

# How to Read Your Best Friend's Thoughts and Body Language, Whoof! Whoof!

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## Introduction

**S**o you have a dog in the family now!  
A four-legged creature to be your  
companion, your friend, philosopher  
and guide?

Don't do a double-take, a pet dog can be all  
this and more, provided you make a serious  
commitment to understand and love him back,  
as well as he loves you.

It's easy. This book will teach all the little dog  
tricks. They say, you can't teach old dog new  
tricks. This book will prove that dictum wrong.

This book will teach old dog, all the new tricks  
in the trade and then some.

Happy reading!

## Chapter 1: Your Dog Is Your Mirror

Owning a dog is meant to be fun – loads of it. However when you make your pet attempt stunts that are ‘humanly’ impossible, or don't come natural to them, the outcome, as with human beings can be a sulk or a yelp, depending upon whether the fella is angry or in pain.

### **The Best Deal**

We give dog's time we can spare,  
space we can spare and love we  
can spare. And in return, dogs give  
us their all. It's the best deal man  
has ever made  
- M. Acklam

If you choose to ignore the signs of their reluctance to perform to your bidding, or in

any other manner put undue pressure on them, you won't just be causing harm and distress to your best friend, you would also be destroying what could otherwise turn out to be the most loving and harmonious relationship on earth – that between a human being and an animal.

Therefore, before calling your dog bad, aggressive, foul, neurotic, shy or unpredictable, get in touch with your own behavior abnormalities, be honest and figure out whether most of those labels apply to you, or your dog. I can bet my last dollar, those labels would be more apt on you!

Remember: the most effective way to teach – a dog, a child or a subordinate at work

- is to lead by example. If you can't do that, you are no good as a leader.

Realize that your dog responds to your energy and body language more than to your words and commands and will model and ape your behavior just as naturally as a young child or a devoted subordinate at work, who is in complete awe of you, does. Power has that kind of influence on others less powerful than you.

In the past, you may have spent a lot of time trying to understand and amend your dog's weird behavior, just as you break your head over your child's eccentricities – not realizing that the changes you seek in them

should first  
appear in your  
behavior. You

**Tail Wager**

The reason a dog has so many  
friends is that he wags his tail  
instead of his tongue

- Anonymous

can't yell at a child or your dog and expect  
that they don't yell back at you.

Remember your dog is your mirror! You  
communicate with your dog every minute  
through:

- Your tone
- Your gestures
- Your energy
- Your posture
- Your everything verbal or

non verbal



Your dog knows when you are happy, sad, angry, pissed off, or not in control of your emotions, the environment around you and your dog and will reflect the same insecurities and intemperance in its behavior towards you and others in the house.

Just try this exercise. Go and shout at your dog once. Now step into the nursery and without being provoked try and yell at your few months old baby. Do you get the same outcome? Did they both look startled, begin to cry and yell back at you?

There you see. When you deflect your pent-up emotions at a child or your dog, it comes back to you, just as Newton promised it

would in the Third Law of Motion – Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The bottom line is that if you don't like the way your dog act, examine your behavior and find out why because, nine out of ten, the animal would be mirroring your bad behavior!

Here are a few questions to help you in this direction....

### **Teasers for Self Exploration**

✓ What kind of one-on-one, quality time are you spending with your dog?

✓ If you are keen on teaching your dog/child a new trick, do you practice with it/her in a calm and distraction-free environment where you both can

concentrate and learn the skill together by practicing it a few times?

✓ Do you take your dog on a brisk morning walk everyday – or step out with her occasionally, with the baby in tow and only because your baby could also use some fresh air?

✓ Are you calm and concentrating on your dog when you're walking or does your child take up all your attention?

✓ Is this walk routine something you look forward to at the beginning or end of a taxing day, or does it represent the last item on your 'to do' list that you can tick off before you can peacefully dose off?

## **Dog Pack**

### **Mentality**

Take it  
from a veteran  
that the trick to  
enjoying a

satisfying and rewarding relationship with  
your dog is learning to think like one.

Don't laugh. I mean it. I am dead  
serious.

Dogs have what is called a pack  
mentality. What this implies is that will always  
need a leader. Someone to blindly follow like a  
sheep. What you call a 'family', your dog calls  
it his 'pack' and feel flattered that the head of

### **The Meaningful 'Look'**

You can say any foolish thing to  
your dog and a dog will give you a  
look that will say 'wow you are  
right. I never would have thought  
of that'

Dave Berry

the family will always be seen as the head of his pack.

