

The Rules of Leadership

Brandy Schmid Leadership Seminar

- 1. Make sure that the dog does not sleep in your chair or your bed, but you can sit or stand in its place.** This seems silly but no pack leader would allow his space to be claimed by a subordinate.
- 2. Make your dog move if it is in your way, do not walk around the dog.** Again you would be deferring to him. Walk toward your dog and tell him to move then you claim the space. This also teaches the small dog not to get under your feet and the large dog from blocking your path.
- 3. Prepare a dogs food in its presence, then sit down to eat a sandwich or a meal before allowing the dog to have its meal.** If this is inconvenient then eat something first in front of the dog. The leader always eats first. Nice side effect of this, the dog stops begging when you eat, as he understands his place. He has no right to your food.
- 4. Do not allow the dogs to push past you down the hallway of your house and enter a room before you.** The leader is always first and should be followed into the room.
- 5. Make sure that all games are controlled by you.** This means we control when the play begins and when it stops. If you enter into strength games make sure you have taught the dog to relinquish the tug on your command and not try to take the toy back. Once the toy has been released it is yours until you initiate the game again. This goes for any size dog.
- 6. Steps are the same as the hallway. You occupy the top step so that the dog comes up to you. He must follow you up the stairs.** Your dog should not occupy space where he is above your head.
- 7. When going in and out of doors the dog should follow you and definitely not push past you.** If the dog places his head under the doorknob when you place your hand on it, it is intending to push through the door first. I will hit the door with my hand or slam the door in its face when it tries to push through the first crack of light that appears (be careful not to hurt it's nose)- it will quickly learn to stay a pace back.
- 8. Do not pet the dog for no reason.** This means that when it is pushing your hand or demanding affection don't comply. Wait until it settles and then call the dog to you or ask it to do something then reward it with petting and affection. (Many dog owners respond to their dogs every demand and then accept its refusal to comply with the owner's demands.) We should make the dog earn all of its privileges, stroking, eating, being let out etc.

All demands should be met by an instruction to "Sit", "Down", or "Stay", just something simple to ensure that if the dog wants something from us he has to earn it first.

- 9. Do not love on the dog for no reason.** This is unsolicited attention and a subordinate dog does this to the leader.
- 10. Meet all attempts at body dominance with a firm loud "Get off."** Some of these are: attempts to mouth arms, hands, or any part of the body, clothing or leash. Also blocking, leaning, pushing with any part of the body, jumping up on you uninvited, and crawling up on top of you.
- 11. You greet all people and their dogs first.** This is simple the leader greets first and decides who is friend or foe. You also have the time to evaluate the situation. Keep greeting people as they come into your home as a calm experience. Dogs naturally show excitement as strangers enter their territory. Since it is your territory not theirs you decide the energy of the greeting. All visitors must focus on you, not your dog. Request that they focus their attention on you and ignore the dog. This gives the shy dog a chance to sniff the visitor without threat. It also lowers the status of the dominant dog, as the visitor defers to you not your dog.

These simple procedures are values that the canine mind can understand. They establish us as leaders and initiators of all activities and not the other way round. Dogs are social animals and we are social animals. We live in groups or packs and in order to prevent discord we establish leaders in the groups. Dogs do the same. That is why dogs and humans can live together.

Dogs are rank opportunists. By that I mean that they are almost always looking to up their rank within the pack. The higher your rank the better your chances of survival.

Above all, it is of prime importance that the rules of your pack are established before you leave your house, their den. For instance, instinct dictates that dogs do not walk in front of a higher ranking individual and that the leader keeps the pack together. So if the dog is given the opportunity of pulling you to the park or refusing to come back when it is called, then you are allowing it to increase its status and you will lose the right to govern the terms of your relationship. More importantly, if you are not perceived as the leader the dog has the right to correct you.

Reflexive Actions in Dogs

All animals have reflexive behavior, by that I mean they respond to a certain stimuli without thinking. If a person were to have something fly at them they would automatically

without thinking raise their arms to repel what was coming or move away from it. This is just one example, but there are many. Dogs a very similar.

There are two main types of dogs who react differently to the same stimuli.

The first is the **Active Defense Reflex Dog (ADR)**. He will actively defend himself when threatened. He will do this without thinking. If you grab his paw and hold it, he will most likely put his mouth on you or threaten to do so.

The second is the **Passive Defense Reflex Dog (PDR)**. He will try to pull away from you or freeze and look away from you, or cry out when you grab his paw and hold it.

There are also dogs that react with a combination of both.

You need to recognize this in your dog and be aware of his reaction to a perceived threat or a situation where he is startled.

The following is taken from the book, "*Think Dog*" by John Fisher. I recommend it highly.

