dry, I cannot tell you when I suffer thirst. Feed me clean food, that I may stay well, to romp and play and do your bidding, to walk by your side, and stand ready, willing and able to protect you with my life, should your life be in danger.

And, my beloved friend, when I am very old and no longer enjoy good health, do not make heroic efforts to keep me going. Should the Great Master see fit to deprive me of my health or hearing or sight, please do not turn away from me and leave me alone. Rather hold me gently in your arms as skilled hands grant me the merciful benefit of eternal rest . . . and I will leave you knowing, with the last breath I drew, that my fate was ever safest in your hands.

- Author Unknown

Oh Lord, please help me to be the person my dog thinks I am.

UnkAuthor -



Things You Can Learn From Your Dog

1. Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
2. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
3. When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
4. When it's in your best interest, always practice obedience.
5. Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
6. Take naps and always stretch before rising.
7. Run, romp and play daily.
8. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.
9. Be loyal.
10. Never pretend to be something you're not.
11. If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
12. When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.
13. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
14. Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
15. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
16. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
17. When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
18. No matter how often you are criticized, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout. Run right back and make friends.

Author Unknown

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Class 1



Class One is usually chaos and mayhem. The dogs are excited and wild; there are so many new people and dogs and smells! They have no attention span, they forget their names, they jump, they bark, they run off. You may be mortified by your dogs behavior. You may not ever want to come to class again. You may even be tempted to move and change your phone number. You may feel hopeless. You may feel discouraged. You may think you have the only retarded dog in the class. (You don't. Trust us. *We* have him.)

Don't be discouraged! Don't give up! Trust the process. It *will* get better. It *will* get easier. Your dog *will* learn. You will both be fine. Training doesn't have to be a chore. Use this time to get to know and appreciate your dog and what makes him special and unique. Have fun. Be consistent. Be kind. Be firm. Be clear. Be cheerful. Work with your tails wagging.

This Week:

Sit / Stand: Repeat each exercise 5 times.

Sit: Hold a treat over your dogs nose and move it backwards toward his forehead. (Don't hold it too high over his nose; an inch or two is good. If he starts to stand or dance around on his hind legs, hold the treat closer to his nose.) As he looks up for the treat, he should naturally go into a sit. Click, and then give him his reward.

Stand: From the sit, tell your dog to "stand" and hold the treat just in front of his nose. Move it forward so that he has to stand to get it. When he stands, hold the treat still for a moment, then click and give him his cookie. Some dogs don't like the stand; it's not really a natural behavior for them to just stand around, watching the world go by. But he needs to learn it to be a good canine citizen; besides, your vet and your groomer will love you for it. It'll knock their socks off.

Let's Go: This week, our dogs are going to learn to walk calmly on leash without dragging us down the street. Your dog needs to learn that going for a walk is not the same as a tractor pull competition. At this point it's not critical that your dog do a perfect heel. What *is* important is that he learns to pay attention to you. This is not asking too much of your dog; if he was in the wild, his survival would depend on paying close attention to the Alpha dog. So, to make sure you have his attention:

Change directions frequently. This forces your dog to stay focused on you and to watch you, not all the other incredibly interesting things going on in the world. There will be time for exploring later, when *you* decide it's time. As soon as you notice your dog becoming distracted, change directions while refocusing him with a quick snap on his leash.

Praise him. If he keeps pace with you and watches you, keep telling him in a happy voice what a good dog he is. Remember, praise is *critical* – many times the only reward your dog has is the verbal praise he receives from you. Most dogs just can't get enough. And remember the key for praise: If you feel ridiculous, you're doing it right!

Pat your leg. While you're walking with your dog, pat your leg frequently to keep him focused and remind him where he (and his attention) should be.

("Let's Go" is different from Heel. "Let's Go" means we're just going for a casual walk. Bobo doesn't have to heel, but he does have to behave himself. Just because he isn't on a formal heel doesn't mean he gets to run around like a maniac and pull your shoulder out of joint.)

Call your Dog: This is going to set the basis for the recall, which can save your dog's life. This is an important one, and we're going to add a step to it each week.

