

Stubborn Dogs

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Don't Give Up

Change Starts Today

The first thing you need to understand is, 'stop making excuses.' I've heard so many excuses for stubborn dogs. The dog is alpha, stubborn, dominant, or dump.

"I've tried everything." "My dog can't be trained."

"Nothing works." There are as many excuses as there are reasons for dogs being stubborn.

No matter how stubborn your dog is, it can be trained, you are only missing a few key elements in your training.

Once you include these in your daily routine then you will see a big difference in your dog's behavior.

Instead, let's forget the past and focus on fixing your dog.

Owners of stubborn dogs focus on everything the dog does wrong – and ignores the dog when it is good. A better solution is to tell your dog when it does something right and 'stop' all the dog's movement when it does something wrong.

Don't Start a Fight - Communicate

Punishment Doesn't Work

Stubborn, intelligent, and dominant dogs do not deal with stress well. They become extremely excited and

agitated, or they shut down. Instead of punishing, or yelling at a dog, teach the dog to communicate. It is

Power vs Force



Dogs understand power. They will respond to it.

But, opposition reflex is the dog's reaction to force.

Power is 'stopping the game'. It is ending the fun. It is not letting the dog 'get what it wants'.

It can be as easy as stepping on the dog's leash, or putting a puppy in a crate. There isn't anything for the dog to fight.

Force, on the other hand, is something that causes pain or fear. The dog learns to fight back. It activates the dog's 'opposition reflex.'

This is why we don't focus on punishment. You cannot teach a stubborn dog by fighting with it. You are just playing the game. Instead, make the dog 'want' to do what you say.

hard for a dog to learn when it only hears what it does wrong.

Tell the dog when it is being good. We do this with 'Markers' – Some people use a clicker. Others use the word 'Yes!'. When the dog does anything, you like, 'Yes'.

A stubborn dog is a frustrated one. The main reason for this is the dog doesn't understand what you want. The dog tries and receives no reinforcement.

This means that there is a cure for stubborn and alpha dogs.

So, stop getting emotional. Stop getting angry. Stop using punishments. Instead, give your dog a command, and expect your dog to do it. If your dog doesn't then just make it.

For example. Your dog jumps on you. Put the leash under your foot and stand on it. Wait. Your dog will struggle, and act out. That is okay. Just wait. After a few minutes your dog will give up. Then, tell your dog how fantastic you think it is.

Another example, your dog is pulling on the leash when you walk – so stop walking.

Deference Behaviors

Who is In Charge?

Either you are in charge, or the dog is. I've seen so many people let their dogs drag them into the training center, or down the street. They always complain but my response is, 'Why did you let your dog do that?'

Owners of stubborn dogs have a very limited vocabulary with their dog. They often use one word to mean several commands. This makes it difficult for the dog to learn what you want.

Your dog will only do what you let it do. If a dog wants to go somewhere faster, and you let it, then you teach the dog that the leash means 'he is in charge.' 'He gets to do what he wants.' When you get mad and start jerking on the leash he learns.....nothing. Instead, he realizes that he must try harder next time to get what he wants.



Training deference behaviors means making the dog wait until you decide to give it what it wants. It works this way. Your dog wants something- The dog behaves – You reward the dog.

You want to walk – the dog stays calm – it gets to walk.

Your dog wants a treat. It sits. You offer the treat.

Consistency

Rules are Rules

One thing that makes dogs stubborn is learning that the rules do not always apply. So, before doing what you ask the dog needs to test and see if you 'really mean it' this time.

The dog remembers the time it got its own way, and knows that if it acts up enough then it will get its way again.

You, and your family, need to make sure the rules mean the same thing, every time. Even when you are busy and not paying attention.



Waiting for the Tone of Voice

Do You Mean it?

When a dog doesn't obey the owner often repeat the command. Their dog ignores them. They repeat again. This becomes a vicious cycle.

Your dog is not being bad. It is just waiting for the tone of voice that signals, 'I mean it this time.'

A stubborn dog is an opportunistic dog. They have learned that they don't need to listen until they hear a certain level of anger in your voice.

This is a communication problem. Give the dog a command once. Then wait 2 seconds and say 'no!' Give the command again. Repeat this until the dog does what you want and then say 'YES!' and give the dog a treat, or pet it, or play with it.

Aggression

Temper Tantrum

What happens when the dog doesn't get its own way? The dog usually escalates its bad behavior. It usually keeps trying harder until you finally give in and the dog gets what it wants.

