

Dealing with the Dominant Dog



By: Ed Frawley



Leerburg Kennels

Foreword

When you view this eBook in PDF format. Click on **BOOKMARKS** on the top left side of your PDF reader, these bookmarks are eBook chapters.

[Leerburg Kennel](#) and Video is owned by Ed Frawley.

Ed has owned German Shepherds (GSD) for over 45 years. Since 1978 he has bred over 350 litters of German working bloodline GSD's. His dogs work in law enforcement, as S&R dogs, as competition Schutzhund dogs, and as family companions and protectors.

Since 1980 Ed has produced over 120 dog training videos and DVD's. He was a police K-9 handler for 10 years, competed in several dog sports, including AKC obedience and Schutzhund. In addition he has built one of the top dog training supply businesses in the world.

If you go to the web site **Leerburg.com**® you will see that it has over 10,000 printed pages. The Leerburg Web Discussion board has over 10,000 registered members and over 120,000 posts in the archives. Learn to use our site search function.

Dealing With the Dominant Dog



By Ed Frawley

[Questions & Answers on Dominance](#)

[The Theory of Corrections in Dog Training](#)

Before you begin to read this article I want to point out that I wrote this article back in the 1990's.

In December of 2005 I finished my 3 1/2 hour training DVD of the same topic. This DVD was 5 years in the making. I have produced over 100 dog training DVD's and think this may be my best.

The information in this eBook and the DVD is a result of 45 years of experience in training dogs. Over 30 years of studying the art of protection

training and breeding over 350 litters of working bloodline German Shepherds.

The information in this article encompasses about 20% of the information in the DVD.

If you have a serious aggression problem with your dog there are two DVDs that you need.

[Basic Dog Obedience DVD](#)

[Dealing with Dominant and Aggressive Dogs DVD](#)



Dealing With Dominant and Aggressive Dogs

\$49.00 +s&h

3 Hours 30 Minutes Long

Many people, including experienced dog trainers, misunderstand dominance in dogs.

There are a lot of people who give very bad information (dangerous information) on how to deal with dominant dogs. Some people don't have a clue how to deal with a dominant dog, others try what I call the HALTY APPROACH (aka

the tree hugger approach) while others feel force is the only way to handle the problem.

Some think you just “alpha roll the dog and be done with it.” This is a common approach. In most cases, this is also the wrong approach.

In addition, many people think that we should only be concerned with dominance in a large dog and not a small dog - this is also wrong. While a large dog (like the one in the photo above) can put you in the hospital, a small dog can put your child in the hospital. Dominance of any kind needs to be dealt with and if not eliminated at least controlled in ALL dogs.

I have owned a number of extremely dominant male dogs over the past 40 years. These dogs have forced me to study dominance. I look at dominance in a different way today than I did 20 years ago. I have learned that dominance is often (not always) easier to control by using your brain and controlling the environment the dog is placed in.

No one likes to get bit. I look at the scars on the arms of many of my friends and consider myself lucky. I have never had a serious dog bite, yet I have handled some very dominant aggressive animals. This includes more police dogs than I can remember.

When I ask people about these scars, I always get the same answer: “I made a mistake with that

dog." Getting "dog bit" comes down to making mistakes in how we handle our dogs in a given situation.

One of the biggest mistakes new dog owners make is to fail to realize that their family pet is a pack animal. The fact is most dog owners don't even have a clue what this means, much less understand how strong pack drive is in their family dog. Their lack of understanding of this very important issue is what gets them in trouble.

One of the best ways to start to learn about dominance is to study pack behavior in wolves. Look at the research done on wolf packs. A wolf pack always has a dominant pair of animals. Wolves don't maintain their dominant position by fighting with pack members every day; they do it through subtle means. Body posture and attitude play a major factor in maintaining a dominant pack position.



Dog on Furniture causes dominance.

Rank Problems in the Pack Structure

Rank within a family pack is a huge, huge thing to a pack animal. A lower ranking pack member would not challenge the pack leader for food, or act aggressively towards a higher pack member when they tried to get into the bed that the lower pack member was sleeping on. Pack leaders eat first and they get the better sleeping quarters.

What this translates down to is this "if your dog growls at you when you go near his food bowl or if it growls at you when you go to bed and it's laying on the bed - or if it growls at you when you try and take its toy away from it - the dog does not feel that you are a higher rank in the pack than it is." When a dog growls at the wife or kids in the family, it sees itself as a higher rank than family members. When that happens there is a problem brewing.

Establishing Pack Structure with the Family Pet

\$40.00 +s&h



4 Hours Long

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When Does Dominance Start?

It is an extremely rare situation for a dog younger than 8 months of age to show signs of aggression related to dominance. In fact most serious dominance problems do not appear until a dog enters maturity. This takes place between 15 and 36 months of age. The most common age is around 18 months.

As a dog matures, its instincts tell it to assume a rank within the pack. As a youngster it was willing to be a follower, but if it grows up and does not receive the proper training or if that training was lacking (which it often is) or if it is allowed to display rank behavior (i.e. lay on the bed or on furniture etc) the drive to become higher pack member will take over. The behavior related to that drive is often to threaten other pack members with aggression. Dogs get themselves in trouble by growling, showing teeth, nipping or even biting anyone it sees as a lower rank.

People often mistakenly confuse prey drive with dominance. These are two totally unrelated and different things.

When a pup chews on your hands or your pant leg (even if it's verbalizing by growling) it's displaying prey drive. Puppies play with littermates by using their mouth. When they move into a human family they incorrectly

assume that this is how you play with your new human pack members. It's the owner's job to teach the pup manners.

This article is not about prey drive - but I must say that I can't count the number of emails I get where people mistakenly think they have a dominant puppy when in fact all they have is a very nice pup with a lot of prey drive.

We use prey drive in training. When we reward a puppy with a toy we are taking advantage of his prey drive. If you want to know how to do this get my video titled [Building Drive Focus and Grip](#) The unfortunate fact is that many people screw up their puppy by over correcting prey drive behavior when all they would have to have done was teach the pup that toys are prey items and arms, hands and pant legs are not. It always saddens me when I see this happen. I always look at it like the pup was not dealt a fair hand of cards.

Obedience Training is ONLY the First Step in Controlling Dominance

Simply teaching your dog to mind goes a long way towards establishing yourself as a higher ranking pack member.

Think of it like this. The alpha member of a wolf pack would never accept orders from a lower member of his pack. When rank is such an

important issue to a pack animal - following the commands of another pack member establishes that member as a higher rank in the pack.

Poor Obedience Training is Part of the Cause of Dominance Problems

When you think in terms of rank and pack behavior it's easy to understand how ineffective obedience training results in dominance issues with maturing dogs.

The correct way to obedience train a dog involves three stages of training:

- The Learning Phase
- The Correction Phase
- The Distraction Phase

1 - In the Learning Phase the dog is taught the meaning of a command through motivational methods. This means we guide the dog through different exercises by giving them food or a toy reward when they do what we want.

2 - In the Correction Phase we teach a dog that it will be corrected if it does not follow a command that it has learned in the LEARNING PHASE. We know the dog knows what we are telling him to do, but he refuses to do it.

It would be unfair to correct a dog for not

following a command that it does not know.

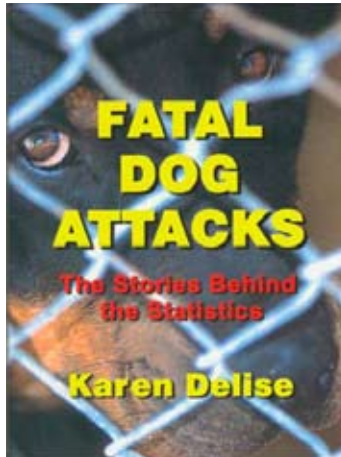
3 - In the Distraction Phase we teach a dog that it has to mind all the time - no matter what's going on around it. We do the training for the learning phase in a location the dog is totally familiar with (i.e. your kitchen or back yard).

In the distraction phase we increase the level of distraction the dog is expected to perform in. (i.e. in the park or in front of other dogs)

Many obedience classes do a decent job teaching owners the LEARNING PHASE but they really drop the ball in the CORRECTION and DISTRACTION PHASE. Classes that focus on CLICKER TRAINING and training classes that focus on owners using HEAD HALTERS (Halties) or instructors that are against physical corrections are examples of this. Many of the pet warehouse training classes fall into this category - they want to appease the tree huggers and PETA terrorists.

When a dog has not had a solid foundation in all three phases it will not mind all the time. When these dogs are faced with a high level of distraction they ignore commands.

People who only take their dog to puppy classes also miss the training on corrections. The only place a puppy should be corrected is for not coming. If they don't COME when called it could result in a dead dog. Puppies should not get serious corrections until they are 6 to 8 months old.



A MUST READ BOOK for everyone who owns a dominant dog. Learn from the mistakes of others.

When Your Dog Won't Mind

When the Alpha wolf issues an order - pack members listen and mind or they don't survive. When dogs choose not to mind their owner they are in effect saying they do not respect that person giving the commands. Dogs that don't follow commands think that they are an equal or higher rank within the family pack.

Dogs are extremely observant. It does not take them long to determine that you, or your wife, or other family members are not consistent in how you expect them to mind. Once a dog figures out that it only has to mind under certain circumstances it is a short step for the same dog to start to think that it only has to mind when it

wants to. This empowers the dog and elevates pack drive.

They begin to think they can ignore commands that they choose. With some dogs (thankfully not all) this translates into challenging an owner or family member when their confidence has been built to the point where they want to challenge for a higher rank in the pack.

This is the exact place where dogs start to show their teeth, growl at the owner, nip at the hand that tries to take a toy away etc.

Had this same dog gone through training for correction and distraction at a young age the odds are this situation never would have evolved because dogs that are brought up properly look at the owner as a clear pack leader.

This is the reason SO MANY DOGS seem to live happily with the family up to 12 to 18 months of age and then suddenly change into CUJO. It's when the flowing hormones and raging pack drive and lack of proper obedience training take over the family pet.

Did You Wait too Long to Obedience Train?

When owners wait until a dog matures to start training, this results in some dogs thinking "Why should I mind this person? I am stronger than he

or she is and I don't have to do what they say".

In other words by waiting to train a dog or by ineffectively training a dog the owner creates a situation where they have to use extreme force or fight the dog to show the dog that they are stronger. I will get into this in more detail later.

Prong Collar



Great for training!

How to Fit a Prong Collar



eBook

Controlling Every Aspect of Your Dog's Life Helps Control Dominance

The remainder of this article is going to offer ideas on how to control different aspects of the dog's life.

While the majority of dogs only require obedience training to get their dominance under control, other dogs need additional work to establish their handler as the pack leader.

Owners often inadvertently allow things to happen that helps develop a dominant behavior in their dogs.