With your dog sitting in front of you, let him see the treat. Take several steps backwards. Bobo will follow the treat (as the treat goes, so goes the dog. It's an amazing thing). When you stop, hold the treat over your dogs nose and move it backwards toward his forehead just like you did for the sit.

There are 3 rules for the recall:

1. **NEVER, ever, ever punish your dog when he comes to you.** No matter how long it took him to come to you, how far you had to chase him down the street in your underwear with your neighbors watching, how long you had to spend in jail for indecent exposure, or how badly you want to shoot him by the time you catch him. **It is absolutely critical that coming to you is always, always, always a happy experience for him.** Remember, your dog's idea of "punishment" may be quite different from yours. In other words, if you call him to you and then clip his nails, and he hates it and throws a tantrum and screams his head off like you've severed a limb, chances are he may view that as "punishment." Just something to keep in mind.
2. **Always praise your dog for coming to you.** There are 3 forms of praise:

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Verbal: Talking in a happy voice and using his name often.

Physical: Petting him.

Food: Small bits of his favorite treats.

3. **Never give the “come” command when you can’t enforce it.** If you call him and he ignores you, you’ve pretty much taught him he doesn’t have to come to you unless it’s convenient for him, and you have no way to catch him or make him mind. Instead, clap your hands, whistle, make kissy noises.

When working on the recall, make sure you vary his reward for coming to you so that he never knows just what surprise he will get – but he knows it will be something good!

Homework This Week:

Practice the exercises your dog learned in class 5-10 minutes once or twice a day most days. You’d be amazed at how much 5 minutes here and there can accomplish. Vary the length of training sessions so that he doesn’t become conditioned to quitting after, say, 10 minutes. You should try to have one long session (20 minutes or so) each week so that Bobo learns to be able to concentrate for longer periods of time. Don’t worry about training your dog twice a day, every day. It’s fine to skip a training session here and there, or even skip an entire day now and again. Training should be special time that your dog looks forward to spending with you, so never train him if you’re in a bad mood or if you’ve had a bad day. Don’t feel guilty or worry about falling behind; it’s better to skip a day than have a bad day with your dog that could have been avoided. And remember that dogs are “only human,” and they have their bad days too. Never end your training session on a bad note; always end with something your dog can do well, no matter how simple, so that he can be praised. Let him feel good about himself. Practice exercises in the house also.

Call your dog. While your dog is busy or distracted in your house or yard, call him to you 5 or 10 times each day. *Reward him every single time either by petting him, praising him, or with a small treat.* Alternate rewards so that he never knows what to expect, but he knows that something good is going to happen to him every time he comes to you, a little “puppy party,” if you will. Coming to you should be the highlight of his day, the pinnacle of his existence, his reason for living (and the treats don’t hurt!).

Watch Me. Encourage eye contact with your dog several times a day. Point to your eyes as you say “watch me” or draw an imaginary line from his nose to your eyes. Work up to 3-4 seconds of eye contact at a time. If you have an aggressive dog, remember that this is a focusing exercise, not a challenge. Don’t get into a staring contest.

New experiences. Your dog should have two new experiences each week. It can be something as exciting as a trip to the mountains or to something as simple as a walk down a new street. Remember 2 things during his new experiences:

If Bobo shows signs of fear, uncertainty, or apprehension, ***do not*** try to reassure him. Your dog actually misinterprets this as praise and “learns” that being afraid is the right way to act in new situations. (The fancy name for this is “Unintentional Training.” There will be a test on this later.) Instead of reassuring him, tell him “no,” or “ah, ah!” and simply change directions to distract him. As soon as he seems less unsure of himself, praise him for what a brave dog he is! This way there is more of a clear distinction in his mind between how he *wants* to behave (hiding behind you for “safety”) and how he *should* behave – as a confident, secure pack member.

Your dog will begin to look to you for leadership. Remember, it’s only a big deal if you, the Leader, make it a big deal. If you remain calm, cool and confident, your dog will sense that and learn to remain calm and trust that you will handle the situation.

