



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CANINE

....and learning how to speak dog!

The best way to understand your dog is to look at things from his/her point of view. What may be obvious to you may not be so clear to your dog (s). It is your responsibility as an owner to learn how to “SPEAK DOG” since dogs cannot speak English! Remember, YOU said “yes” to getting a dog. Your dog didn’t ask for you. Give him/her everything they need. Below is a list of helpful tips providing insight on how your dog thinks. Training is not really about teaching “sit, down, come, etc.” It’s really about developing a relationship with your dog. When you take the time to make this happen, your dog will follow your lead and the greatest gift you will have is not a dog that will sit, lie down or come but an incredible, loving bond that will last forever.

- Dogs are a direct descendant of the wolf. They are pack animals who thrive on a social environment. Because of this, dogs perceive relationships as a hierarchy, with one leading (NOT DOMINATING) and the other following. Dogs need to be part of your “human pack”. They are social animals and will be depressed when isolated. Include your dog in EVERYTHING you do (as long it is safe for your dog), such as playing, exercising, eating, and socializing! A dog’s primary concern is identifying the “pack leader” and what is “his number” in the pack. Remember, all dogs have a strong willingness to learn.
- Dogs must have a set of fair, firm and FUN set of rules to live by. These “rules” need to be set by you the owner, otherwise your dog will have no other choice than to make his/her own rules and become your leader. Dogs need a stable and consistent leader –YOU.
- Dogs are selectively bred for specific personality traits. Find out what your dog was bred for and take advantage of putting their talent to work! ie: Labrador Retrievers are bred to retrieve ... organize retrieving play sessions. Teach and play “find it” with food or toys.
- Dogs learn in black and white. There are only “yes” or “no” options in a dogs’ minds. They cannot comprehend “maybe”. The latter is a grey area and leads to confusion which leads to a misbehaved dog. Dogs do NOT have the ability to connect events. They can only make associations with immediately circumstances. ie: If you come home and find the garbage ripped open, do NOT yell at your dog, he will associate punishment with your coming home and NOT the garbage.
- Dogs have a strong willingness to learn. Take advantage of it! Play fun games & teach your dog tricks!
- Dogs must have consistency in all areas of their lives. That means: feed them at the same time every morning and night, take them to the bathroom at the same times every day, use only select command words to teach your dog, if you allow your dog to jump on you when you have jeans on, but not when you are dressed up, YOU are not consistent and are giving your dog unfair mixed signals. Instead, decide what your dog is and is not permitted to do.
- Praise is the key to communicating to your dog. If you don’t let your dog know when he is doing a good job, by saying “goooooood boy!!!” & giving him a treat, then how will your dog know? Dogs learn by association & positive reinforcement. Make learning FUN. Your dog will learn fast & be HAPPY.
- Always use a happy voice to “speak” to your dog; while using a quick concise verbal reprimand when need be. Dogs just love hearing a “HAPPY VOICE”! They especially enjoy WHISPERING!
- Dogs are much more tuned into reading body language, than humans. Use non-threatening body language when around dogs. ie: When you come home from work and see that “Rover” got into the garbage and is hiding in the corner, it is NOT because he “knows that he did something wrong”, it IS because he reads your body language which says to him you are stressed out and angry.
- Communicate to your dog with one word commands that are consistently used. ie: Sit rather than saying “sit” sometimes and “sit down” other times. It is also important to not repeat commands over and over, such as “Come, come, come”, that will only teach your dog to ignore you.
- Catch your dog doing something RIGHT!! www.courteouscanines.com