Understanding subtle dominant behavior in a dog help people learn how to establish themselves as the pack leaders in the home. Here are just a few behaviors many dogs will display that represent a dominant behavior:

- Sleeping in bed with the owner
- Pushing you to pet him
- Not allowing the husband into the bedroom after being gone on a trip
- Growling near food or toys
- Not allowing you to take toys away by showing aggression (not just playing keep away)
- Always going through doors first

- Always going down stairs first
- Being extremely dog aggressive
- Resisting laying down when told to DOWN
- Showing aggression to certain family friends and not others

Your Bedroom and **YOUR BED!**



Controlling dominance begins at home. The first thing we need to do is to take total control over the dog in terms of where he is allowed to sleep, eat and play. The dominant dog should never be allowed to sleep in the bedroom. The best place to sleep is always reserved for the pack leader (you). Make your dog sleep in a dog crate in a room other than the bedroom. Of course, if your dog lives in a kennel out back this is not going to apply.

When people bring an 8 week old pup home there is nothing wrong with putting the dog crate in the bedroom for a week or so to allow the pup to adjust to his new home. But as soon as the dog is crate trained (does not scream in the crate) the dog crate should be moved out of the bedroom.

I do not allow a dog to sleep in the bedroom until I am 100% sure the dog knows exactly who the pack leader is and I NEVER ALLOW DOGS ON THE BED.

Your Toys

As puppies grow up they should not be allowed to become possessive of their toys. Your attitude needs to be ALL TOYS ARE YOUR TOYS and you allow the pup to play with YOUR TOY.

A new pet owner should not play tug-of-war games with their pup. Tug games are an integral part of protection training but they have no place in raising a pet. Playing tug with a dog creates dominance problems. The dogs get empowered when the owner lets the dog win the game.

The handler should be able take every toy away from the dog at any time without the dog showing aggression. If the pup growls, there is a protocol that should be followed. I have covered this in [my DVD on Dominant Dogs](#)

In its simplest form we look at what caused the pup to get over excited. It can be the owner over stimulated the dog and caused the problem. When that happens this is a handler problem not a dog problem. If a pup bites (which is common and normal) with normal handling we don't hit the pup we simply lift it by it's cheeks and hold it as we stare in his eyes. We do this until he calms down and submits.

Back in the early 1990's I used to recommend shaking a pup by the scruff of the neck. I no longer do this because some people take this too far.

If the dog is older and there is a concern over being bitten, a leash should be put on the dog and the dog should be corrected off the toy. If there is any growling at this point the handler should scold the dog with a firm, deep voice.

Once the dog has dropped the toy the handler should lead the dog away from it before bending to pick it up. Until the dominant situation is under control that toy is never given to the dog again. The handler controls his dog's universe and the dog needs to learn this. The factor in that scenario is, "You determine what toys are played with and for how long."

If the dog will not give up a toy when corrected on leash and the handler does not feel comfortable with his ability to safely get the

toy out of the dog's mouth, there are 3 options available:

- Ignore the situation, only pick a fight that you can win. When the dog finally releases the toy, pick it up and put it away for good. He doesn't play with it anymore.
- Trade the dog for a piece of food. When he drops the toy put it away and set up a training session where you are in a better position to correct the dog for not releasing the toy. (possibly having a muzzle and prong collar on to make sure you will not get bit)
- To win the toy war with a strong mature dog takes planning. If it's done wrong you will be bit.

First put 2 collars on the dog. A Leerburg Dominant Dog Collar is the best to first put on the dog. ([Click here or see photo below](#)) The second collar can be a normal collar.

Attach a leash to a post or a tree or solid object in your home (i.e., around a door knob and then close the door on the leash so the long end of the leash in a different room than where the line is over the knob.)

When the dog has the toy in his mouth, put him on leash and take him to the

location of the second leash that is attached to the post. Clip the second leash to the dominant dog collar on the dog. So the dog now has two leashes on, each attached to a different collar.

Now tell the dog to drop the toy and back up and stretch the dog between the post and you. Put enough pressure on him that he spits the toy out. As soon as the dog spits the toy out verbally praise him. If you can approach without getting bit, do so and calmly praise the dog. If he tries to pick up the toy when you approach, don't get mad and scream. Just calmly say NO DROP IT and back away as you tighten the leash again.

This process should not be a wild and hectic operation. Keep your cool and remain calm. By remaining calm you greatly increase your image in the dog's eyes - he sees that you can choke him until he passes out without getting mad. This procedure does not hurt the dog. There is no real pain, it just takes the air away from him and he submits. If the owner makes a fight out of it and gets crazy and screams it defeats the purpose of what you are doing.

Continue to choke the dog as long as he goes after the toy when you approach. If you don't feel comfortable picking the toy up, then kick it out of his reach. This is one way that you only pick a fight that you can win.



This two leash process is only necessary with big dogs. Little dogs still need the dominant dog collar but they are simply picked up off the ground and hung until they drop their toy or stop acting aggressive.

Some handlers are simply too soft in temperament and they will not do this. My position is that when the option is to solve the problem before the dog bites someone - or to do this rather than put the dog to sleep - well it's a simple decision for me. I would rather deal with handler aggression with [our dominant dog collar](#)

a few times than by taking the dog to the vet and killing it. In most (not all) cases the problems have been caused by the owners not doing their job properly. So here is part of the fix on tough hard dogs (toughness and hardness are not a size issue - small dogs can be very hard dogs).

Training a Dominant Dog Requires That You Have Quality Training Equipment

One point here: Make darn sure [you use good equipment](#) when you do this. Make sure your leash is a quality leash like you see the photo below. You would not want your leash to break when you are in the middle of a problem with a handler aggressive adult dog.



If you have no plans to protection train your dog it is not a good idea to play tug games with puppies. This builds the dog's drive towards being possessive of his toys.

If you do plan on doing sport work (Schutzhund work) or have plans to make your pup a personal protection dog or police service dog you are going to want to play a lot of tug games with the pup. We want to build its drive towards the tug and eventually the bite sleeve or body bite suit. What needs to happen at an early age is to develop a relationship with the dog that after allowing him to win the game of tug a few times, the handler can take the tug away from his dog. I have found that giving the pup a piece of food after taking the tug away is a way of rewarding the dog for releasing the tug. This also is the beginning of teaching the dog to "OUT."

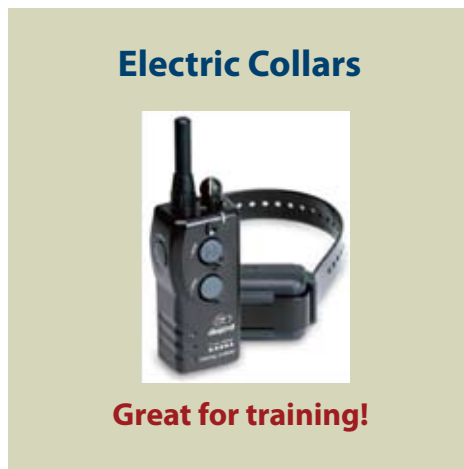


This photo is an example of exactly how NOT TO KEEP YOUR DOGS. One of the biggest mistakes dog owners make is to allow dogs on furniture or beds. This causes dog fights and increases the potential for dominance problems. In this case the small dog on the back of the couch was almost killed by the other dogs.

Dinner Time

A dog with dominance problems is never allowed to be in the kitchen or dining room while the family eats. The worst thing that can happen is to feed a dominant dog from the table. Again, the pack leader always eats first and gets the best pieces of food. If your dog is a house dog, put him in the dog crate or another room at mealtime.

Feeding the dog from the table enhances your problems.



Aggressiveness Around the Food Bowl

Being aggressive around the food bowl is a common problem with some dogs. There are two issues about food aggression:

- Preventing food aggression in young dogs
- Control of the aggression

I look at the food issue differently than many people. A lot of trainers will tell you to practice taking your puppy's food away at a young age. I prefer to look at it in a different light. I don't want my dog to be aggressive around his food bowl. I am not sure that this translates into "me taking his food away."

In fact I think that many people make mistakes by taking their dog's food way too much. Why not look at it from the dog's point of view:

You are starving and your mother gives you a plate of mashed potatoes and turkey. As you are eating your father reaches over and takes your food away for NO APPARENT reason. You never said anything wrong or did anything to be punished by losing your food. After awhile your father puts the plate back but then takes it away again. This creates confusion in your mind because you look at it as if you were being punished. If your father does this all the time when you are a kid it will eventually piss you off and at some point you will put your foot down and say ENOUGH OF THIS CRAP. STOP IT!!!

I feel a better way is to build trust in my pups. Teach them that I am a good guy and that I am always fair with them. I will train them that they must SIT before I put the food bowl down. This is something they have to do their entire life.

When my pup eats I will softly talk to him and very slowly pet his back. I try to be very, very

calm about this - not hectic patting. I want the pup to learn that me being around him when he eats is a good thing. I may put my hand in the bowl but I never take his food. If he shows aggression I will shake him and scold him. But if this is done properly he will learn that me being around the food bowl is not a bad thing.

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With older dogs I am not sure it's worth the fight to win the battle. If I buy a dog that is already aggressive around his food I usually do not force the issue. I still make the dog sit for the food bowl. But with these dogs I feed them in their dog crate or dog kennel. I put the food down and walk away.

With food aggressive dogs I NEVER LEAVE FOOD IN A DOG BOWL and I NEVER FEED A DOG OUTSIDE OF THE DOG CRATE. To do so only courts disaster. If there is still food in the bowl 10 minutes after feeding I open the door on the crate, take the dog out and close the door. The

dog goes outside and I remove the food. They only get food one time a day - if they don't eat they are either too fat or not hungry. It does not hurt a dog to go a day without food. In fact, FASTING a dog for one day is healthy for the dog.

When and How to Pet and Praise the Dominant Dog

Having a good bond with a dominant dog is critical. These dogs live and die by pack order. The only way to maintain control is to maintain a good relationship. But this must be done on your terms.

A dog that comes to you and tries to force you into petting him when you are reading the paper or working on the computer is displaying a form of a dominant behavior. Do not allow this to happen. Make the dog go lay down. In fact, controlling his behavior through the use of a long down is one of the very best ways of establishing yourself as the leader.

Almost all dogs want to be petted. But there is a difference between a happy, friendly dog that just wants a pet and a dominant dog that wants to force his attention on you when you are busy doing something else. Understanding the difference between these situations may come down to experience. If your dog doesn't display any other symptoms of dominance except wanting to be petted, you don't have much of a

problem. The solution is to always make a dog do something before you pet him. Give him a SIT command, or give him a DOWN command then pet him.

What Do You Do at Doors and Stairs

Never allow your dog to go into a room or through a door or down a stairs before you. This means very little to humans and a lot to a dog with tendencies for dominance. Make the dog sit at the door every time you take it outside. Just like you make it sit every time you put the food bowl down to feed it.

If one of my dogs tries to rush past me to go down stairs I use my knee to slam it into the wall. I teach the dog the WAIT command on our walks. I then use this command at doors and steps. If I have to have the dog wear a prong collar and a drag line in the house I will do it. A Drag line is a short leash that does not have a handle. The dog can drag it around and it will not get caught on furniture the way a normal leash with a handle does.

Leather Drag Leashes



Showing Aggression Towards Family Friends

When a dog shows aggression to certain visitors to the house this is a form of dominance. People with small dogs think this may be cute, while others are pleased that their dog is acting protective. Both are wrong. This behavior needs to be controlled. The dog needs to be taught that this behavior is unacceptable.