Release word: Remember to decide on a release word for your dog this week, something like “Take a break,” “Go play,” “All done,” or “At ease.” Then use it to let him know when his “work” time is over. (We don’t recommend using “Okay” as a release word because it’s used so much in everyday conversation. Some dogs get confused. But some don’t, so if you feel strongly about it, go ahead.)

Good Luck!!!! Happy Training!!!! Keep those tails wagging!

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Class 2

Congratulations !!!!! Only the heartiest souls come back for Class 2. That wasn't so bad, was it? By now you should be a clicking fool and your dog should be enthusiastically starting to focus on you. He should know to put his bottom on the ground when you tell him to sit and he should be able to look you in the eye for at least a second or two. Life just gets better every day, doesn't it? So then, before we get started, a few words about the sit.

Sit Happens

It is sad but true that at some time in everyone's life, sit happens. And it's going to happen in your dog's life too. Because the sit is just too perfect a tool for us not to enjoy. There are two reasons for this. One is that for the most part, a dog that is sitting has his gearshift in Neutral. Neutral is a good thing for us. Your dog can't get in too much trouble in neutral. A dog that is standing has the body language of a confident, assertive dog. A dog in the down position displays the body language of a submissive dog and can make him feel vulnerable and defenseless. But the sit is wonderful in its simplicity, not standing, not laying down, just coasting down the doggie freeway of life. The other reason we pay homage to the sit is because the sit / stay is going to teach your dog to control his behavior. Sometimes dogs act like maniacs and bounce off the walls because they don't understand that there's any other way to behave. With the sit / stay, we're going to teach our dogs to meditate, if you will, to take a deep breath, let go of the stress of everyday life and just zen. Next week we're doing yoga.

Sit / Stay: Last week we learned the sit and your dog, theoretically, learned how to listen to you. This week we're going to add the stay. This simple sit / stay combination teaches him to learn. He learns two separate commands that stand for totally different concepts. He begins to understand sentences and to chain commands together. He learns he can do two things at one time. And it helps reinforce your Alpha role. So, sit your dog next to you on your left side facing forward. Tell him "stay," and give him the hand signal by placing your flattened hand in front of his nose with your open palm towards his face. Pivot directly in front of him for the count of five. Pivot back to the heel position. Release and praise. If he starts to break his stay, just pull straight up on his collar to remind him. Watch him and learn to read his body language. Watch his ears and his mouth for signs of alert. If he's going to break, you'll know and can correct him verbally before he even makes a move. He'll think you can read his little mind.

Stand for Exam: Your dog should let a "stranger" pet him while you are standing next to him.

Don't Pull: If Bobo starts to pull when you're walking, snap the leash and tell him "Don't pull." This will give your dog an option to avoid a correction when he learns the heel. If you tell him "don't pull" and he ignores you and continues to pull on the lead, well, you gave him a chance and he blew it, so now he gets corrected.

Let's Go with Automatic Sit: There are 3 things to remember when you're working with your dog on this one:

- 1) Work on your hand / leash coordination so that you're ready before you actually stop.
- 2) If necessary, guide your dog into position so that he doesn't develop the habit of sitting crooked.
- 3) **Most Important:** When you correct your dog, make sure you pull **straight up** on the leash! This will force his bottom down into the sit position.

Down: "Down" is the single most important word your dog will ever learn. A reliable down can save his life. It will calm him down. It can save your sanity. It has a million uses limited only by your imagination. And without a doubt it is the single most important and effective thing you can do to reinforce your Alpha role (with very little effort on your part). That said, it is another sad but true fact of life that most dogs resist the Down. Some of them resist it quite emphatically. The reason is that Down is a very submissive position for a dog. He feels vulnerable and defenseless. That's OK. It's a survival instinct, so don't take it personally. He still has to learn the Down. Also remember that "down" is not a request, ***it is a command***. Do not say "please."

* **Note:** He's not officially down unless his bottom *and* his chest are touching the ground! A dominant dog will try absolutely anything to keep from actually lying all the way down. Don't accept "good enough." If you let him get away with it on the down, you've just taught him that he's in charge. Take 3 giant Leadership steps back.