The wolf based on species similarities is the most likely candidate as the forefather of the dog. First of all, the dental characteristics of the dog and the wolf are similar. Also out of ninety behavior patterns in the domestic dog, all but nineteen of them are present in the wolf. The vocal patterns of the dog and wolf are similar. So too is their social behavior.

The Way Of The Wolf

The wolf is a pack animal that lives within a very strong social structure where there is an established hierarchy. The Alpha wolf leads the pack. Contrary to popular opinion, he does not maintain that role by regularly showing aggression to the rest of the pack. His position of authority is upheld by constant displays of deference being shown to him by the rest of the members. For sure, if there is an up-and-coming dominant figure within the group who feels like challenging the leader's authority, then real aggression will become the order of the day, but these challenges are rare. In general the whole pack lives in harmony. Research has shown that feral dogs live in much the same way and exhibit remarkably similar behavior.

Wolves are very territorial: in order to survive, each pack must stake and defend its territory by defecating or urinating at strategic boundary points. Similar territory-marking behavior can be seen on a daily basis from the domestic dog, even though its food is so easily available that in general the need to defend is not so great. Because we dictate that our dogs have to share exercise areas or because we insist that they have to be socialized, normally we do not have too many problems with territory guarding. However, if two very dominant dogs meet that have been regularly allowed by their owners to mark a particular territory, then all hell is

going to break loose, especially if either or both of the dogs are hungry at the time.

The body posture of wolves and dogs is almost identical. We humans can read the obvious signals in our dogs that portray fear, aggression, pleasure, submission etc., but we are incapable of reading the more subtle signs that are transmitted dog to dog. We tend to place our own interpretations on what our dog is trying to say.

To most people, the happy low tail wag of the Golden Retriever is the same as the high tail carriage and tip of tail wagging of the German Shepherd. The first is a submissive posture which says, "I am no threat; please be gentle," whilst the other is a clear threat which says, "Come any closer and I will bite you." It is still more difficult to read a dog that has had its tail chopped off.

It is a fact that no matter how much we try to genetically engineer breed characteristic, size and shape, the way of the wolf will always remain as an unalterable instinct. If more people realized that the cute little poodle, fast asleep on the warm lap of some doting owner, has all the instincts of a wild animal, then they might not so easily accept the dog into their family as an equal.

Dogs in the Human Pack

Over the centuries the domestication of dogs has resulted in their being, generally, subservient to man. Despite this fact, as can be seen from the last chapter, unless the dog is socialized with humans before it is fourteen weeks of age, the chances of forming a strong bond with it is pretty slim, and some would say impossible. This early socialization and the fact that we are upright creatures, which gives us the appearance of being the more dominant animal, help us to maintain our control over dogs. Occasionally, we lose that control and we end up with dogs that bite the hand that feeds them.

Whether we are considering the social structure of wolves, feral dogs or the domestic dog, we are looking at a pack animal. For the social structure to hold together every pack needs an Alpha (leader) figure. Understanding the rules in a wolf/feral dog pack is relatively easy for the members of those packs because they have an established pecking order, wherein every individual knows its place. The higher ranking they are, the more privileges they are granted. They all display and are capable of reading the same body postures and signal. If a lower-ranking individual tries to take a privilege that would normally be reserved for the Alpha figure, a withering look from the Alpha figure is all that is required to ensure that order is maintained. When we look at the domestic dog we can see that, by virtue of the fact that they live within a mixed species pack. Understanding the rules becomes confusing. We, as humans, attempt to teach

the dog our values. The dog is only capable of learning on a canine level and can only understand canine values. In general, we muddle by and it is a tribute to the dog that it eventually learns to live with such inconsistent creatures as ourselves.

If we take a look at some of the rights and privileges that are afforded to the Alpha figure and compare them with the way that some of us live with our dogs, we can start to see where the communication between the species starts to break down and how we can end up with what we term as a problem or disobedient dog.

Many people allow their dog to jump up next to them on the settee or chair whilst they are watching the television. The majority of these dogs are also allowed on to the bed, if only for a cuddle in the morning. Almost all of these dogs have their own baskets or bean-bags to sleep on. Many also like to occupy another area in the house as a favorite resting-place, under the kitchen table or behind a chair in the lounge, etc. The owners never invade the dogs beds or resting places. Therefore the dog's bed space is never violated and it can sleep where it likes. Who is Alpha here?