The easiest way is to verbally scold the dog and put him in his crate or put him in a different room. When you show him that you control his environment all the time you are establishing yourself as the leader. In a pack, the pack leader is the one that determines who fights and when. If we allow our dogs to determine who to attack on their own, we are allowing his dominance to take hold.

People that protection train dogs (in Schutzhund or police work) may be thinking that this is bogus because these dogs go out and work on their own. The fact is that Schutzhund dogs, personal protection dogs and/or police service dogs do not work on their own. Through training the handler establishes the rules of engagement. The dog learns when it is and is not acceptable to bite. The fact is that protection training helps establish pack order as long as everything else in the dog's life related to dominance is done properly.

Doors and Stairways

Living with a dominant dog requires a number of small subtle things being done to make the dog understand that you are his master, the leader of his life, the person he looks up to and respects. One of the small things you can do is always make the dog let you walk through a doorway or go down a flight of stairs before he does. This may seem like a small thing but in fact it is not. If you enforce small things like this (that do not require a fight to accomplish) you are setting the tone for the relationship.

Muzzles



Learn how to measure for your dog and pick the right muzzle.

Dog Aggression:

This is a difficult situation. I have found that it's easiest to control this at a very young age and get a grip on it before it becomes a serious problem. I do not allow my puppies to fight. I step in and shake the snot out of them for getting too serious about fighting. They quickly learn that I am the one who determines if and how hard they are allowed to play.

Controlling dog aggression in adult dogs is the topic of a completely different article. It involves using electric collars and muzzles. The fact is that with some adult dogs that have not had this early training, no amount of work is going to completely eliminate dog aggression.

Alpha Rolls ARE STUPID & VERY DANGEROUS:

If I tried to alpha roll one of my stud dogs without a muzzle on he would eat me for lunch. When I hear people talk about taking an adult dog and “alpha rolling” them I shake my head and compare it to Russian Roulette.

For those that don't understand what an alpha roll is, let me explain. When a dog shows signs of dominance many trainers will tell new handlers to take his dog and force it down on its back on the ground and stare in their eyes until the dog looks away. The handler is supposed to get down on top of the dog and grab it by the sides of its cheeks and stare right into his eyes until it submits.

Well, this is fine for some little FOOFOO - or with a dog that is not very dominant. But you had better not try it with a large dog that truly is dominant. I just got an email from a friend who told me about an episode in his California Schutzhund club where two dogs got into a fight. After the fight was broken up one of the dog handlers (who was not very big) alpha rolled her large male German Shepherd male (who had not been obedience trained during its first year of life). Well, the dog attacked her and bit her in the face and upper body leaving her with permanent disfiguring scars. The dog was subsequently put to sleep. The lady had over 100 stitches in her face.

The unfortunate thing is this did not have to happen. The lady had been given bad information. If things had been done differently this would not have happened to this poor woman and the dog would probably still be alive today.

I am not a fan of "Alpha Rolls."

Always remember that if you are going to pick a fight with a dominant dog, you had better pick one you know you can win.

My feeling is that in most cases with extremely strong tough dominant dogs I accomplish as much through subtle body language and voice commands. In other words, rather than create a situation where I have to string a dog up on a leash (and damage the bond with the dog) I will avoid the situation all together or I will scold the dog with a deep voice and stare at him. Think of it like this - the Alpha Wolf in a pack does not have to attack pack members to get his way. Through body language and verbalizing the Alpha is able to do almost everything he needs to do.

There are times with a real kick-ass dominant dog that I will not even force the issue with a direct stare because this could trigger an attack. I will wait until I solve the rank issue in a different way or I will wait until I can control an attack and win the fight. In other words I fight on my terms and not his terms. I will assume a subtle alpha position by scolding the dog and then either lead

him away or call him to a heel and walk away from the situation.

Here is where we need to know our dogs. You may know that a truly strong, stubborn dog may fight you if you try and force him into a down position after a confrontation. I am a firm believer in not having a fight with my dog (unless it cannot be avoided). I believe that you lose a lot more than you gain in coming to blows with the animal. It's always better to control him a different way. For example, if you see him stiffen up and hump his back after a situation occurs, don't try and down him to illustrate how much of a higher rank you are, rather heel him away and put him in his dog crate. Do something to show the dog that you are the one that is in control of him and his environment.

If a handler forces a situation to the point where the dog attacks, then that handler has made a mistake. He has misread the situation and now has a problem. The goal is to see the potential for a fight before it happens and avoid it without losing face with the dog.

For example, when I first got my last police dog he was a very dominant dog. In the beginning I used a Tri-Tronics electric collar to get the dog to release his drug toy. The collar helped the dog spit the toy out on command, but he had such strong drive for that particular toy that he would guard it. In the beginning there was a risk of

being bit if I tried to reach down and try to take it away. So I would heel the dog away from the toy and go back and get it when the dog was not standing over the toy. As I built my bond with the dog and gradually established my position as pack leader I could take the toy without ever using an electric collar. But this took 6 months of consistent work.



Allowing a dog to lie in bed greatly increases Dominance in the Dog

(Child's face has been intentionally masked)

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REVIEW

So as I close this article there are a couple of things that need to be remembered:

- Only pick a fight that you can win
- Whenever possible use your head and think about a problem's cause and a solution
- In most cases you lose more that you gain in a fight with your dog, even if you win.

Always remember that once your dog relinquishes pack order to you he will be a much happier dog. It's like a great burden is lifted off their shoulders. As I work through the various problems on dominance with a dog I always remember that in the end this dog is going to be a much happier dog.

Dog fights are violent, loud, and dangerous events. I get emails every day on dog fights. As I wrote this description I got 2 emails. In one email the family had two dogs. Their female GSD had just killed their Dachshund. In the second email this family's dog had just been in a fight with a neighbor's dog and done \$1,400 damage.

In the mid 1990's I wrote an article on [How to Break Up A Dog Fight](#) - that article is still on my web site. This 52 Minute Audio Book CD is an update of that article. The information in the podcast and on the CD has more details on making the decision about even trying to step in to break up a fight, it discusses many methods used to break up fights and it tells how to break up a fight when you are alone. There is also an extensive section on preventing dog fights.

Basic Dog Obedience

\$40.00 +s&h



4 Hours Long

Our Basic Dog Obedience DVD demonstrates how to break up a dog fight without getting hurt. I actually demo the procedure with two dogs.

Additional Articles Related to Dominant Dogs

- [The Theory of Corrections in Dog Training](#)
- [The Ground Work to Becoming a Pack Leader](#)
- [Raising 2 Pups at the Same Time - Why it's a bad idea!!!](#)
- [Dog Fights and Questions on Dogs that are Animal Aggressive](#)
- [Introducing a New Dog Into a Home with Existing Dogs](#)
- [Using Breaker Bars in Dog Fights](#)
- [Chow's & Chow Mixes - know what you are buying!!!](#)



This pup may look cute now - when the dog is 18 to 24 months old this could come back to haunt you.

DOMINANT DOG EMAIL QUESTIONS

Question About Dangerous Dogs:

HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I am writing this in a desperate attempt to keep my sanity...I have been arguing with my husband for the last 6 months about his dog. We are expecting our first child in 5 days and still nothing has been done. At first my husband pacified me with "I'll find somewhere for the dog to go" to now "I'm not getting rid of the dog".

If I could simply explain----we have been together for 5 years, when we first met I owned a male Pit who he eventually became very close with. Two years ago the male Pit died from cancer, to say the least we were devastated to the point of grief counseling and antidepressants. We loved the dog. Four weeks later John comes home with a female Pit. She was cute enough and having her here did alleviate some of our pain; I begged him to take her back and he didn't. I wasn't ready to give my heart to another animal. She is now at 22 months and I believe beginning to show real signs of dominance. The other night I awoke and came out into the living room and she was laying on our comforter on the couch, I immediately pulled the blanket out from under her and scolded her to get off which she did, but when I came out of the bathroom she was in my bed laying next to my husband! I

went to grab her collar and she growled at me for the first time. I couldn't believe it and for a split second I didn't trust the dog. Maybe she feels my animosity once we had a neighbor over with his 7 year old, as they were leaving the child walked into her "space" she is frequently on a runner in our yard, she pinned him down and started like she was trying to bite him, although she didn't. I thought then my husband would get rid of her. He later rationalized and said she didn't know the child and our child would be different. I am in a state of terror over this.....I am having nightmares of killing the dog out of fear it will bite my not yet born son. My husband refuses to see it any other way. Every time someone brings a child around he tries to let the dog near it. Needless to say anyone who has a child will immediately remove it. The dog is extremely hyperactive, when John plays with her he plays "rough wrestling" the dog sounds ferocious. I never play with the dog. She nips and dodges right for the face. One time I went to pet her as she was sitting there quietly looking cute, I made the mistake of getting too close and she head-butted me right in the FACE! INSTANT FAT BLOODY LIP!

Like I said my due date is in 5 days, he swears the dog will not be here when we arrive from the hospital. If he plans on the dog coming back I have threatened to have it taken away. I've told him about my visions of killing the dog if it comes near the baby. Do you have any suggestions for

this no win situation?

Thanks -----Desperate and Pregnant in RI

Answer About Dangerous Dog:

Your husband's problem is bigger than the dog problem. If you don't solve that first you will never solve the dog problem.

Bottom line is this is a dangerous dog and he does not admit it. You both need to read my article on [Dealing with a Dominant Dog](#).

If you change the way you live with this dog it could be saved but it does not sound like your husband has a clue. He falls into the category of

STUPID STUBBORN DOG PEOPLE – the worst kind – owners like him are the reason for 95% of dog bites to kids.

So with all this said you have three choices:

- 1- Have him read the article and promise to make the changes
- 2- When you husband is at work – take the dog to a shelter and leave it
- 3- Leave your husband.

There are no other options.

Question:

Dear Mr. Frawley,

I just spent the better part of my day looking through your website, and I wanted to tell you how much I appreciated the “dumb and dumber” section. I haven’t laughed that hard in a very long time! It’s so refreshing to see someone being honest even if it’s not what people want to hear.

Last year I finally got up the courage to consult a trainer about my dogs. My ex-husband left me with two backyard bred female Pit Bulls who I unfortunately loved very much but could not control and nearly lost a finger splitting them up from fighting (I REALLY would have been on your dumbEST section if I went into detail!) As a last resort before putting one of them down, I began working with Roland Fox who is a certified master trainer and runs a program called K-9 Solutions NYC. His training methods run parallel to yours and quite literally changed my life. I now have full control over my two formally unmanageable dogs, and no longer fear what next potential disaster is around the corner. The change in mine and my dog’s behavior so drastically improved all of our lives that I have decided to become a full time trainer and now work (as an apprentice) with Roland. One of the tips he gave me to improve my capabilities was to study and learn from your website, particularly

to see how ignorant the average dog owner is! I'm sure you get thousands of emails and I don't want to take up any more of your time, but I thoroughly enjoyed reading your web pages, they have been of unmeasurable help to me, and I wanted to thank you.

Very Sincerely,
Rachel Eckman

PS...Not that you need me to tell you, but crate training my dogs saved their lives. I am taken aback every time I hear someone say that crating a dog is mean or unnecessary. My dogs not only needed crates, but they love having their own space!