Back Up and Call Your Dog: This builds on last week's Call Your Dog exercise. Give the command "Bobo, come," and back up as he comes to you. All dogs have what is called a "Prey Drive," which is the drive that compels them to give chase to something. This is the drive your dog is in when he chases a ball, stalks the cat, runs after the paper boy or herds small children. So we're going to try to accomplish 2 things here:

- Since we're basically lazy, we're going to let your dog's own instincts train him. There is no need to reinvent the wheel here. By backing up and calling him to us, we're going to try and engage his prey drive and his curiosity.
- More importantly, once again it reinforces your position as Leader. It sets the precedent where he chases you. This is no small thing, let me tell you. Remember, in the pack, the Leader is almost always the one chased by the other pack members. It would be undignified for him to chase a lesser pack member.

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Class 3

Stand / Stay for Exam: Your dog should do a stand / stay while a stranger examines him while you are at the end of the leash.

Stay with Distractions: By now your dog should be an old pro at the 1 minute sit / stay. So this week we're going to add distractions. The difference between a trained dog and a *reliable, well-trained* dog is the ability to work well around distractions.

Down / Stay: Give your dog the "down" command. Tell him to "stay," and pivot directly in front of him for a 5 count. Pivot back to the heel position. Release and praise! Isn't he brilliant? If you have trouble getting him to stay in place at home, try putting his leash under the leg of the couch or bed. As he tries to get up, he'll correct himself. What awesome power you have! You didn't even have to get up. Pretty clever, huh? After he corrects himself, tell him "No, down. Stay."

Heel: By now, your dog knows that "Let's Go" means he should pay attention and walk with you without pulling on his leash. But there are going to be times in your life together – when you go to the vets, when you visit friends, when you go window shopping at the outdoor mall – when your dog will need to be on his very best behavior. For those times you need the Heel. The Heel is a tight, precise "Let's Go." The command is "Bobo, heel," and ideally, his nose should be even with your left knee. Use the same techniques to teach the Heel that you used for Let's Go:

Change directions frequently to keep him focused
Praise him when he heels well
Pat your leg to remind him where his attention and his nose should be

Get it / Drop it: "Get it" is basically the beginning of the retrieve exercise and can be more difficult for some dogs than others. It's somewhat breed specific, meaning it's an instinctive behavior for some breeds such as retrievers, although most dogs are capable of learning it. "Get it" is a handy little command that's worth working on even if your dog isn't a natural. So what you want to do is sit or kneel next to your dog, with him on your left side. Tell him "Get it," and open his mouth by placing your thumb and forefinger at the back of your dog's jaw and squeezing slightly until he opens his mouth. Place the object in his mouth and hold his mouth closed *for just a moment*. Tell him "drop it," and release his muzzle. He'll naturally spit it out. Praise him! You'll want to gradually increase the amount of time you hold the object in his mouth.

Leave it: "Leave it" is a wonderful little command you can use in lots of handy ways. "Leave it" means drop whatever is in your mouth *immediately*, get out of whatever toxic substance you've gotten yourself into *right now*, stop rolling around in the cow manure *this instant*, *do not* eat the ant poison on the floor. The key to this is persistence – *he must never be allowed to have something once you've told him to leave alone*. You can use leash corrections, voice corrections, the Shake Can, whatever it takes, *even if you have to pry it right out of his mouth*. Tone of voice is also important. Mean it.

Homework:

Long Sit and Long Down: Your dog should be working up to a 3 minute sit / stay and down / stay this week. Alternate the sit on one day and the down on the next. Sit in a chair next to your dog during the exercise. These are control exercises, so make sure your dog stays for the entire 3 minutes, even if *you* spend the entire time putting *him* back into position.

Sit / Stay While You Open the Door: Remember, it is the responsibility of the Leader to greet guests. It will take your dog anywhere from a week to six months to learn this one, depending on your dog's personality and how consistent and firm you are. You may need to start with baby steps and work one step at a time. For instance, make him do a sit / stay while someone rings the doorbell. He has to stay until you release him. When he can do that reliably, have him stay until you open the door, then release him. And so on.