Food is of prime importance to dogs, not just for survival, but as a means of maintaining the social order. It is the right of the Alpha figure to have the richest pickings and eat first. The rest of the pack can have what is left unless the leader decides to have some. Therefore a dog that is fed before the family eats may consider the food on the table also his to eat as well. Instinct tells him that he is entitled to all the food

One of the most popular games to play with any young dog is tug-of-war. We usually allow the dogs to win these games because we admire the tenacity and dedication that they put into them despite what we see as our superior strength. These ruff and tumble games are great fun to play, until the youngster starts to get a bit aggressive, and then it is we who give up before it gets out of hand. It is important to note that being a predator and part of the hunting unit, the instinct not to get injured is much to the fore, for the dog, and for this reason all dominant/submissive levels are decided through play. We should not teach our young dogs that to growl, pull and persevere brings the reward of winning, and that when we engage upon a rough and tumble we then give up.

Canine or lupine displays of deference are exhibited by low head carriage coming towards and upwards, but avoiding any eye contact. So if you have stairs in your home and allow the dog to rush up in front of you, turn and watch you approach as he sits on the top step, you are deferring to his dominance. You approach with your head down and eyes lowered.

Doorways are a key area in the house as far as the dog is concerned. The doorway is the entrance to the den; it is

also an narrow passageway. Pushing past the owner through doorways, is usually regarded as excitement on the part of the dog. Lying in the opening to a room and refusing to move (stretching out with a groan) is usually regarded as laziness by the owner. Most of the time the owner ends up not disturbing the dog whilst it is sleeping but goes round the animal.

If the Alpha is resting, all others make sure it is not disturbed. When approaching a narrow passageway, all others hang back to let the Alpha through first. In the wild if the Alpha wants to walk across a clearing, all the other members of the pack move out of the way, not through fear but out of total respect. All these are canine instinct. If you think about them, they are also human instinct. Rank has it privileges.

How many times have you been seated, intent upon a particular programme or news bulletin on the television, when suddenly your arm is forced in the air by your dog. Wanting to be stroked? In most cases, we respond immediately, partly because we know that if we do not the dog will persevere and it will interrupt our viewing, and partly because we do not want the dog to think that it is unloved. We are flattered by the display of affection that the dog is showing us.

What is actually happening is the dog has decided who is going to stroke it, when and for how long it will be stroked. If you called your dog over to you during the evening, it is quite possible that you would get a look, a stretch and a groan but no other response. You would normally smile and take the view that you should "let sleeping dogs lie."

Without realizing it we have a situation where from our dog's point of view:

1. It sleeps wherever it wants, but nobody sleeps in its bed.
2. It gets the pickings of available food and we have whatever is left.
3. It can win all fighting and strength games.
4. On a daily basis we show deference to its superior rank.
5. We allow it to precede us through narrow openings and we do not disturb it when we move around.
6. We respond to its demands for affection but we accept its refusal to comply with our demands.

All these are the rights of the Alpha figure. Our dogs do not ask for them; we grant them without realizing it. If we inadvertently promote our dog to this high rank, we must accept the fact that the dog will take on the responsibility of the job that we have given it to do.

It is the responsibility of the Alpha to:

1. Lead the pack. That is why it pulls on the lead.
2. Keep the pack together. That is why it runs backwards

and forwards when it is off the lead. If you take note, it is always running in a circle around us. It is herding us.

3. Protect the pack. That is why it is aggressive to other dogs that invade our territory or warns Joggers that do the same.
4. Initiate the hunt. That is usually what it is doing when we complain that it runs off.
5. Defend the den. That is why it is aggressive, or over exuberant to visitor.

The list is endless. Dogs that exhibit these behavior patterns are not necessarily bad, disobedient or aggressive dogs: they are usually just dogs, who are accepting the responsibilities with which we have unwittingly burdened them.

★ Leadership Exercises

You need a six-foot leash on the dog for these exercises. Hold the end of the leash at its handle in your right hand and hold the slack loosely in your left hand.

No food given to the dog during leadership exercises.

No verbal corrections given at all!! Petting is something you like, whether your dog likes your petting is another matter. **It is the Praise that is important.**

1. The Joining Routine

Moving away from the dog encourage it to join you, as it does give big praise. Keep moving and praising until the dog is next to you. If you reach out or step toward the dog it will stop or slow down its forward motion toward you. You may pet your dog as long as it does not move away from your hands.

2. No Pulling Routine & Ten Steps Backward

This goes both ways, no pulling by the dog and no tight leash by the handler.

If the dog pulls you, shake the leash up and down firmly when the dog turns to look at you, initiate the joining routine. You will need some slack leash for this so move toward the dog. Do not stand still as you will just get pulled and not have enough slack in the lead to correct.

You can also use the Ten Steps Backward for pulling. It is gentler and does not add energy to the dog. This is best for those dogs that are excitable types. I find that most owners want an effective but gentle correction. This will only work if the handler is consistent with the correction.

