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How to Create Harmony Between Your Family and Your Dog

Dogs can quickly learn to look up to us for leadership without using force, intimidation, or coercion. All we have to do is "pay" them for good behavior with what they need - food, shelter, exercise that is fun & loving social contact. Because we can provide all these needed resources for our wonderful friends, we have everything we need to help our dogs feel secure, guided, confident and content. The trick is learning how to "pay" only for good behavior.

You already know that nagging, or being over-bearing towards your dog doesn't work. It isn't any fun and it certainly doesn't produce a harmonious loving relationship. And more important - you don't need to use emotional (shouting) or physical (correcting) force to have a "good dog". Positive reinforcement training and good management will mean you won't need to worry about your dog taking over the world or your household - you can throw out your concerns about preventing doggy dominance by learning how to be a fair, attentive, positively reinforcing leader.

Here are the important pointers (supported by our training manual) to help you create and maintain harmony in your daily relationship with your dog.

- **Feed your dog on a schedule** (it can be once or twice a day) depending on your own personal schedule, and/or the dog's age or medical conditions. Avoid self-feeding or free feeding your dog (i.e. leaving a large amount of food always present in his/her food bowl). When you feed on a schedule, you know how much food your dog is eating and also see when your dog is off his food. Realizing when a dog is off his food may help determine if there is a medical condition brewing. By feeding on a schedule, your dog will look to you for his/her this valued resource, which makes you a leader in their eyes. You are the bearer of the "caribou". This focus's your dog's attention on YOU which is *the* most important part of your training program. If you don't have something your dog wants you won't have a training partner, so something as simple as providing the meals to your dog - will give you "dog on owner focus". *Check out the *Food Bowl Game* on pg 16
- **Teach and guide your dog down the road of acceptable greetings.** Help your dog realize that humans of any shape, size or age, aren't going to reinforce the dog when he jumps up on them or licks them. Dogs/puppies jump up to get something - attention and/or play. Don't react ever - no matter how cute the dog is. Substitute a "good" behavior for jumping which you can reward. *Check out the Sit for greeting exercises* on Hint keep a short tag line long enough for you or a guest to step on before the dog can jump up on you. Remember not to push the dog off just move into the dog and one he/she sits the pet lavishly for having all four paws on the ground© * pg 60
- **Focus on what your canine friend is doing correctly** and develop this correct behavior

in small successful increments. Take un-desirable behavior and re-direct into a desirable behaviour. *Pg 5 & 52

- **Teach your dog that moving out of the way**, when need be, is highly rewardable. Don't nag your dog to get off the couch or move out of the way, just to be a pushy human. Make the move a great experience. * *The Excuse me exercise pg 20*
- **Play with your dog** - dogs love interactive games like "fetch", and so do most humans - although some humans don't know this yet, because they have never tried it. Teach your dog that giving up an object on cue is loads of fun, because he gets it back again or gets a better object in exchange. Allow your dog to initiate playtime, it does not mean he is going to take over your household; he is simply expressing his current desire to play. Allowing a dog to initiate and offer behaviours allows your dog to express him or herself, to be creative and to learn self-confidence. You do not have to take your dog up on the offer to play, only if you want to, and this will also teach the dog that they don't always get what they want, but it doesn't hurt to ask. * *See Developing Play Behaviour pg. 39*
- **Always supervise young children and dogs when they are together**. If something happens to a child when left unsupervised it is not the fault of the dog or child, it is YOUR fault!!
- **Teach your dog that attention on you and coming to you** is the greatest and most REWARDABLE thing in life to do. * *See pgs. 53 & 59*
- **Don't put unrealistic demands on your dog**. Train new behaviours the way you would like to be trained. Be supportive, respectful and let your dog know when he has done a great job and/or tried really hard.
- **Teach your dog that he can be away from you** (left home alone) and still be a confident and happy dog. Remember to crate the dog for short periods of time when you are home too! * *Check out crate training pg. 11*
- **Have quiet times with your dog**, touch, massage and be close to your dog - it will do you both a lot of good to realize how rewarding calmness is. * *See pg. 32*
- **Train and guide your dog through life** - learning is a part of life for all species (including humans), and is on going as long as we live. Positive reinforcement training is a form of play for the dogs and when you see how much they enjoy it you will too.
- **Don't be angry when your dog is a dog** - learn from these amazing animals and realize your dog IS a different species. Observe your dog's canine uniqueness and allow yourself to be enthralled, riveted and amazed by it.

* Ganley Lyon Training Manual "Happy Eager Fun Relationship with your dog"