Dominant/Aggressive Dog Problem Question:

Mr. Frawley:

Your website is very informative, thank you for making all this knowledge available, it truly changed my mental paradigm on dog behavior. I read your articles on aggressiveness and would really like to ask for your advice on a time bomb my father (Edward) is keeping at his house, a 2-yr-old intact Bullmastiff, aka "Bruce".

Just a quick overview on the dog's temperament: Gets along with his 2 feline companions, occasionally will press his chin against the younger cat's back (which is the cat that gets petted the most) but still lets the cat eat/drink

from his bowl and they lick each other's forehead occasionally. He doesn't display aggressive behavior towards dogs either, when he was younger he would be afraid but now just ignores them (unless the dog is unrestrained and barking, then he will start barking but never actually fight).

With people it's a different story. He loves all the family members but is weary of strangers, will get along with just a select few. I know you're thinking "this dog was never properly socialized", and you're right, he also wasn't taught basic commands such as "sit", "stay", etc... He's always been treated by my father like his "kid", my dad would constantly play with him, hug/pet, let him sleep on the couch, sometimes climb into bed. He would also make this huge commotion when getting home (whistle, call the dog's name and give the dog full attention as soon as coming in through that front door).

Now this loving relationship between the two has changed, I think Bruce is trying to challenge my dad's "leadership" in the pack, but I'm not sure since there are other factors involved.

We live in Florida and Hurricane Wilma made a mess in our neighborhood, destroyed the fence on the backyard, the roof, the streets were chaotic. We were stuck in the house with no electricity for a few days. Bruce was probably confused to see his environment change so

much; during those days he also couldn't see what was going on since we had shutters blocking the windows (his favorite spot in the house).

As soon as it was safe to roam the streets, my dad took Bruce for a walk but had placed the prong collar on the wrong side (he never really used the prongs for training since he thought it'd be cruel, he got the collar as a gift from my sis and would use the "pain-free" side). Bruce felt the prongs and made a sound like he was hurt, my dad immediately fixed the collar and spoke to Bruce softly "I'm sorry, etc...".

After this day he started to sometimes growl at my dad.

One person advised us to show Bruce the prong collar every time my dad was about to take him for a walk and throw it on the floor and say "this hurt Bruce. It's bad... bad!" and get an alternative plain collar and show as being ok, so that the dog would associate the pain he felt with the object and start trusting on my dad again.

A few days after, just when we thought things were going back to normal, my parents were coming back from work and as my father opened the front door Bruce just snapped. He growled and tried to bite him, during that instant my mother pushed my father back, commanded Bruce to stop and got bitten on the arm. When she started yelling the dog stopped, he realized

he wasn't getting his primary target. I came rushing from the bedroom to see what was going on, and my parents were behind the door, I immediately bribed Bruce into one of the bedrooms and left him there in the dark the whole night (btw, he hates sleeping in the dark).

He then was kept in the patio and backyard for almost a week. The veterinarian prescribed him a tranquilizer and an anti-depressant and told us to get him neutered. My mom would show him her arm and say "bad dog, look what you did" and he would sometimes look away and sometimes bark. He's been taking the meds for 11 days (with progress) up until yesterday when my father decided not to give him any and the same episode happened. As soon as they opened the door Bruce growled. This time he couldn't bite, since he wouldn't get close to the door - there was this piece of crown molding on the floor blocking his way there. He could have easily jumped over it since it was so low, but if the path in front of him is not clear he won't go over objects (he's had this fearful behavior since he was a puppy, so imagine when he saw the hurricane mess). He stops growling and barking when my parents reprimand him loudly but stares defiantly.

Shortly after the incident I gave him his medication, put him outside and am leaving him there for a while (he's an indoor dog, who's constantly left sleeping on the couch when my

dad is at work). He hasn't tried to challenge me yet (I never really established a bond with him or praised him constantly, I just don't intrude on his space and he doesn't intrude on mine), he seems ok with my mother but has stared her straight in the eyes after she told him to shut up and stop growling. His main target is really my father. My dad is so heartbroken, his reaction is more like "why are you doing this to me?"

I think he needs to hear that he has to be tough with this dog; he can't act like everything is normal and try to pet the dog, take him off the medication and just wish for things to be normal in a few days. I'm here on a short vacation while my husband is out to sea w/ the Navy, so I won't be able to help my dad with this situation for much longer (I only have 2wks). I'm sorry this e-mail is so long, but I felt you needed to know the details in order to better comprehend the situation. I'd truly appreciate it if you could take the time to answer, the stress level here is pretty high. My mother found a no-kill shelter which accepts aggressive dogs. No one wants to euthanize Bruce and I'm a firm believer of new beginnings. Thank you very much for reading, your advice is gold.

Alexandra P.

Answer to Aggressive Dog Problem:

I recommend that you go to my web site and read the article I wrote on my philosophy of dog

training. I think you will get some good ideas there <http://leerburg.com/philosohy.htm>

This dog is dominant. He became this way because of the way your father and mother raised him. Many people make the same kinds of mistakes. It's too bad.

I have a saying: I have a saying that I tell people – it goes like this” Everyone has an opinion on how to train a dog – just ask you barber, your mailman and your neighbor”The problem is very few people have the experience to back up their opinions. This results in a lot of bad information being passed out so people like yourself need to figure out who has the experience to warrant being listened to.

The information you have been offered falls into this category. In fact, it's stupid advice. I strongly recommend you and your parents read the article I wrote titled THE THEORY OF CORRECTIONS IN DOG TRAINING <http://leerburg.com/corrections.htm>. Your father failed your dog in not properly correcting the dog.

In addition you need to read the article I wrote titled Dealing with Dominant Dogs. Allowing dogs like this on furniture and on the bed is insane. It's a recipe for disaster. But then you are living the disaster right now with this dog.

In my opinion this dog has gone beyond your families skills to handle it.

If you think you want to try - it will need training and a new lifestyle. You may want to read the article I wrote on [GROUND WORK BEFORE OBEDIENCE](#).

Regards,
Ed

Dominant Dog Question:

Dear Ed,

About ten days ago I was attacked by my 3 year old Basset Hound. I had to go the hospital and Simon was placed in Animal Control.

During this past ten days I have tried to find a home for him with a strong trainer. I know that a family situation was out of the question. In ignorance, I thought maybe a rescue group would take him. I could not find a home for him. With children still in my home, we could not bring him back. This has really been a heartbreaking experience for me because I was so close to this dog and I loved him so much.

Simon's behavior had increasingly gotten worse from growling and snapping to as of this instance running and attacking. As I lay on the floor and was bitten over and over again I thought he was going to kill me. The more I fought back with my legs and arms the more he bit. I did not know he was capable of this especially with me who loved

and cared for him.

I have had dogs all of my life and I have never come across this aggression situation. After seeing your website, I now realize how ignorant of dogs and their emotional and behavioral needs I am.

I have such a soft heart (especially for that Basset Hound face), that I truly let this dog take over. Disciplining him was hard because he would come at you. What I don't understand is that having always been around dogs raised in our home from puppies why hasn't this happened before. I grew up on a farm and dogs ran wild with no training.

I have been informed by several area rescue groups that there is a definite problem with the breeder we chose. There supposedly have been complaints to the American Kennel Club. I was told I needed to add to these complaints. I now realize there were warnings that I didn't respond to. There were possible training techniques to be used as puppies develop that I knew nothing about. After speaking to my vet many times about this he would just say that there have been cases of Bassets being aggressive and that I might have to give him up.

I would eventually like to have another dog but I want to do all the right things. Should I choose a different breed of dog? I have always loved

beagles and bassets and was raised around them. I would appreciate any advice you might give me.

Thank You,
Cheryl

Ed's Comment:

Your experience is not unique. Not properly raising a pup can have dire consequences. You are not alone - so many people ignore pack instinct in their dogs - they don't see RANK issues when they start to develop.

The fact is that serious obedience training at 5 to 6 months (with a correction phase) will often eliminate these kinds of problems. People need to neuter dogs at 6 months, they need to use dog crates and they need to train their dogs. When these three things happen you will seldom have problems like you just had.

It's a terrible thing to be attacked by any dog, much less your own. It's also a sad thing to have to put a dog to sleep - but in this case that's what should happen to this dog. Once a dog like this has attacked an adult member of the family there are very, very few people who have the experience to correct the problem. 99.9% if the so called behaviorists out there would not have a clue on how to fix this dog. Vets fall into this category. Medication would not work.

Dominant Dog Question:

Dear Mr. Frawley,

I wanted to shoot you a quick email to let you know the great improvements I'm already making with Hunter (training him myself). I watched your tape, which by the way was fantastic, it was like showing the secret behind a magic trick. It was inspirational and encouraging and it got me really excited and motivated to train Hunter the right way and it made it seem possible (I even made the liver treats).

Also I've been reading the book "The Dog Listener" by Jan Fennell, which I've found to be very interesting. Just by working with him everyday my problems have almost diminished completely already. I can have people (friends & family) come to the door, ring the door and actually have them come in without a fuss. Now hunter barks at the door when the door bell rings or he hear someone coming up to the door, and once I open the door and greet the people he's fine and walks around and smells them with no agitation (actually seemingly social). I always make him sit before I open the door, maybe that helps. Also now on walks no more barking and lunging, I do keep him by my side when we pass people or I will have him sit or down so that he gets used to seeing people pass by and that it's no big deal.

As a side note, every week the housekeepers come by and I always put Hunter outside because he's always barked when they're around, and through the glass when he's outside, they aren't friends or family so I still like to play it safe in fear of being sued. Today I thought I'd put him on a leash and work with him in the house while they were cleaning. Everything was fine he was paying attention, and I saw that he wanted to smell the housekeeper who was standing next to me so I thought why not (mistake! mistake!) the second he smelled her he started barking like crazy at her. He was on a leash so I corrected him and he immediately stopped but I couldn't figure that one out. Any insight?

Well I've just only started training him so I know I've got a long ways to go, but I was so excited with his major improvements and I wanted to share them with you. Also I noticed in your catalog that you have a newly updated [Basic Dog Obedience](#) on DVD, but I couldn't find it on your website. Could you direct me to that page because I would be interested in purchasing the [Basic Dog Obedience](#) tape on DVD as well. Thanks.