Again nine out of ten, the head of your dog's pack would be the patriarch. They are a little sexist in that respect. Or, perhaps you are a little sexist in that department and assert yourself as a patriarch with the rest of the family members. In any case, the dog takes its cue and unquestioningly follows a structured 'pack' hierarchy.

At the top of the pack is you, then Momma (she rule the kitchen, remember) and you as the alpha male set territorial rules that others must follow. "Don't do this," "Don't climb up the bed," "Don't dig up the flower

beds, you dumb dog,” kinda rules. Your dog, as with other junior members of the family are expected to abide by these unwritten rule, “or else...”

Call it the ancient Darwin-ian survival instinct, but a dog’s basic nature is to either submit to the dominant or dominate those who are submissive. So, the onus is squarely on you to tell your dog who wears pants in the house. Don’t ever, ever treat you like a pushover, or he’ll soon be taking your authority for granted. The result would be the spoiled brat of a pet!

On the flip  
side, don't be so  
harsh that you  
come across as  
Hitler incarnate.

**If....**

If dogs could talk, perhaps we'd  
find it just as hard to get along  
with them as we do with people.  
Karel Capek

Rule, but with kind logic and affection. Any  
extreme with a dog or a child is ill-advised  
because then the animal and the child will  
also being to respond in kind and in the same  
measure – which is the last thing you want to  
deal with, right?

Therefore, what you need to do instead  
is assure them of your undivided love and  
protection but at the same time, set some  
ground rules of the game and if you are  
consistent and clear in what you expect from

them, over time, they will learn to respect those boundaries and abide by your norms. Trust me, babies and dogs are smart. Without being told, or without having the vocabulary to speak either, they know exactly what's going on in the house, and also in your mind – so just be a little wary.

All said and done, if you don't want to lose your commanding position in the house, you have to position yourself as a leader. You have to clearly define all the win-win, win-lose and lose-lose situations to your dog. The animal must know about Newton's Third Law of Motion – especially the third law. It must know that there is a consequence (good or bad) for every action (good or bad).



The bad (or sad) consequence could be time-out for littering the house, while the good (delicious) consequence could be doggy treats or something sweet (depending upon whether the recipient is a child or a dog).

Consequence is denial. It's not a yell, a beating, the use of fear or force. That's primitive and animalistic (Don't forget that you are the human in this relationship). Take inspiration from Nobel Laureate Ivan Pavlov and how he how he conducted his famous experiment in classical conditioning with his dog. Pavlov made it absolutely clear to his dog that there is no such thing as good or bad behavior. There is only wanted or unwanted

behavior. Wanted behavior will win food.

Unwanted behavior will attract denial of food.

Lastly, when you are setting these rules, make absolutely certain that you don't happen to demonstrate the use of the unwanted behavior with your child or your dog or else – you will get it returned to you in an equal measure.

## **Chapter 2: The Ties That Bind and Blind Us**

**A**t the most basic and fundamental plane we all interact with each other as social animals. We feel for each other. We share in each others' joys, pleasure, pain and suffering. We feel hurt or sad when we see someone else in pain. We expect empathy and understand when our chips are down. When we acquire something, we want to flaunt it to the world.

It's the same way we feel for our pets, especially dogs. If it looks slightly 'under the weather' we rush the sod to the vet. If there is a thunderstorm and the fella is whimpering

and shivering  
and wet with  
fear, you'd try to  
pat and calm it

**Rendered Speechless**

It's no coincidence that man's best  
friend cannot talk.  
Anonymous

down, perhaps swoop it up and cuddle the  
fellow in your arms. And when they die – the  
saddest incident of all, because their life span  
is so short – you feel infinite amount of  
sadness in your heart. You recall all the good  
moments you spend together. You don't want  
to throw away his pots and kennel and  
lovingly turn those in to planters and flower  
holders. We weep when we bury them. And  
they are left incredibly sad when we are buried.  
That's the man-animal bond that's special and  
always cherished.

## **Modeled After Human Behavior**

Chimpanzees are our evolutionary forefathers from the same gene pool but perhaps because we've shared a lot of intimate space with dogs and for a very long time, they mirror our behavior more closely than do chimps and orangutans!