Sit / stay or Down / Stay for Dinner. This one always impresses people. Put your dog on a sit/stay or down/stay. Then place his bowl on the floor and every time he starts to get up, lift up the bowl and tell him "Ah-ah! No, Stay!" in your best Alpha voice. When he sits or downs again, place the bowl on the floor again. Keep doing this, back and forth, forever and ever, until he gets the idea. Eventually he will. He only has to stay for a second or two at first, then give him his release word, tell him what a Good Dog he is and let him eat. Work up to longer and longer stays. This is an awesome control exercise. Remember, you just need to outlast him.

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Class 4

Learning Plateau: Dogs that are worked fairly consistently will reach what is called the “Learning Plateau.” They are “supposed” to reach it around the 35th to the 42nd day of training, but we’ve seen dogs plateau anywhere from 2 weeks to 4 months into their training. The learning plateau can be very, very frustrating for both you and your dog. Bobo is going to act like he’s never heard the commands before, like he’s lost his mind, like he’s forgotten everything you’ve painstakingly taught him over the last few weeks. It’s a classic case of “The Lights Are On But Nobody’s Home.” You can almost see what’s going on in his little mind – he’s trying very hard to put it all together for you but he can’t quite remember where he put it! He knows you want something from him, but for the life of him he can’t figure out what it could be. It’s really not his fault. His little brain is just frazzled. Be patient! Try not to become too frustrated. Hopefully, it should only last a few days. Don’t let him get away with anything, but don’t push him too hard either. Unfortunately, pushing him won’t make him break through, it will only frustrate *you* more.

Return to Your Dog: While your dog is on a sit or down / stay, return to him by walking around him counterclockwise to the heel position. He should hold his stay until you release him. To do this properly, imagine that there is a pole coming straight out the top of your dog’s head. Keep your left hand “on” the pole, and circle around counter-clockwise behind your dog. (The “pole” is so that we don’t inadvertently pull on the leash and cause him to break his stay.) Your dog is probably going to try to jump up and watch you as you circle behind him, so if you see him start to break tell him “ah, ah, stay,” to reinforce the command.

Down to Sit: Just like it sounds. From the down position, your dog should raise up into the sit position. For some reason, dogs seem to either get this immediately with no problem, or to be very confused by it. There doesn’t seem to be any middle ground. If he doesn’t raise up into the sit position, remember the correction for the sit is always to pull straight up on the leash.

Hold It: Now that we have (theoretically) taught our dogs that they have to take something in their mouths when we ask them to, we are going to make them hold on to it for us. Tell your dog “get it,” and put the item in your dog’s mouth. Tell him “hold it,” and put your hand around his muzzle and hold the object in his mouth for at least a 5 count. Tell him “drop it,” and let go of his muzzle. Lots of praise! Tell him how brilliant he is!

Get It (beginning retrieve): Now we’re going to expand the retrieve. We want the dogs to think this is a game, so be very enthusiastic when teaching it and, initially, alternate between your dogs favorite toy and a favorite treat. Put Bobo on a stay, and drop it on the floor a few feet in front of him. Tell him “get it,” and let him go. If it’s a special food treat, like biscuits or hot dog pieces or prime rib, you probably won’t have any trouble with this exercise at this point. He’ll break world speed records to gobble down his treat. Praise him some, but his main reward is the food treat he just had. If it’s a toy, he may not be as interested. Try to stimulate his interest. Tap the floor a few times, wiggle the toy, pounce on it, fall down and have convulsions. When Bobo finally grabs the toy, tell him what a good boy he is! Lots of praise! Then tell him “drop it,” and take the toy from him. Lots more praise and treats!!! What a cool game!

Homework:

Long Sit and Long Down: Continue to alternate the long sit and down, working up to 5 minutes each this week. Instead of sitting in a chair next to your dog, try sitting in the same room with him, but not right next to him. Keep an eye on him, and as soon as he breaks, correct him and put him back into position.