Take the dog's collar and walk calmly backwards ten steps, (handler walks backward holding dog's collar) then quietly release the collar and resume walking in the direction you were going. Use this anytime the dog decides to self-reward by leaving you, sniffing the floor, going after something it wants to investigate. This includes people and other dogs.

High-energy dogs may need 15 to 20 steps backward for this to work.

3. The Leader Walking Routine

The rule here is; **if the dog leaves you, you leave the dog and PRAISE the joining.**

Walking on a loose leash move forward and if the dog leaves you turn and move in the opposite direction. **Do not warn the dog that you are turning.** This includes popping or shaking the leash, making noise with your feet, etc. You want the dog not to notice that you are going away from it. When the two of you are going in the opposite direction the leash will tighten and the force produced will be a good correction if your timing is right and you used the leash correctly. When the dog joins you, praise as soon as it gets to you, praise more excitedly when it looks at you and gives eye contact. I will demonstrate "about turning" to the right and to the left and the proper handling of the leash while doing so. If the dog does not leave you as you pass the toys **give super praise!!!**

4. The Leader Walking Routine With Distractions

Place distractions in four corners of your training area. For our purposes they are toys today, but they could be anything that will cause your dog to leave you. As you approach the distractions slow down to give your dog the opportunity of leaving you. If it is not paying attention and is focused on getting to the toys, as you slow down it will keep going. As soon as it has moved far enough not to notice you turning around, do so and cause the correction to happen, then praise with the joining routine. Start with the toys on the floor. When it is sticking with you, have someone toss a toy by you in the direction you are moving and repeat the process. If your dog does not chase the toy but stays with you **praise big time!!!!!! "Good with me"!!!!!!**

Ten Steps Backward is also a great response for the dog that leaves its handler for the toys. What is great about the ten steps is the correction does not require a leash. Remember your goal is to have off leash control. If the dog leaves you for the toy, calmly take his collar and holding it, back up ten steps. Release the collar and walk forward again. Consistency here is the key; if he leaves you again, repeat until he stays with you. Remember some dogs will require 15 to 20 steps. Do this quietly without any verbal corrections.

5. The Greeting Routine

As you approach the person you are going to greet, slow down to check if your dog is paying attention to you or is totally focused on who or what you are approaching. If your dog keeps moving forward and does not notice that you are slowing down stop. Your dog will keep moving. It has just left you so you will quickly leave it and cause a correction. When the dog turns and looks at you, praise and complete the joining routine. You can also use the 10 Steps Backward correction here.

After the dog has connected with you, approach the greeter again. At about four feet from the greeter, stop and sit your dog. Next step in front of your dog, greet and shake hands with the person. If your dog gets up at any time, repeat the joining routine immediately or use the 10 Steps Backwards and try again. If your dog does not get up, return to your dog in heel position and praise and reward. Then if the dog is calm allow your dog to greet the person, calmly. Instruct the person stay calm and a pet the dog or allow the dog to sniff him.

If your dog gets excited and jumps on people, stand on the leash so that if he jumps up he will be self-corrected by the leash, you can also use the Ten Steps. Let me know if you have this problem and I have several ways of fixing this problem.

POSITIVE NAME ASSOCIATION

Your Dog must learn to give you its attention when you say his name. His name should not mean come, it means look at me and pay attention.

Teaching this is fun and simple.

In a quiet location, put a leash on your dog and step on it. Leave room for him or her to move around. This is so he cannot decide to walk off for another activity. Puppies have a short attention span. You can start this sitting down but you must move to standing up at some point in the training.

Have your training treats hidden somewhere on your body. I always have a toy on my body also. I use a toy as a reward with play at some point in the exercise.

Say your dog's call name, happily and excitedly. When he looks at you, hold the food at your face level and praise him for looking up at you, then bring the food down to him. Remember jumping up, or jumping on you is not the correct response, so don't praise and reward it. Just tell him off, disconnect and when all four feet are on the ground start over.

Soon he will lock his attention on you. At this point use something or someone to draw his attention off of you. I step on a squeaker under my foot and get him to look away. When he does I say his name, when he looks back at me I praise and treat the behavior.

Never use the dog's call name in a negative tone or manner. Do not say his name over and over. He will learn to tune it out. There is always some positive response from you when he responds to his name. I will play this game with a toy and use play as a reward for looking at me. If he looks he gets the toy, or gets to chase the toy, tug on the toy. Whatever pushes his buttons.

When calling your dog to you, from this point on, you will say his name followed by the word come. As you say the word come you will move away from the dog. Do not repeat his name over and over as you back or move away. Do not say come over and over as you back away. Simply praise him for moving toward you, and lots of it. Move your body excitedly, remember Dogs are visual animals. They communicate more with body language than with sound.