Regards,
Yvette

Dominant Dog Question:

I have some of your video tapes and equipment and I just can't tell you enough how much they have helped. You deserve an award for your videos! Out of my first litter of German Shepherds, I have chosen a male to keep and train for my own personal protection dog. My husband & I manage a small motel now and he is a city cop and works at night, so I'm here by myself a lot. I feel very confident that I have chosen the right dog for me because of your videos and articles on testing pups. This puppy "Zeus" and I "clicked" when he was 2 or 3 weeks old, it's one of those hard-to-find bonds between owner and dog that no amount of money will buy. I am so proud of him. He's 14 weeks old and we have mastered "sit" very well and now we are working on "down" and also working with a leash some. Your videos have taught me a better way to train and I am more patient because I have seen the outcome. I get so frustrated with some of my customers that buy my pups, as I'm sure you do too. I can't seem to get the fact through that a well trained dog doesn't just happen or that it takes more than a month or two to get a wonderfully trained dog and just because a puppy has a good working bloodline doesn't mean that he will automatically be "wonder-dog", that it does take some training. I recommend your articles and videos to my customers and give them your web address because I

believe you are wonderful. We've been able to accomplish much more with our dogs since we discovered you. We even have a 1/2 Rott. that has been a pleasure to train. I always said I would never have a Rott. I thought they were "time-bombs". He has proven me wrong. He is about 18 months old and is a little slow maturing, but we're not rushing him. He is just now starting to show some aggression. Thanks to your articles on "Dominance" and "Aggressive" dogs, we better understand all dogs now and I'm not so afraid that this Rott (Rabi) will be out-of-control. My husband brought him home from the pound because he had a good bite and because he had a very even temperament. (Not to mention that he's a little soft hearted and could not stand to see him put down). And I am so glad he did. I have to tell you though, that when strangers or friends are over and they hear us tell Rabi "foeey", that think we've lost our mind. This is Texas, "foeey" isn't in the vocabulary! But it DOES work. My husband was told that you never are suppose to say your dog's name along with "no" or "foeey" that they associate "no" with their name after awhile and you have trouble getting them to "come". Is that true? It makes sense. The "Dominance" articles really helped with my stud dog. At 2 yrs. he started getting pretty dominant towards my husband mostly. It really didn't take a lot of effort to make him quit, just persistence. He's fine now. Before reading your articles I wouldn't have known what to do with him

because I have never had a dog with that much dominance before. Again thank you so much for taking the time to write all those articles and make all those videos.

Sincerely,
Lisa

Dominant Dog Question:

I copied this letter in this article after it was posted on my web discussion board by Julie Gausten

This is a sad story, but I have learned the hard way:-

When I was a Teenager, my parents got me a Corgi (Pembrokshire). I called him "Ross" and he was a real sweetie as a pup and grew to be a very handsome adult.

He was not neutered, as my father just winced at the idea and the only reason he was not allowed on the beds or furniture, was because my mother hated to see dog hair! (A lucky break?)

Anyway, we were asked to leave ob training classes, as he was so disruptive. To their credit, they did advise us that "we would have problems with this dog". But did not offer any other advice.

The odd growl here & there, progressed to food and toy possessiveness & finally (after about 5

years) a fully fledged “attack” on a family member. (Me! - when I tried to pick him up to give him a bath!). How he missed my face I will never know.

After this, none of the family could ever trust the dog and he was put-down.

We gave this dog no leadership, guidance nor training. He did pretty much what he wanted, no wonder he thought he was head of the house. We just thought he was “The Dog”! and knew no better.

If only I had known then, what I know now about the treatment & training of a dog.

I have always wanted another dog, but was very wary about the prospect. However, having researched dog training, I took the plunge. I now have 2 well mannered dogs, who know their place & receive leadership, guidance & training - as well as play & lots of love!

Ross died because he lived with people who “killed him with kindness,” It saddens me so much when I think about what happened.

If he is waiting for me at the bridge, I hope he will forgive me for failing him.

RIP “Rossie Doggie,” I am so sorry.

Julie Gausten

Dominant Dog Question:

I have purchased a few videos from you and some products your website is awesome thanks.... My question is I have a 5yr. old Rott he has a good pedigree with some good working dogs in it that was told to me by a Rott person well the dog has been obedience trained and has some bite work I got the dog about 2yrs ago and he has been a good dog playful and very alert but when I purchased the dog from a K-9 trainer and breeder of Shepherds and Malinois he said Bo has a lot of defense in him and to be careful with him and not let him around children as he is a one handler dog well I did just that and I keep him in a very secure kennel around no one but here recently when I go take him out of his kennel he will growl at me, I tried correcting him but he still does it and when I get him out his tail stops wagging and when I praise him he's not excited anymore. Bo is very dog aggressive from day one and tries to chase cars... lately I've had to muzzle him to put him on a chain to clean his pen out I use a Jafco muzzle I got from you, now I have to make a decision whether to keep him and deal with this problem or put him to sleep, I would like to keep him but am I putting myself in a dangerous situation of getting bit one day or can I deal with this problem, selling him is no option because I know he can hurt someone badly and there are too many irresponsible dog owners out there so what should I do?????

Thanks, Confused Allen

Answer:

It seems a little odd for a dog to all of a sudden start to become aggressive to the handler. Usually this begins at an earlier age (around 2 or 3.)

I would begin by having the dog checked out by a vet. Maybe there is something medically wrong with him. Maybe he is not feeling good and just wants to be left alone.

If the vet gives him a clean bill of health then you need to deal with his aggression or make the decision to put him down.

I have an article on "Dealing with the Dominant Dog and Dealing with the Overly Aggressive dog" - read these and make sure that you are doing everything properly.

If the dog is used to wearing the muzzle, make him wear it for awhile and then take him out with a prong collar and do some obedience training. Sometimes prong collars can over stimulate a dog. If this happened then use one of my Dominant Dog Collar.

Every instance of unwarranted aggression needs to result in a correction. If the dog comes after you then you have a handler aggressive dog.

When that happens it's time to get some help from someone who really understands rank drive. The problem is not a lot of people know how to

deal with this. I have a DVD that goes into this area ([Click here](#))

It involves a [dominant dog collar](#) and following the protocol of using it correctly. [See the article I wrote on how this is done](#)

This is not done with a fight. The handler must remain very calm or it just brings out the fight in the dog. If that happens then you lose what you are trying to do, because the dog thinks it's a fight and that's not what this is about.

It's about a dominant dog understanding that you are a higher rank than it is. In the wild the leader of a wolf pack has the power to kill a lower ranking pack member if he chooses. Very handler aggressive dominant dogs (dangerous dogs) must have that kind of respect for their handlers. Not that the handler will kill the dog. They won't and don't want this.

Dogs (all dogs) are pack animals. Dogs understand rank within a pack. Dogs that attack their handlers don't respect the handlers rank.

This portion of my article has been mentioned and taken out of context and written about on other web sites. These sites choose to attack this method of handling dangerous dominant dogs.

The people who own these sites (like Sue Marston in Ventura, CA) have never been exposed to a truly dangerous dominant dog. Ms

Marston would either choose to kill the kinds of dogs I am talking about (rather than give them a chance) or they would get severely hurt trying their foolish PETA methods of training.

My comment to Ms, Marston is they need a lot more training on dominant and aggressive dogs and that should start by taking a good arm and leg bite from a tough dog. It is surprising how that will make them see the light of god and find Jesus in a dominant dog collar.

With this said, dominant dog collars like any training tool can be abused. In the wrong hands a Halcyon can be abused. So I am not sticking up for abusive or untrained dog trainers. There are plenty of those out there.

Dominant Dog Question:

I have a 2 1/2 year old who has been obedience and protection-trained. I have used all of your training methods for his protection work. He has been very good with kids while still showing a strong nature to protect. He loves to stay in the yard and play ball with the kids to the point that he interferes.

My 10 year-old son called him in the other day to put him in his cage so that he could play basketball in the yard. Needless to say the dog did not want to come in. My son ordered him in his cage. He went in but as he put his hand to

the cage to lock him in, the dog growled at his hand. I pulled him out and gave him a foey with a correction. I told my son to lock him in again with the same results. I gave another correction and had him try it again. This third time he let him close it. Did handle this situation correctly or should I be considering getting another dog. Since this dog has grown he has developed fight drive. He has otherwise been a charm for me and my family. Please help me on this one. I'm really shocked.

Answer:

At 18 months the dog is coming into maturity, he is starting to exhibit some rank drive.

You need to follow the information I have in my article on [dominance](#) to a "T."

You did the right thing, I would probably have kicked his butt a little harder.

I don't think I would replace the dog just yet. If necessary get a [muzzle](#) and a [prong collar](#) and have your son work with the dog in [obedience](#) in a muzzle. If it were my dog I would get an electric collar, a prong and a muzzle. I would learn how to use the collar with the tapes I have, and then have your son works the dog while you controlled the collar. It would not take long for the dog to realize his position in the family pack - (which is below the child.) Do not do this without a muzzle.

Dominant Dog Question:

HELP! We got Tucker when he was 6 months old, from a family that had two very small children. They felt overwhelmed and could not keep the dog.

He was wonderful and friendly until about the age of 1 year. He suddenly became very aggressive.

Things that occurred about that time:

- We rented a room in our house to a woman and he was sprayed by the mailman. At it's worse, Tucker would attack (charge at someone's feet and stand there with his teeth showing and snarling in a way that you knew he would attack if the person moved another inch. This started to happen to the women who rented from us on a daily basis.
- Eventually he would attack my husband in the same way.
- In almost every instance this occurred in the morning. The ritual was something like this.... My husband would get up, get dressed, and take Tucker for a walk, on returning back to the house after the walk, Tucker would join me in bed. My husband would come to kiss me goodbye

and Tucker would VICIOUSLY (growling, snarling, pacing, charging) keep my husband out of the bedroom.

- Then later when I was up getting ready (usually the same way every morning) Tucker would hang out in the bedroom. When it came time to leave the women who rented from us rode to work with me. When it was just about time to leave, Tucker would begin pacing and when she came downstairs to leave, he would run for her feet. She would literally freeze. I would have to get Tucker away from her or he would have bitten her and sometimes did actually grab her foot with his teeth.

Some of the ways I would try to stop this:

- Scream "no", keep a leash on him in the mornings and pull him away, soothe him out of the aggression by stroking him as he snarled and growled, choke collar with the leash attached. Sometimes I would literally have to come from a half asleep state to a full dive out of bed to grab him so he would not attack my husband.
- There were even times that my husband would have hold of the leash and have his arm outstretched to keep Tucker at a distance. A few times Tucker would even be lifted off the floor and would be

choking. My husband had to do this a few times just to keep Tucker from getting him. I have been the only person to be able to touch him in this state.

- I can pick him up. He is growling and snarling the entire time he is in my arms while I carry him off to a room or his crate.
- We have had private training, one group class, drug therapy, animal behaviorists look at him. We checked for medical explanations (hypothyroid) his blood work is perfect!

The roommate is gone, but now we have my husband's teenage daughter living with us. He will attack her as well. The way we have solved this mostly is adapting the way we live. After my husband walks the dog in the morning. He leaves him outside until he's ready to go. He kisses me goodbye and on his way out lets Tucker back in. WHENEVER I am getting dressed everyone just stays away from the room and when we leave, I let everyone leave first and then I come out.

If anyone comes to visit I lock Tucker in the bedroom. The other day Tucker turned on me. First time in four years! He did not bite me. I grabbed him and pushed him down on his back, held him down by his neck and smacked his face a couple of times (not hard) and said No! I am not afraid of Tucker, everyone else is!!!

I am fairly certain that somehow I have caused this monster by reinforcing this behavior SOMEHOW?????????? Can this be changed! The problem is still there even though it happens much less than before. But it is because my family has changed the way they live. I can't imagine why my family would tolerate this (except that we love Tucker very much!!!