New Locations: This week, train your dog in 3 new locations that are free of distractions. This teaches him to focus and that he has to pay attention in new places.

Finish Your Dog: Ah, the Finish. The Finish is the icing on the cake. When it’s done well, it’s very flashy. It’s a dance step, so it requires some coordination and timing. When you call your dog to you and he sits in front of you, tell him “Bobo, heel,” and put his leash in your right hand. Take 2 or 3 steps backwards, and as you do, keep encouraging your dog. (You may need to tug slightly on his leash to give him the idea that he’s supposed to “follow” you.) As you take your last step backwards, transfer the leash from your right hand to your left behind your back. Take another couple of steps forward, talking to your dog and patting your leg. Stop, and your dog should be sitting on your left side, ready to go again. So it goes recall, sit in front; step **back, back, back, transfer leash, forward, forward, stop**. Eventually, we’re not going to take any steps at all, and when you tell your dog “heel,” he’ll just march around behind you and sit at your left side. But it’s about a million times easier to teach them by taking these steps at first. Be patient with your dog; this exercise can be confusing because it makes no sense to them. Be sure and practice; next week we’re doing the Tango.

Don’t forget to bring a 10 - 15 ft leash or clothesline for next week’s class !!!!

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Class 5

Long Line Work:

Recall on long line: Come when called on a long lead

Sit / stay on long line: For 3 minutes

Down / stay on long line: For 3 minutes

Beginning down on recall: While your dog is on the long lead, you're going to call him to you and when he's just about there, you're going to give him the "Down" command. Why should your dog know this? Because sometime, somewhere, when you least expect it, your dog is going to be running towards you right in the path of an oncoming car, a Mac truck, another dog, alien space ships. If your dog is reliable on the down, you could save his life. This can be a frustrating exercise to teach but there are so many benefits to it that it's worth the work. Heel your dog, and then suddenly back up. As he turns and follows you, tell him "Down" and point to the ground. You should be close enough to correct him if necessary, but remember that this is a new and difficult exercise for him to learn so be patient until he understands what you want him to do. Also remember that this is ultimately a recall exercise, so never correct harshly.

Down during the heel: Much like the down on recall. While you're heeling your dog, tell him "down" and point to the ground. This is to get him used to doing the down while moving.

Go / Get It / Bring It: Toss your dog's favorite toy a few feet away. Tell him "Go, Get it!" in your happiest voice. If he shows any interest at all, praise him lavishly. You may have to hand it to him or put it into his mouth (while telling him "get it."). Once it's in his mouth, praise him and tell him "bring it." Step back a step or two to help him get the idea that "bring it" involves travel time. If he brings it to you, tell him "drop it." Lots and lots of praise! Treats! Accolades! Ticker Tape! Some dogs just seem to have a difficult time with this. Some of them just plain don't care. If your dog doesn't show any signs of ever being any kind of retriever, you have to decide how much time and energy you want to put into this exercise. It's not a control exercise, so it's up to you. There are about a million tricks and some advanced obedience work that's based on the retrieve, but for some people and dogs the benefits are just not worth the effort involved. You decide.

Take a break during a walk: This is a control exercise. It's also on the Canine Good Citizen test. It's primary purpose is to show that you have control of your dog in any circumstances. While your dog is heeling next to you, tell him "take a break" (or whatever release word you've chosen) and let him play or investigate for a few moments. Then tell him to "heel," and start walking, whether Bobo is with you or not. Some dogs don't make the connection right away that they can take some "time off" while they're "working," so when you tell Bobo "take a break," you may need to play with him to make him understand that he can go back to being a dog for a few minutes.

Review: Get ready for graduation

Homework:

Hand Signals: Try working your dog on hand signals alone, without verbal commands. Remember that dogs communicate by body language, so most of them pick up hand signals very easily. There are "official" AKC hand signals, but if you're not going to show your dog in the obedience ring, it doesn't matter what you use. Choose something easy for you to remember, easy to do with one hand, and easy for your dog to distinguish from other hand signals or everyday hand gestures.

Next Class is Graduation !!!!!

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