Even if it means the dog tries to see if it can get away with biting.

As your dog gets older it is going to expect to get its own way. When it doesn't then it will push harder.

If you are not the boss then the dog will be the boss.

Unfortunately, most people ignore the problem until the dog bites, or drags them across the ground, or attacks another dog.

Once the dog has found out how strong it really is, and that it has power, then it becomes more difficult to train it.

Freedom is Earned

No means No

Any stubborn or dominant dog should have their privileges revoked until they learn some manners.

Wait

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The best lesson you can ever give a dog is to teach it 'stress coping skills'.

Its not hard. Teach a dog to wait. While you are walking on the street stop and wait. Before your dog goes for a walk, stop and wait. Before you feed it, stop and wait.

If your dog does not respect the children, then your dog should not be loose when the children are around.

If your dog doesn't show good manners when you are busy, then it needs a time out until you have time to play.

If a dog doesn't walk nice on a leash – then the dog doesn't go for walks.

As your dog learns some manners then it can earn its freedom back. This isn't as harsh as it sounds.

If you want a calm dog – teach a dog to be calm

Take Time To Teach

Teaching happens all day, from the moment your dog wakes, until it falls asleep. Like with children, everything is training.

Too many times we feel that a dog should know something after we teach it 2 or 3 times. This is unrealistic. Children can think – but it takes dozens of repetitions before a puppy can start to understand.

If you start punishing, or stop teaching then your puppy will

become frustrated and 'act out' and 'fight back.'

Pick one command. Repeat it using positive reinforcement until your dog does it every time. Make it a game.

Then, add distractions. Then add distance, then duration.

Fear and Anxiety

Are you the problem?

Why should a dog come when you call if it means you will hurt the dog. Coming to you is stressful.

The only way to relieve that stress is to avoid you.

Another problem is that anything to do with you is upsetting. You yank the leash. You stop the puppy from playing.

You put it in a crate. You take things away from it.

In short – you are not a nice person to be around. One of the most common catch phrases among pro dog trainers is 'all good things need to come from you.'

Boundaries and Rules

Know Your Place

Everyone has a role to play in the family home. You, your children and your dog.

A dog needs to learn their boundaries. They need to see everything in black and white. And the rules need to apply 100% of the time.

Dogs do not understand 'stay off the furniture all the time, except when it is family night.'

They do not understand that they must walk nice on the sidewalk, but not when you pass an empty lot.

This causes confusion, which leads to frustration.

These boundaries and rules must include how to greet people, and dogs. How to act around children. How to behave when visitors come over.

Never assume that a dog 'just knows'.



Poisoned Cues

Building Fear

If you call a dog, and then punish it, the dog learns to be afraid when you call it.

If you put your dog outside to play, and ignore it until you want it to come inside, then seeing you means that all the fun and play is over.

A dog will not obey if it is afraid. Dogs do not want the fun to stop, so they will run away (avoidance).

If a dog expects to have its feelings hurt when it hears a word, then that word is poisoned and should never be used around the dog again.

Poisoned cues can be look like aggression. Don't be too quick to blame the dog

Running Wild?

What does your dog do all day?

How does your dog spend most of its day? Does he run wild and 'do his own thing?' Or is he constantly being quiet and respectful?

10 Tips to Solve Your Problem

Get Started Now

Today is the day you and your dog learn how to get along well.

1. Wait until your dog looks at you before – anything. Treats, walk, opening the door, supper.
2. Say 'YES' anytime your dog does something right.
3. Leave a leash on him whenever he is loose so you can stop bad behavior.

4. Slow down training. Either you or the dog is not getting it.
5. Spend 2-3x each day teaching your dog to lay down and stay.
6. Focus more on good behavior than bad.
7. When your dog learns a command then add distractions each day until your dog is 'rock solid.'
8. Training needs to be a part of the dog's everyday life, not just at a specific time, but all the time.
9. Not all dogs are the same. Some like treats. Some like affection. Some like play. Maybe you are using the wrong reward.
10. Have fun with your dog.

If these tips don't help then get help. There are people trained to figure out the problem, and find a solution.

Puppies are like children. We bring them into our lives with anticipation and joy. But, reality rarely meets our expectations. The struggles and the problems can often overshadow the joyful times, and the pleasure.

Be patient. It takes 2 years for a dog to mature mentally. They will make mistakes – that is how they learn. They will act out. That is part of being young and learning.

Just remember, tomorrow is another day.

Patience, and Persistence solves most problems.

Suzanne Wiebe

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