



HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

As long as your dog is with you, YOU are the Pack Leader. When your dog senses that leadership is absent, he will instinctively take over the leadership role so that he can feel safe and minimize risk to his survival. It is up to YOU to be the consistent leader that your dog needs!

Practice your leadership role every day, in every way, in every place to reinforce and to generalize his confidence that you have his back and will advocate for him when needed. It is also important to let him figure things out on his own rather than solving or 'doing things' for your dog to expedite a task or movement.

WHAT is 'EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP?'

Effective leadership requires you to:

- Be a Captain, not a Dictator.
- Be firm, not angry or emotional.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Be aware ... of how your dog sees the world and empathize so that you can feel his concern, pain, or fun.
- BE an advocate for your dog. Seeing the world through his eyes will help you to better understand how and when your advocacy is needed.





WHEN IS LEADERSHIP NECESSARY? Leadership is 24/7.

Your dog seeks leadership - Every day/After rest or your absence/After conflict:

1. Every day – Dogs are always ‘checking’ to see if anyone is in charge. They want to know whom they can trust to keep them safe. Otherwise, they live in a state of constant mental chaos (fight or flight).

2. After a long sleep or absence period – BE the energy that you want from your dog.
 - a. If you are excited when you come home, your dog will also be excited, and may jump, nip, bark or simply be confused about what behaviour is expected – none of which is acceptable.
 - b. If you are calm, your dog will be less excited and will be more intentional in his manners, including being calm, quiet and respectful.

3. After conflict. Dogs live ‘in the now’.
 - a. If your dog has an altercation with you or with another dog, when it is over, it is over.
 - b. One of you must then assume the role of *Leader* to return to calm order.
 - c. You (not the dog) get to choose which one!

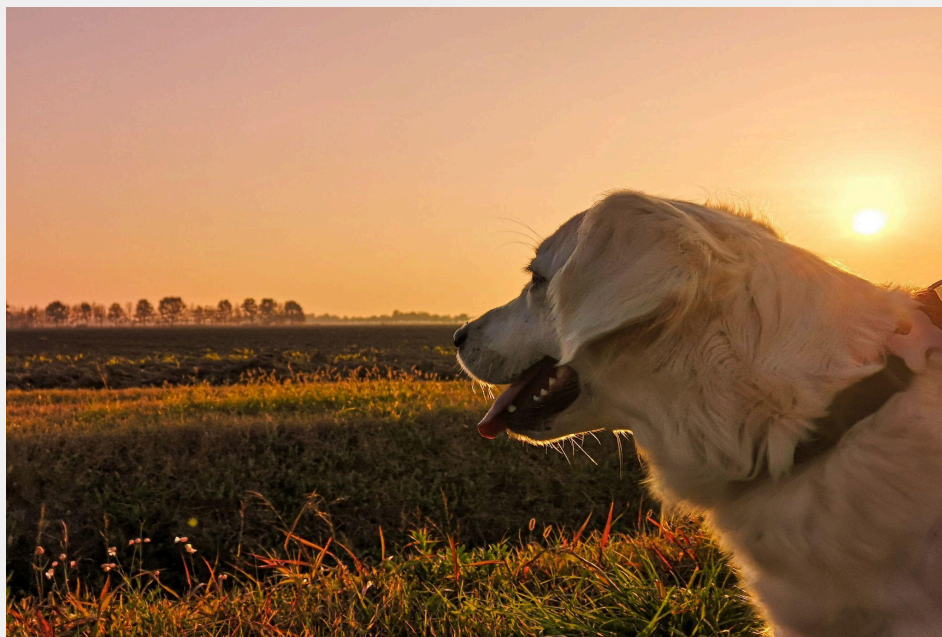
How Can YOU be an EFFECTIVE LEADER? ... Effective Leadership is about influence, ... who controls what and when and how, without ego or emotion:





Pack Leaders control three things:

1. Movement: On walks, hikes, in the house and outside, your dog should follow you, not the other way around. The more he moves *with you* on his own (i.e. not being dragged on leash), the more confident he will become and the more he will *want to move with you*.
2. Space: is a valuable commodity for a leader. Space includes any area inside and outside. A dog that MOVES aside without conflict when you approach, is showing respect for your leadership. Your dog is respectful of your personal space when he is on the ground/floor. He will take more liberties and may push into your space when he is allowed on your furniture – especially when you are on it too! Your dog should not have access to furniture unless you are prepared to give him status above you on the leadership scale. If he helps himself to your furniture, including your bed, calmly remove him and gently guide or put him in a place (such as a dog bed), where he is allowed to be. NOTE: Dogs with aggression or other behavioural issues directed toward humans or other dogs that live in the same house should NEVER be allowed to access your furniture.
3. Resources – include food, furniture, toys, affection, play and many other things that are of value at the moment. If your dog steals things that you do not want him to have, use the cue “out” or “mine” to gently remove items from his mouth. Working for food (starting with teaching eye contact and playing the “touch to hand” game) is a great way to teach your dog that you control food and that making eye contact with you and confidently approaching the flat palm of your hand is a great way to be rewarded.