MOST of the time, Tucker will sit in ALL of our laps, jump for joy when any of us come home. And at night when we go to bed....My husband is permitted in by Tucker (in fact, Tucker cuddles with him every night) probably to keep him away from me. I'm sure you can tell that this is a really bad situation. My step daughter ALWAYS ask where Tucker is when she enters a room, you just can't trust him and she's afraid he will be in the "attack mood." Can you HELP?

Answer:

Can I help you? NO!!! I don't think you can help yourself!

You mentioned in your email that you thought that you had created this problem. Well, you are 100% right - you have. You have allowed this dog to take over your house and it is beyond me how people can allow this to happen. But then I am a dog trainer and the solutions are very simple (to me).

If you want to keep this dog, which I am not sure is the correct decision, you need to make some serious changes in the dog's life. From the sound of it you are not going to be able to do this.

- The first step should be to get a top quality electric dog collar and learn how to use it. There are good instruction videos on this (we sell some).
- Get a good muzzle for the dog and make him learn to wear it - the Jafco plastic muzzles that we sell are fine for this.
- The next step with this dog is to NEVER allow him in your bedroom again. Not for any reason. The bedroom for these kinds of dogs is 100% off limits. He should be corrected for coming in there (make sure to have the muzzle on him when you do this).
- Do not ever ALPHA ROLL a mature German Shepherd - or for that matter any large dog. I don't care how strong you are - your face is only inches from this animal and if you pick the wrong dog on the wrong day you will be getting plastic surgery on your face. I know people who have made this mistake. DON'T DO IT - I cringe when I hear people tell me that their dog trainer told them to "put the dog on his back and get on top of him." You are dealing with an amateur when they tell you this.

- Do not ever let the dog get into your lap. This is foolish. This is not a situation where this dog is trying to get love - it's a way for him to demonstrate his dominance. People totally misunderstand how strong a dog's pack instinct is. They don't recognize when a dog is jumping up to be friendly and when he is jumping up just to show someone that he can do it any time he wants. These are 2 totally different situations. So the solution is don't ever let him do it at all.
Train the dog that it has one spot in the house that he must go to when he is told to go there. This can be his crate or a certain rug. Start by teaching him to go there for food. Once he understands that when you say "Crate" he must run to it and get into it, and then you can correct him when he does not go there when told. By correcting him with an electric collar (the way the videos show) you will have control over the dog without having to fight him. The dog should never be fed before you eat. He should also be fed in the garage or the basement. This is important.
- Finally, if the dog does attack your husband in the way that you have said, your husband did the right thing in stringing the dog up. His only mistake was he quit too soon. With dogs like this they should

be stung up until they pass out or just before they pass out. During this process there should be no screaming at the dog, the handler should be very calm and not act like he is fighting with the dog. It's OK to say in a calm voice "You will not attack me - you will not do this." The dog must feel that he is about to die and he must understand that he has no control over it. This is the ultimate way of establishing who the boss is. If done properly it only takes 2 or 3 times and he will never have to do it again. From that point on the dog will realize who the boss is and what can happen if he screws with the boss.

- But I can not over emphasize that when this is done the handler must be very calm and very quiet in how he acts.

If you are prepared to do these things this dog may be salvaged. If you do not you are risking your step daughter and any guests that you have, What kind of a home must this be for a step daughter who is afraid of the dog? You have a bad situation that has crept up on you but also caused by poor handling. If you are not prepared to make the right steps to correct this, you should put the dog to sleep.

Dominant Dog Question:

I will start out with a little bit of history on our dog. He is registered. We brought him home with us when he was 5 weeks old which I have since found out that was not a good idea. He is 19 months old and resides both inside the house and in our fenced yard. We had him professionally obedience trained in which he stayed at the trainers house for 1 month. He is still in the process of training but he now stays with us and we take him to an obedience class with other dogs. The trainer wants to do this for distraction purposes. His name is Bubba. Before he left to go to the trainers, Bubba growled at our 9 year old son twice. Once when our son petted him while he was eating (the dog got a major correction), and once our son petted Bubba while he was sleeping. We were not in the room at that time. He had never growled at our son before this. We sent him to the trainers and told her of the growling. Bubba has been back home 2 weeks. He plays with our son during the day, licking his face, and rubbing up against him, tongue hanging out and tail wagging. They play both in the house and out in the yard. After about a week, we came in the house one evening, our son walked over to Bubba, petted him on his chest, and said "Hi Bubba." Bubba growled.

He doesn't show his teeth when he growls, but looks our son right in the eye and does a belly

growl. Once again he was corrected. (I have a horse crop and I came down hard on his head and sternly said NO at the same time. My son again petted him, this time on the top of the head. Once again, the growl. Once again, a correction. I did not have a leash on Bubba at the time. The times that Bubba has growled at our son has all been in the house and only in the evening, (night). We talked with the trainer. Our son has played, teasingly with Bubba since he was a puppy. Such things as walking up behind him and trying to scare him. Our son has watched his dad playing rough and tumble with Bubba and thinks that this is okay. The trainer told us Bubba respects the dad but not the son. We also have a 7 year old daughter. Bubba has never growled at her. (Bubba will growl at anyone if they try to pet him when he is eating, we have told the children not to bother him at this time.) I am the one that works with Bubba and we have tried to guess what the problem may be. My son is a very affectionate child and I don't know if any jealousy could be involved. The trainer said Bubba is not CRAZY, the growl is a warning and she doesn't think he would ever hurt our son. She thinks there has been something in the past that our son has done that has stayed in Bubba's learning block and he has not forgotten it. She thinks with pack order, the dog sees our son as the loner, and will let him in the pack only when he wants to. It was suggested that our son hold Bubba's food bowl, sitting down for 5 consecutive

days. If Bubba growls, he is corrected and the food is taken away. After 15 minutes, try again. Bubba does not get to eat unless he takes it from our son. If after five days, he continues to growl, we need to get rid of him. That is the history. Now my question is this; is this something that will pass and we can correct? I love the dog. He is everything that I have ever wanted in a dog, BUT not at the risk of my child getting hurt. If there is any way we can correct this, I would be willing to do it, especially since Bubba seems to love our son most of the time. Any suggestions? I don't want to get rid of our dog, but if there is a chance of our son getting hurt, I can't keep him.

Answer:

The dog is going through maturity and trying to change his rank in the pack. Read my articles on my web site about Dealing With the Dominant Dog. You made a mistake in sending the dog off to a trainer. This accomplishes very little with a dog like this other than to teach the dog that the trainer is dominant over him. It does nothing to change the way he views his family pack.

You need to do some serious obedience training yourself. Get my training tape titled [Basic Obedience](#). Also get a [prong collar](#) and learn how to use it. If the dog shows any signs of growling during hard corrections - get one of these cheap [Jafco muzzles](#) I sell. The dog can not bite you with a muzzle on.

When you are satisfied with his obedience around you (and you have done the things in the article I wrote on dominance. Then put the muzzle on and have your son do obedience with the dog. You can put a second 20 foot line on and follow behind him. If the dog gets growly, you hit him so hard with a correction that he flips over backwards. This is a level 109 correction and the SOB will learn that you do not growl around the boy. But this always is done with the muzzle for safety purposes and it is very, very important to make sure he has been acclimated to the muzzle for 2 weeks before doing this.

DO NOT DO WHAT THIS TRAINER SAYS WITH YOUR SON HOLDING THE FOOD BOWL. You are only asking for a dog bite. This is foolish advice from someone who needs to learn more about dog behavior.

Do what I said above. Take the dog through the program. Tell the kids to leave the dog alone when he eats. Why force the issue. Just leave him alone. Put the food down for 20 minutes and pick it up, even if he has not eaten. He will eat the next day when the food comes down. It only takes a couple of days for the food to be picked up for him to learn. This is a simple way to eliminate that problem.

Maybe after the dog has gone through the training with the boy and learns not to fool with him you could make a point of having the boy

hold the food bowl when there is a treat in it. The dog eats from the bowl and it's put up. Not immediately and not when he is growling while giving eye to eye contact. This is one step away from a bite and to say that he will not bite him when he is doing this is stupid.

Dominant Dog Question:

I have a question concerning my Pit bull. Recently he has been attacking my roommate, and when we try to leave the house through the front door. One thing that stands out is that, if he does not let us take him out in the morning we know to sneak out the back door otherwise he will attack if we try to use the Front door.

He started doing this to his owner my roommate. Three days out of the week he works very early in the morning. He used to be able to take him out in the morning, but recently he has not allowed him to take him out. He does allow me to take him out instead of my roommate. The problem is that if the dog is not in the closed room with my other female Pit bull and me. He will sit in front of my door and wait for my roommate to head towards the door, as soon as he does he run towards the door and tries to bite the door and my roommate. He has only been doing this towards my roommate, but recently he has started to act like that towards me.

He is like Dr. Jeckel and Mr. Hyde. One day he does everything perfect and acts like a wonderful dog, but there are days where he has this look on his face where fear comes to me and my roommate. He is not neutered from reading your literature it won't help if I neuter him. So before I put him down I would like some advice to what I can do to correct the problem.

Thank You,
Carlos

Answer:

This dog has a problem with rank. In other words he is the pack leader in the house.

I have written an article on Dealing with the Dominant Dog on my web site. I do not believe that a dog like this will respond to JUST the work I describe I this article.

The issue of rank can be cleared, but it takes a lot of skill from the handler and is a dangerous thing to try and correct. I would guess by your email that you do not have the skill to do the work if I describe it.

My advice would be to find someplace that needs an area guard dog and give it to these people (after you are sure that they treat the animals in a kind way) or put the dog to sleep before he really attacks you. This behavior is not going to get better, it will only escalate.

Dominant Dog Question:

I have an American Shepherd (I look forward to the day when I can purchase a REAL shepherd from you!) who is 2 & 1/2 years old.

He is an outside dog. Yesterday he came into the house through the patio door. I calmly took a hold of his collar to take him back outside. He growled at me.

This morning we went for our 2 mile walk. (I can let him walk leashless where we go) He darted off running at the geese. I told him to come. He did not come. Usually he does. While he was peeing on a tree, I walked up to him calmly & took a hold of his prong collar & told him "bad boy." He growled at me.

In both situations I was not at all harsh with him. Why did he growl? He has only done that once before about a year ago. I corrected him with the prong collar right at the time he did it. He hasn't done it since until yesterday.

It scared me a little bit this time. He has been told no many times before & not growled at me - why now?

I haven't been able to spend as much time with him lately as I normally do - is he mad at me? Is it just a temporary behavior thing or do I need to have him put to sleep?

Michelle

Answer:

Your dog is challenging you for rank in the pack he is coming into maturity, and this is rank drive showing its ugly head.

You also need to take this dog through serious [obedience training](#), in addition to doing EVERYTHING I mention in that article.

If you are afraid of the dog then get one of these [Jafco muzzles](#) and it should become part of his life. He wears it all of the time. Especially when he has the prong collar on and is in a position where he will growl.

