



4 Things You Can Do TODAY to be a Better Leader and Have a Better (Behaved) Dog



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Leadership – It's the little things!



- ✓ Leadership is an *attitude* and a *state of mind*.
- ✓ A good leader puts their *desire* for love and affection from their dog secondary to the dog's *need* for leadership.
- ✓ A good leader is calm, not overly excited, nervous or angry.
- ✓ A good leader remembers that his or her job is to lead and protect the pack.
- ✓ A good leader establishes their leadership in non-traumatic ways that make perfect sense to a dog.



The Walk – It's all business

- ✓ All dogs have an instinctive need to *walk* (around the backyard doesn't count).
- ✓ The walk is *all business* – the leader *owns the walk*, and the walk's purpose is for the dog to pay attention to you (not sniff and send pee-mail, or change directions or pace).
- ✓ The walk is a relationship building and training exercise – and gives your dog a job!
- ✓ The walk is the perfect opportunity for your dog to perform a job for which he can be rewarded (with breakfast or an off-leash romp).



The Walk – How?

- ✓ Whatever kind of collar, keep it up high behind the ears; your dog's head should be up and eyes forward.
- ✓ Pick a side (your strongest) and have your dog stay on that side.
- ✓ Give leash corrections with a quick snap and release – a tight leash screams tension; a relaxed leash says “yes, that’s right”.
- ✓ Learn your dog’s “triggers” (other dogs, skateboarders, cars) and step in *before* he starts to react.
- ✓ Reward your dog by letting him sniff, etc. *after* he’s performed his ‘job’.



Food – Retain its value

- ✓ Food is (or should be) the most valuable resource to your dog, and is controlled and provided by the leader
- ✓ “Free-feeding” (always available) food removes the opportunity to assert your leadership and lessens the value of this resource. Dogs are not natural ‘grazers’.
- ✓ Reinforce your leadership by ‘scenting’ your dog’s food with your hands (a little warm water on dry kibble and use your hands to mix)
- ✓ Your dog should ‘sit’ and ‘wait’ until you ‘OK!’ him to the bowl
- ✓ Remove the bowl when your dog is finished eating *or* if he walks away from it

Personal Space (Yours!)



- ✓ Dog's expect to give their leaders as much or little personal space as requested.
- ✓ A leader requires their dog not get underfoot or invade their personal space uninvited.
- ✓ Expand your personal space requirement; have your dog go to his 'place' while you're in the kitchen, on the couch, etc. Then *invite* him to join you (or not!)
- ✓ Use your body as your tool to indicate to your dog to back up and wait – another opportunity for your dog to do a “job” for which he can be rewarded.



Attention – Give it wisely

- ✓ Leaders give attention when warranted or deserved – don't mistakenly reinforce bad behavior with attention; even negative attention can be rewarding to a dog.
- ✓ Your silence (no talking, no touching, no eye contact) speaks VOLUMES to your dog – it says “I am the leader and I'll let you know when/if I need you”.
- ✓ When you come into the room, withhold all attention (including eye contact!) until your dog is calm.
- ✓ Give the humans in your pack attention *before* you give it to your dog (dogs *expect* this when the roles of the pack are established and enforced).
- ✓ Leaders say when play begins and when it ends – if your dog brings you a toy (“You will play with me NOW!”), ignore him until he's taken his attention from you then call him to you to play.
- ✓ Attention is a reward and should be used as such.