

LEADERSHIP

A good "leader" is fair, consistent, and trustworthy and gives and expects respect. Fair, no-nonsense rules, consistently enforced will give your dog the leadership he needs in order to be an enjoyable companion in your home. A good leader has what the other group members want (food, games, fun, petting/grooming, interaction). Utilizing these things will have your dog following you in anticipation of what you have to offer.

1. One way of gaining leadership (and/or to teach impulse control) is for you to go through doorways first.
 - ❖ The best way to do this is to teach your dog a wait command to be used at all thresholds (exterior doors, gates, cars).
 - ❖ It is also important that your dog moves out of your way when you walk through the house. If he is in your way, rather than walking over or around him, shuffle your feet (don't kick!), saying something like "Move" as you make contact with your feet.
 - ❖ If your dog is always running ahead of you (either in the house or outside), you can turn and go the other way, no longer allowing him to 'race' you.
2. Ask your dog to sit, look at you with attention, or lie down in order to get something he wants. This is teaching your dog to say "please" and "thank you." Use these commands before he is played with, has his leash attached to his collar, is given his food, throwing his toy, before playing tug, etc. Having him do something for you teaches him to listen and perform before he gets what he wants.
3. For some dogs, "free feeding" may have your dog thinking he's in charge of the food supply. Offer meals twice a day, removing the food after 15 minutes. This will put you in charge of a resource that is very important to your dog. In addition, it helps with housetraining and weight control!
4. You must go to many locations (at least 20) and train your dog to respond to you in these various environments before you can start to count on her to be reliable in her behavior and listen to what you are asking her to do. You will need treats for a while at first when teaching obedience commands (especially in really busy locations) to help you in getting your dog to respond appropriately to you. Treats may always be needed initially in really high distraction locations (especially new ones). Be sure to make the treat interesting enough to win out in the environment you are in.
5. **CONSISTENCY** is key to all training and interactions with your dog. Set up fair and consistent rules in your household and have everyone follow them. If you are wishy-washy, it is unfair to expect your dog to have any level of consistency in her behavior. For example, your dog may be allowed on a certain piece of furniture but not others -- OR it is only okay if you invite him on the furniture. Assign certain words and use them every time. If you say SIT each time rather than sometimes saying "sit down," "you sit," or "sit, sit, sit," your dog will be less confused and will learn to comply much more quickly with what you want.
6. **Giving your dog feedback must always be given WHILE a behavior is occurring, or your dog will not learn what you are trying to teach.** Whether the feedback is positive or negative, you only have up to 3 seconds from the time the behavior has occurred to give that feedback. Anything past that small window of time is after-the-fact punishment, which will teach your dog not to trust you, and to think of you as someone who is unpredictable. Dogs learn to leave things alone after LOTS of catching them in the act and interrupting what they are doing, which is the same for a toddler. It wouldn't make sense to drag a one-year-old child over to something he broke an hour ago and show him what he did wrong and yell at him. The one-year-old won't understand what you're trying to teach him and neither does your dog.

LEADERSHIP (Continued)

7. If your dog is turning a deaf ear (i.e., not listening, ignoring your requests, etc.), put him on his leash when in the house and have him go everywhere you go. This gives your dog no options for independence or to get into trouble. Please, NEVER leave a dog unsupervised when his leash is on.
8. If your dog continues to push you by either demanding attention, not listening, turning a deaf ear, or challenging you non-aggressively (body slamming, excessive jumping, or mouthing), then you want to stare your dog directly in the eye (this is a confrontational gesture), scowl at him, and walk into his space and use a low, growly voice, saying something like "stop it."

You can also walk toward your dog while doing all these facial gestures, as this really gets the message across that you are in charge of this space, and you mean business. This is much more effective than any hitting, scruff shaking, or rolling your dog will ever be, because this is how dogs communicate with one another. By staring, moving your dog out of YOUR space, and using a low growling voice, you will be letting your dog know that he's crossed the line.

9. It's also important to have a command you give to your dog that signals that you are finished engaging with him, and that he needs to go away. You may say something like "Go" and point. Initially, you may need to stand up and walk into your dog as you're telling him to "go" so that he knows to actually move away from you. Pretty soon, you'll only need the verbal command.