1. Movement is more than just Walking:

After 3 months of age your puppy's instinct to follow you diminishes and is replaced by 'seeking behaviour' – which means that without intervention, your dog will be more likely to follow his nose and may wander off to investigate sights and smells that are more interesting than you.

When building your walking relationship, carry treats in your pocket when walking with your dog and be prepared to offer a food reward when he does something spectacular – like walking confidently past another dog without any reaction or hesitation.

One way to hold his interest is to not feed every time so that you keep him guessing when a reward may be offered. That way, checking in with you will be like playing a slot machine – sometimes he wins a treat and sometimes he learns that he must try again.

Remember that dogs see in the 'micro' so even your smallest movement matters. Be consistent in your hand, foot and body movement - especially when working a precision exercise with your dog. Something as simple as walking on a leash sends a plethora of information to a dog. Creating consistent moves with your hands, feet and body will help your dog to learn the expected behaviour much more quickly.

Leash and Free Walking: Owners often overcompensate when walking their dog on leash. They are too restrictive by keeping their dog on a leash that is so tight the dog cannot breathe. When the leash is held tight, your dog may feel threatened when seeing another dog or human because it instinctively feels trapped or unable to escape. Or they allow their dog to dismiss them and wander all over and thus lose any relevance as the Pack Leader during the walk.

Most dogs need more than life on a leash. Walking on and off leash with your dog is one of the best ways to establish your leadership and relevance. Walk time should include on and off leash experiences. Walks should be enjoyable for both of you. When walking with your dog on leash, keep your hands at your side and apply firm but gentle sideways tension to the leash and instantly release the tension when he moves in your direction. As soon as he moves one foot towards you, give him back the loose leash (i.e., release the tension) and mark the behaviour with 'YES' and repeat or proceed with walking forward.

Initially keep your leash walks brief (not more than 10 minutes per session). Several short leash walks on a soft surface during each day are better than one long walk at the end of the day. For puppies and older dogs with joint or spinal issues, too much walking on a hard surface may be painful and tiring. The ideal ratio for puppies is 3 minutes walking on a soft surface for every minute walking on a hard surface.

A minimum of three walks per day (morning, noon and early evening) of approximately 10-15 minutes each are better than one walk of 30 to 45 minutes because your dog's focus and interest



on you is maintained on shorter trips. Increase the duration gradually as your dog becomes more calm, confident and reliable to walk nicely with you.

Include free walking as part of your daily walking routine. Free walking means the leash is dropped to the ground (or removed in safe areas) and your dog is 'free' to sniff and do dog things in safe areas while you continue to move at a slower pace around the area. Your movement will keep his interest as much on you as on the new smells in the free area.

'Free' does not mean 'dismiss'. Do not abdicate your role as leader. Your dog should be 'looking for you' or 'checking in' while exploring new surroundings. Occasionally approach him, grab his collar, give a yummy treat and walk away. Do not ask anything of him – just give the treat and walk away. After two or three repetitions of approach-treat, pick up the end of the leash and resume your walk together. Your dog will associate your approach with good things, like treats and will welcome your presence.

2. Space and Touch: Protect Your Dog's Personal space! Effective leaders maintain control of personal space by moving away or warding off uninvited guests. While you want your dog to be social, you also want him to be safe and polite. Puppies and adult dogs build confidence by going to new places and exploring new spaces. Take your dog to as many new places as your schedule allows and do not allow people to rush into his space. Protect his health by avoiding places where dogs that are unknown to you congregate, including dog parks and Pet food stores.

Avoid allowing people to barge into your dog's personal space, even if he is friendly. Touch should be on your dog's terms. Random people invading his space may get him over excited, nervous, or anxious. He needs to know that you have his back and will not allow people to approach him uninvited. It is best to ask them to stop and allow your dog to approach them. 'Listen' to what he is saying by watching his body language – if he moves behind you or is hesitant to approach, do not force it, walk away, and try another time. Your dog's confidence will increase as he learns that he can trust that you are a leader that always has his back.

3. Resources - Be aware of your dog's behaviour around things that humans do not normally perceive as 'resources'. If your dog is charging, biting or jumping on any person or dog who comes near you, it may be because your dog views you as 'his resource'. Play is a resource that leaders start and leaders stop. If your dog is dropping a toy in your lap without your permission, or stops picking up the ball and wanders off after a few throws, it is the dog, not you that is the leader.