Dominant Dog Question:

My name is Saskia and together with my husband and 2 children age 4 and 6 we live in Belgium with 3 dogs. A rottweiler from 6, a Bordeaux dog from 2 and a mastino from 1 year old. About two weeks ago my oldest daughter came in screaming that the dog bit a child from 11 years from next door. It was not serious so we thought that he entered on our garden without notice and tried to grab his sister when she was playing with my children. This had never happened before. Last Friday a woman came in with a child from 3 at her hand. The dogs all begin barking but I remembered wondering why the mastino his name is Vito kept on barking. They where behind a fence. I went out to escort this women

and child inside. When I opened the door Vito came like a tornado bent his head to pass me from behind and attacked the child. He snapped her hip I let myself fall down on him while the women pulled the child backwards. He still had a hold off the sweatshirt and he shook his head very wild and aggressive from left to right. We finally had to pull him away with 2 persons and lock him up (with keys) because he opens the doors pushing doors or pulling or sliding with weight pumps on it he opens them all. There was no reason at all in attacking this child. It had not spoken screamed or yelled at the dog neither did the woman. I let them in so he had to accept there entrance. Today my husband was standing next to him when a man and his 2 children walked inside. Immediately he started to growl at these 2 children completely ignoring everybody else in the room. His eyes were fixed on them and was again very aggressive, my husband led him out off the room. As I start wondering what could have caused this aggression in my dog towards children? My neighbor the mother from the child that he bit first the one from 11 years she came to me and told me that her father in law saw already that this boy sometimes is teasing the dog through the fence. I don't know exactly what he did to make our dog into what he is right now: a very dangerous killing dog towards children. What can be done to make him again tolerant towards other children, and could this also turn against my own children. Up to know

he's still very nice but can I trust him now like I did before??

Thanks
Saskia Maes

Answer:

There is NO SOLUTION FOR YOU. The only safe solution is to have this dog put down. I am sure the child next door had something to do with causing the dog to become aggressive, but at this point it has gone too far. The dog should NEVER EVER be allowed near children.

If you decide not to put the dog down, the damage it does in the future rests on your shoulders, because you know the risk this dog is to others.

If you do not have the heart to put the dog down, find a factory that needs a guard dog. There are plenty in your country. I know because I go there. Make sure the factory has a fenced in kennel for the dog to live in (look at it first) and agree on the quality of dog food the dog will get.

This dog is just now coming into the first stages of maturity, this problem is only going to get A LOT WORSE as he matures.

Dominant Dog Question:

Hello there and thank you for taking the time to read my question. For mothers day a few years ago I received a female German Shepherd who was given to me by my daughter. The prior owners were looking for a home for her as they were starting to raise Jack Russell's and the Shepherd was just too dominant with them, they would NOT get along. At first I thought it was because she (the Shep) was kept outside and was lacking for attention. Well, it is going on 3 years now and her behavior has not changed. I think life would be so much more pleasurable for her if she would only stop trying to "rid the world of all other living creatures, other than herself." I foolishly had her bred last year not thinking that this was a trait that could be passed down. I just thought it was a behavior problem that needed to be addressed. She had a beautiful litter of 9 pups and I have one of them that I call my little "misfit." We love him very much but he is now showing the same dominant behavior as his mother. (By the way, she was spayed yesterday!!) She is only 65 pounds, but he on the other hand is 85 and only 9 months old. He is very hard to control when he (or she for that matter) sees another animal. It doesn't even have to be a dog. They both love their family very much. I have 3 children under the age of 10. The only time they ever show any signs of aggression towards the kids is if they try to lay over them when they

are petting them or snuggling. I am the only one who can do that without any growling or moaning on their part. The male, who hates baths, showed his first real sign of aggression yesterday when I was trying to get him in the tub. I grabbed his collar and called him and he growled at me, twice. I am not sure if I handled it correctly or not, but I just kind of ignored him and said sharply NO then proceeded to pull him in the tub. I gave him lots of praise for his good behavior. I know there has to be something I can do to change this behavior. I love them both very much and want them to be happy, as well as myself and my kids!!! Please don't tell me a professional trainer is my only resource as that is not an option for me at this time.

Answer:

You have a male who is becoming dominant at an early age. You need to read my article on this. You also need to obedience train this dog with a prong collar. He needs to understand his position in the family pack, which is at the bottom. Keep the collar on during the day with a short 2 foot line that you can grab and correct him with. If he shows signs of growling or biting get one of the cheap Jafco muzzles we sell.

Tell the kids "NO MORE ROLLING ON TOP OF THESE DOGS" why even put the kids in a position where they could potentially be bit? No use creating a problem yourself.

As far as the dog's aggression goes this has to be dealt with an electric collar probably a Tri Tronics sportsman model. They will always have to have this on... it's not something that ever goes away for good.

Dominant Dog Question:

January 27, 1999

Hi Ed, My name is Jill Frost, I live in WA. state and breed German Shepherds. I do obedience training, have been in Schutzhund and behavior problem dogs are my specialty. I just got on-line for the first time a few days ago. I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed your articles, WHY IT'S A BAD IDEA..., and DEALING WITH THE DOMINANT DOG. I can't tell you how refreshing it is to see someone tell it like it is! I have been using the pack/alpha theory in my training and consulting for years. Because of the huge popularity of the Rottweiler breed, I have lost count of how many have come to me with behavior/dominance problems. For the last 4 years my behavior consulting has been 75 % Rotts. It sickens me to see a breed gain such a bad rep because of the stupidity/negligence of owners. I'm glad that the lady whose Rots killed the boy was convicted, she deserved it! If she was training with these dogs and had some knowledge of SCH. then she cannot claim she didn't know their capabilities as the average pet owner claims. Just yesterday

in our local newspaper there was a jogger that was mauled by 2 Rots. He's hurt badly. When the police came on scene one dog attacked the car. They were shot. These dogs had gotten out before. My neighbors bred their Ratty bitch and kept 3 pups. These pups are now over a year old, 2 intact males, 2 intact females all running together. They have a renter on their property that had a 13 yr old malamute. He had been there long before she had these pups, and the dogs got along .The pups started trying to play with the old dog when they were quite young but when she would try to scold them the mom would jump in .The old dog stopped coming out from under her owner's trailer except to potty. The old dog's owner, Scott, told me that the Rots would sometimes run circles around his trailer and bark at his dog. The owners of the rots would laugh as they thought this was cute! I told Scott that something had to be done because this "game" would escalate and his dog would be hurt or killed. One day, I heard their dogs really carrying on and saw them running circles around Scott's trailer. I tried to call the rots owner and quickly realized no one was home. By this time rots had Sheba. I just reacted and ran down there, on the way breaking a branch off a tree. I beat those dogs with everything I had in me and it still took awhile to get them off her. Then they just circled. If it were not for another neighbor coming to my aid I don't know how I would have got her out of there. I do realize it was stupid of

me to put myself in that position but I couldn't just sit there, it is not in my nature. Unfortunately Sheba died .The root owners are making up excuses for their dogs and saying it was Sheba's fault because she used to try to bite the pups when they were younger! These dogs have no obedience training and they all still run together. I don't try to push my knowledge on people and the things I have told them are ignored (they are very defensive and I'm labeled as a know-it-all). Something bad is brewing and I can't do a thing about it. Plus what is really scary is Rott owners just had a baby! Ed, these people are just a small example of what I see going on around me, It's unbelievable! Anyway thanks again for such good articles.

Sincerely,
Jill

Dominant Dog Question:

Hi Ed,

I work with tons of behavioral problem dogs and aggression counts for a good # of them. I agree with the obedience being paramount & the dog learning to mind. I recently finished a couple of dogs with this same problem and have heard from the owners who tell me the dogs are doing great. The key was teaching the owners how to establish basic control over the dog and how to correct for bad behaviors. The "behaviorists"

around here are really just dog trainers w/a different name so they can charge more by the hour. I use a lot of motivational training but in this case the dog has to be taught boundaries - and correction is essential. A lot of what I would call "90's type trainers" who only believe in food and praise will never be able to finish a dog like this reliably. Or it may take forever. There has to be a consequence to bad behaviors. The dog needs to learn limits and the owners how to train and handle such a dog. In short, I agree.

Regards,
Nick

Dominant Dog Question:

Hi Ed,

Thank you for all the info you have posted on your site. I have a situation here and unfortunately I only see one conclusion, which is to find our dog a home. I have an 8 year old Dalmatian, Bear, and he has always been known as an alpha dog...even got suspended from doggie day care for fighting with other male dogs. I raised him from a puppy and he knows all his commands and he can even be walked without a leash and sent home on command....Bear is pretty much the perfect dog. About a year ago we adopted a male Great Dane,

Blake, he was days from death. We brought him home and got him healthy. Our goal was to get him healthy and find him a home; Blake is still living with us, guess we fell in love with him. Bear would always let Blake know who the boss was and being that Blake is not aggressive at all, after a couple of butt kicking's Blake knows to stay away. None the less they have actually become pretty good friends now, I come home to find them lying together and they always are playing, they have not had a fight in over 6 months but Blake still knows his place in the pecking order. For example, even though I feed them separately when I get their food ready Blake goes in the other room to wait for bear to go outside and eat.

The problem is that all three of us... My wife, daughter 14, and myself have no problems with Bear, Bear is actually quite tolerant, my daughter used to put little hair clips all over him and he would just come to me to take them off. But the bottom line is we are always careful when people come over, we tell them to not get in his face and pet him, we actually mostly keep him up in our room when we have company over. All that ended the other day, when a 5 year old boy came over and while bear was on our bed he went over to see him and Bear took the boys nose off. Thank god after some plastic surgery the boy is doing well but we now are about to adopt a 5-year-old and I am not willing to take the chance of this happening again. I don't think

we have any choice but to find Bear a home but I am willing to listen to any suggestions....One idea was to find the Great Dane a home and even though they are doing ok now maybe in bear's mind he is working overtime as Alpha dog. Bear has never attacked anyone out of the blue but has always been alpha dog and aggressive that way. If you get in his face, you will lose it...Its still not expectable and we can't take the chance of a little boy not listening to us and testing the water on his own like most kids do. We have done a pretty good job in training him but my wife and daughter find it cute to cuddle with bear on our bed and kind of have bear tell them what and when he wants something. They laugh and say how I'm alpha but he is second in command and I always tell them that it is not funny and it will catch up with them someday. We love both Bear and Blake but Bear is like a son to us...I had his mom and now have Bear so even though Blake is a great dog I would find him a home before I found one for Bear. One other thing about the great Dane and small children...Blake is the kindest dog you would ever find...anyone can take his bowl away or pretty much do anything to him and he just looks at you, but considering his size, he is 125lbs and really tall, my wife is afraid that when Blake wants to play he can end up accidentally hurting a small child out of pure innocence. Is there anything we can do to control that from happening or should Blake also go to be on the safer side. We love animals more than

anything...actually more than most humans so this is a very hard thing to do.

Thank you very much,
Manny

Dominant Dog Question:

Mr. Frawley,

I have a 3 year old Dalmatian, Lab, Pit bull mix weighing about 65 lbs. Two days ago, while loading up our car for a trip, we were walking in and out of the house with the dog. While the dog was left unattended momentarily, a city worker pulled up at just that moment and walked on the property. In a split second, my dog charged him and bit his ankle severe enough to require stitches. Currently, my dog is in quarantine at Animal Control and we are faced with having to put him to sleep after the 10-day period. We are not required to put him down, but I am afraid that this could happen again--even if we are being super diligent, I don't know if I can guarantee he would never get out again by accident or other unknown circumstance. This was the first time he has broken skin or bit a stranger--but I can't stop feeling in my gut how bad this could have been if it were a child who wandered on the property at that moment.

