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Understanding Your Dog

By Valerie Dancer

To be a responsible dog owner you have to understand how important your role is in developing

your dog's character. Yes, all dogs come with different characters and temperaments, but it is your reaction to his/her actions that mould the finished product that is the character and temperament. You only have to watch the many recent television programs to see how badly behaved some dogs get, and all because the owners have either ignored the signals that the dog is giving out, or the owners react to the dogs actions in the wrong way that make the dog think that it has done the correct thing, so of course it does it again and again, always going unchecked, so in a very short time it becomes an unwanted or bad habit. Bad habits or behaviour are always far more difficult to solve, but rarely impossible if you know what you are doing, than they are to stop them being created in the first place.

That is the first and most important lesson to be learnt by any dog owner, new or seasoned, that the most important time in a dogs life is in the early stages. When you first bring that puppy home, do not make the mistake of ever thinking that it is too young to learn. Yes you may have to let the puppy settle in with you before issuing too many rules, (usually about 24 hours) but do not make a rod for your own back, try and think "what do you want the dog to be like when it is fully grown" because what ever you allow the puppy to do now it will continue to do all its life until you check it. If you do not want the dog to sleep in your bedroom as a fully grown dog then do not have it there as a puppy.

If you are to succeed in being the Alfa dog in your household then your bedroom should be your "den" and your dog should respect your private place and know that it does not go there, ever! You will never have good control of your dog if it does not respect you as the "Alfa" dog in its pack. You may have to suffer a few lost hours of sleep, if it has been left in the kitchen by itself but it is rarely a problem for long. Make sure the puppy has plenty of toys to play with, food and water (in a container that it cannot lift or turnover) can also help, but something which is most helpful is leaving the radio on all the time for them. Silence is hard for them to cope with, it can also help to stop them barking at noises from outside, and being spooked by things that go bump in the night. You know yourself how noisy silence can be, especially at night. Also remove everything that is within reach that you do not want to be chewed, once again prevention is better than cure. If all chewable items are out of reach and the puppy has a nice tasty bone to chew on ,chewing should not become a serious problem.

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So you have got through the first night, puppy should now be feeling more its self now as they do not tend to grieve for their lost litter mates and Mum for very long. Now this is the time when the time you spend with your new puppy really is most important. Keep it confined to a fairly small area so it is easier for you to keep an eye on. If you watch puppy very closely you will notice a change in its actions just before it is about to relieve itself, it will walk around in circles sniffing the ground, this is when you quickly but gently scoop it up and take it out to the garden to spend a penny or two pence, if it does not immediately relieve itself keep telling it to "hurry up " or something of your choice, until it performs then make a really big fuss of it and even give a treat. You will need to have treats handy either in your pockets or in a bag by the door you use so that you can just grab one as you are going out with puppy. Any treat you are offering to a dog or puppy to impress on them that they are good must be given within a matter of seconds for the dog or puppy to connect its deed with the receiving of the treat, therefore encouraging it to do the same again in the hope of receiving another treat.

Like wise any reprimand for bad actions also need to be issued within seconds for them to be effective.

On a note of reprimands; as a young puppy no telling off should be issued at all, an absolute no ! Only when you know they have fully understood what they should do should you begin to introduce mild reprimands to enforce your rules for the good behaviour. How much your particular dog needs to be corrected really does depend on its own character. A very gentle character who quickly learns and wants to please you will probably need no reprimand at all yet a strong character which is going to try and be boss will need telling off when he/she does something wrong or it will think its ok to do what he/she wants to do.

Personally, my last dog, a German Shepherd, never had even a verbal telling off because she was so gentle she just wanted to please, but her replacement is a very different matter, she is also a German Shepherd, but given her own way in the wrong hands would be an unruly dog. As so many Shepherds have the misfortune to suffer because they get bought by people who do not understand them.

A mistake that a lot of owners make is not realising just how expert, dogs of all ages, are at understanding body language. They are experts from the day one! They instinctively understand all movements you make, even when you do not realise that you have even hardly moved. If he/she was waiting for your next move and was paying attention to you, the very slightest lean forward will be seen and recognized by your dog that you are about to get up from your chair, when all you are really doing is moving to get comfortable. But if you really were about to get up your dog would sense it instantly. This is why they always know when you are about to either, take them for a walk, go on holiday or go to bed , or anything else you do regularly , simply because you will go through the same motions each time any of these actions are about to happen .

The biggest reason for problems developing is boredom. The more intelligent that your dog is the quicker he/she will get bored, this is why you have to become very creative to keep your dog not only entertained but to give to give him/her plenty to think about. Entertainment for the brain will tire a young dog out much more than physical exercise. When young , you need to apply just the right amount of exercise to keep your dog fit without over doing it. Too much exercise for a young dog can be very damaging to the growing frame. Much better to play games that the dog has to really think about, not only is it good for them but it is also excellent for building your relationship with them.

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Dog training needs to be fun , do it properly and you will learn how to stop bad habits forming, or how to eradicate unwanted behaviours that already exist. You will learn the practical value of all obedience exercises, how to develop good habits for your–self and your dog, which will lead to a harmonious relationship.

I have had dogs for 42 years. Learning how to train them from my mother who trained to county level. Over the years I have found that the old ways of training are not always the best.I have found that praise is the best form of training, and the younger the dog the easier it is to train.

<http://www.dogtrainingproblems.biz>

Quality Dog Food Is Essential For The Health Of Dogs

By Mike Yeager

Dog food is very important for the health of dogs. It is easy to overlook it, but it is essential to pick the right dog food for your pet dog. People sometimes just pick the first dog food bag they see at the store, instead of considering what is needed for your own dog. Puppies need different types of food than mature dogs, just as different breeds of dogs also require different types of dog food. If your dog seems like it has no energy, consider switching to another type of dog food. If you are unsure what kind to buy, you should consult your veterinarian.

Dog Food should be healthy and tasty.

If your dog does not like a certain type of dog food, do not force your dog to eat it. Instead, try to find another type of dog food that has all the vitamins that your dog needs, and your dog enjoys eating. Also, be aware that your dog's taste may change over time, and may not necessarily eat the same dog food all of its life. If it does not like its current dog food, then buy some other types of brands, and see which one is its favorite.

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