He has been territorial since a puppy. He has snapped at or lightly bitten guests in my home

who came near his feeding area or touched his food. When someone comes near the house, or if he is in the house and the doorbell rings, he barks in a vicious way. When I walk him and someone else is on the road, especially if they have a dog, he pulls to get to them and I hold him back because he has snapped at other dogs and I am afraid he may bite. He is very strong and will not listen to my commands to stop without my holding him back. I now realize that pulling him back probably has made the situation worse. When I have taken him to a friend's house and put him in the fenced backyard to keep him away from my friend's two small children and their toy poodle, when he sees them on the screened patio overlooking the back yard, he barks and growls and will even attack the closed door if they were to venture near. This behavior has made me extremely uncomfortable for some time--it seems to be getting worse as he gets older. Around the family, including cats, birds and his best buddy, a small Chihuahua, he is very friendly and sweet. In the past, we have had him kenneled when we go out of town and he has not had a problem. Also, when he has gotten out and run away, he is never aggressive to other people or animals (a stranger picked him up and took him to the humane society shelter once and I have found him playing with other dogs on another occasion). This situation is breaking my heart because I know that we made a mistake in not getting him professional training. My

husband often roughoused with the dog and sometimes I feel encouraged (unintentionally) his aggressive behavior during their play games. My husband is definitely the leader of the pack--but he is often away on business and my daughter and I are left to care for the dog. I need to know if it is possible to retrain a dog of three years to not be so aggressive and dangerous to others or if putting him to sleep is the only responsible thing we can do. We love the dog and my daughter is crying and can't sleep over this, but we want to do the right thing. Thank you for any advice you can provide.

Sincerely,
Diane

Answer:

If you asked me, I would recommend putting the dog to sleep. This behavior could be corrected but I don't think you are capable of doing the work that's required.

The aggressive behavior should have been addressed when this dog was young. Your husband's play did not cause any part of this. Read the article I wrote on [DEALING WITH A DOMINANT DOG](#).

In reality you are correct. We are talking about a dog that was not trained. You are also correct in saying that this could be a lot worse. Had this dog ever gotten a child, you would have a very bad dog bite.

It is never an easy decision to say that one should put a dog to sleep. It must always be the last option and I seldom recommend it.

Dominant Dog Question:

Hi,

My son has a staffy cross, not sure what the cross is, but she is mainly staffy to look at. He had two dogs, the dog that was attacked by the staffy was a border collie named Jess, she was 17 years old. Molly, the staffy, is 5 years old. They were alone in the house together, when Molly attacked and so severely injured Jess that she had to be put down. Molly must have thrown and shook her around. The injuries that Jess received were horrific, to her throat, her lung was punctured and the rib that would have covered her lung was missing. The vet also suspected her pelvis was fractured, and it was at this point that it was requested of the vet that he put Jess to sleep. She did not deserve to die this way nor for that matter, any dog/child etc.

Jess had always been a quiet, gentle dog, never showed any aggression to anyone.

My son asked me to try and find some information on the internet relating to the above attack, and if you can to please give an opinion as to whether, his son, who will be turning two in June is in any danger from Molly. I know that

perhaps you can't give me a direct answer as to whether Molly should be put down or not, but perhaps with letters that you have received there may have been similar experiences. Could Molly attack again now that she has been "blooded" so to speak? It's just very hard to know what to do, putting Molly to sleep won't bring Jess back to life, but by the same token if Molly should attack again, how does one forgive one's self for giving her a second chance?

And that is why I'm emailing you, as my son, and myself included, just don't know what is the best way to deal with this situation. I hope to hear from you soon.

Regards,
Shirley

Answer:

I feel badly for you and this poor dog. Can you imagine what the last minutes of life were like for this very old dog? To end 17 years of life in this way is a terrible thought.

I will guarantee you that it is not a matter of "IF" this dog will fight– it's only a matter of time and "WHEN" it will happen again.

Dogs like this need to be totally isolated from other dogs. They can never come into contact with animals. This needs to be accomplished by keeping them in secure dog kennels, secure

dog crates and through the use of very solid dog training that results in the dog being 100% under control even in the face of the most severe distraction (i.e. another dog that is challenging it).

Read the article I have written titled [DEALING WITH THE DOMINANT DOG](#). You can find this article in the list of [training articles](#) on my web site. I believe you will find the answers you need in that article or in the [Q&A section](#) of my web site. There are simple solutions to these problems. The question is if you are willing to do the work necessary to make the changes that will fix the problems.

A dog like this needs to be trained with an electric collar. I use a [DOGTRA 1200NC](#).

If you would like to learn more about the principles of obedience training a dog, read the description for my [Basic Dog Obedience video](#). You will probably find that you have not had a clear understanding of the steps of training a dog must go through before it can be considered fully trained. You can also read why I am not a fan of taking an untrained dog to obedience classes. I think if you read the testimonials on that tape you will see that my customers feel the same way.

Dominant Dog Question:

I came across this site while searching for dog obedience, it would be great if you could help me. We have a mixed breed, 1 and a half year old, Australian Shepard / Lab / Collie. He is a great dog, easily trained.

Our main issue is that when he is lying down and you go up to him calmly and pet him nicely and gently, he will most of the time growl at you. I describe the sound at growling with your mouth shut. Like a humming. He doesn't show his teeth, only if you take it one step further and try to scold him (To be honest when he first did this and we figured out that it was bad we would scold him by giving him a swat and shoving him outside, and also yelling at him. When we do this he cowers in the corner and his back legs shake nervously.) He may show his teeth...

When this first started (about a month after his first birthday) we were trying to figure out if this was a good sound or bad. As sometimes when we would stop petting him he would get up and come to you and ask for fuse, although while doing this his tail would be between his legs and head down.

There was one time once when he came up to me for fuss and I gave it to him and 20 seconds later he started growling and slowly cowers away. As I was saying "NO BARE" loudly.

Now we firmly tell him “NO” and when we do that he continues to do it, when he stops and we reward him by saying “Good boy” and pet him, he does it again.

There are also times when I will call him and say “Bare Come!” and he won’t come he will walk away with his tail between his legs and low head, looking very sad. With my husband he gets a better response. This doesn’t happen all the time with me, there are times when he will come and I will tell him “good boy” and reward him. We have tried to walk him more, on a daily basis. Myself doing it more, as I am home all day.

When we walk in the front door he doesn’t come up to us like he is happy to see us. Whenever anyone else comes over he is excited and happy. He doesn’t display any of the symptoms when he is at my moms with me or for a walk, he actually looks happier whenever we are elsewhere or its playtime.

We have 2 small kids, 5 and 2. They don’t pay much attention to him when he is lying down, but times that they do he has growled at them. We want to fix this so hopefully it won’t get worse.

I called a behaviorally specialist and he told us to try the Umbilical Cord Theory for a week. Meaning that he is attached by leash to my waist and has to go everywhere I go within the house, whether he is sleeping or not. I am then showing

him that I am the boss and he can't do anything unless I let him. He said his growling was him telling me that he doesn't want to be touched right now and that it needs to be corrected. If he does growl I am suppose to give a sharp yank on the leash and say no, or growl at him using a deep AAAAAAAA sound. When he stops right away tell him good boy. Problem his while I am yanking on his leash and doing this he is continuously growling, there is no chance to say good boy, or even if I touch him and give praise it starts all over again. I have to wait till he stops and tell him good boy and not touch him. I think he is winning.

I hope this email makes sense, I am on day 3 of this theory and don't know if it is working. Hopefully you can help me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Do you just post your responses on the web or do you send me an email back as well so I know when to look on the web.

Thanks,
Lorraine

Dominant Dog Question:

We have 5 cocker spaniels, one aged 10 one aged 5, one aged 4 and two aged 9 months. We are having major dog fights. The two puppies are ganging up together with the 4 year old and

fighting the 10 year old. Three dogs on one. What can you suggest? I am sure it is for dominance, but how can I prevent this. The vet's costs are horrendous with the damage done to the 10 year old. Up until the puppies arrived everything was fairly quiet. It is one of the puppies that is initiating the fighting.

I really need some advice.

Please help

Brenda (in the UK)

Answer:

Brenda,

You own a dog pack and you don't understand pack behavior. This is a RANK issue and they will kill this old dog unless you change your ways.

There is not a MAGIC BULLET that someone is going to give you to help these dogs live together. IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN!!

Either find homes for some of these dogs or get 5 dog crates and keep the dogs separated, or build 5 dog kennels. That's the ONLY SOLUTION to this problem.

Let me pose a question to you – how would you feel if you lived a long happy life in the same house with your family. When you were 70 years old your family brought a couple of gang members into your home (which you were not allowed to leave) and these gang member kicked

the living shit out of you ALL THE TIME – so bad you had to see Doctors. After these medical visits your family brought you back to the house where the gang members waited?

THIS IS EXACTLY what you are doing to this old dog. I cannot imagine what's going on in his head. But it is very sad.

QUESTION on Aggressive Dog:

Hello,

I had a question about your DVD on Dealing with Aggression and Dominance in Dogs. I am looking for a training video for my mom and was wondering if the problems she is having with her dog would be covered in this DVD or if another one would better suit her. She has a Cairn terrier that is about a year old. It has shown aggression since she got it. It bites, hands, feet. It bites when you try to bring it inside, when you try to pick it up, if you are trying to take something away from it, sometimes just when you reach down to pet it. It also shows a lot of aggression, say if you want to bring it in and it doesn't want to come, and if it sees other people or animals, it will just freak out like it is gonna eat them alive. My mother is terrified of her, and I think that this is part of the problem, the dog knows that my mom is scared. Do these characteristics fit in with this specific training video, or is there another one that would best suit this problem, any info would be greatly

appreciated. Thanks.

Jessica

Answer:

Well you are correct – this is a pack structure problem and your mother needs to learn to be a leader – she is not at this time.

There are actually 2 DVDs that she needs to study – notice I said study and not watch. It is IMPOSSIBLE to watch my work and consider yourself trained. That’s just not going to happen.

The two DVD’s are

[Basic Dog Obedience](#)

[Dealing with Dominant and Aggressive Dogs](#)

Obedience is about 25% of the solution. She will never solve the problem without obedience but in and of itself she needs to address pack structure more (dogs are pack animals and the average person has no idea how strong those genes are in dogs like this.)

In many cases the final step is to control the dog with a remote collar – this is where the maintenance training comes in for the life of the dog. This is covered in my DVD [Remote Collar Training for the Pet Owner](#). I recommend an Innotek ADV300 for that work.

So with this said – the solution to these problems is in these DVDs. The question is --does your mother wish to put in the effort and educate

herself? The fact is she has more to learn than the dog.

Good luck

Where To Go From Here

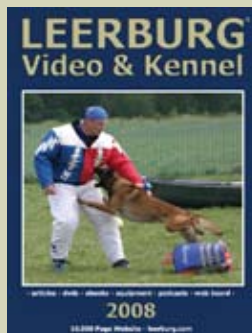
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