Domestication has also made them clone human behavior more closely, especially when it comes to showing:

- Cooperation and respect for hierarchy
- Attachment with the 'pack'

- Using and interpreting verbal and non-verbal communication and
- Learn from imitation

## **Do Dogs Resemble their Owners?**

Of course, they do! In fact, after a long marital inning, even spouses begin to resemble one another, so why would dogs be an exception!

Experts contend that almost 75% of our communication is non-verbal, conveyed through facial expressions, tonal variations,



gestures etc. In a pack, all these are picked off each other. The result is that after a few years, most dogs end up looking like their owners!

Ironically, the similarities are not limited to physical appearance or facial expressions but also to other behavior quirks.

This may appear strange, but a guy's choice of a four-legged companion often says a lot about him/her. For instance, if you are the body-building, athletic type, you are most likely to pick a breed of dog that's hyper active. On the other extreme, if you are laid back and lazy, you may choose a Poodle or another lap dog that takes life easy and relaxed.

Julie Fishman, co-author of *The Little Black Book of Big Red Flags* draws up the following

parallels between various dog breeds and their owners:

<p><b>Jack Russell Terrier</b></p> 	<p>These dogs are super-hyper and so are their owners. Both are always on the go.</p>
<p><b>Labrador Retriever</b></p> 	<p>This dog typically attracts an all-American, guy-next-door-type owner.</p>
<p><b>Beagle</b></p>	



	<p>Sensitive, anxious, and clingy. Those are the common traits of the breed and their owners.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chihuahua</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Sandra Bullock and Poppy, a Chihuahua-Pomeranian mixed breed</p>	<p>Blessed with a sense of humor. Vain and super confident of their ability to charm each other off their feet!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Poodle</b></p>	<p>Lazy, laidback and suffers from too many real and imagined ailments and</p>



allergies.  
Hypochondriac is the term for the owner and the dog.

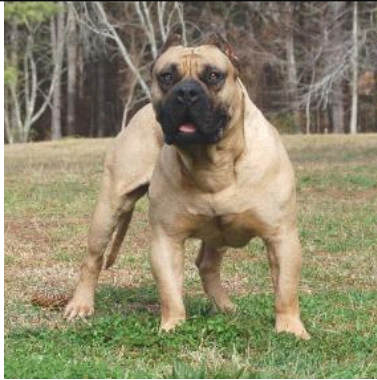
### **Collie**



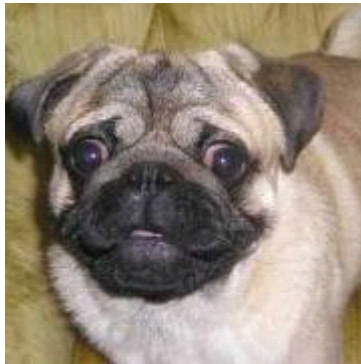
Disciplined and focused and detail-oriented like their masters. Don't suffer fools, excuses or delays easily.

### **Pit Bull**

More ruffian than renegade.



**Pug**





Semi-popular, non-conformist. Looks solid and secure on the outside but is really jelly soft, inside.

**Mutt**



Usually laid-back, humble with a clear sense of right and wrong. The cookie-cutter approach doesn't work with the dog

	or the man, either.
<p><b>Siberian Husky</b></p> 	<p>Sexy and cocky-sure of himself.</p>
<p><b>Saint Bernard</b></p> 	<p>Clumsy, awkward and eager to please.</p>
<p><b>Great Dane</b></p>	<p>Incorrigible attention- seekers; always want to hog the</p>

	<p>spotlight.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bulldog</b></p> 	<p>Rustic, practical, roll-up-my sleeves kind. Can be really gross, at times.</p>

Why dogs begin to resemble their owners so closely is anyone's guess, but behavior scientist call it a trait of "group

think" – the desire to belong to a bigger cluster for security reasons and the tendency – in humans and animals – to seek shelter and comfort in conformity. When we think and act alike – there is less likelihood of being singled out or attacked. That's a jungle trait that still survives in most of us and it takes a lot of courage to stay different or do things that others may not accept, so readily.

"This suggests that, like humans, dogs are subject to 'automatic imitation'; they cannot inhibit ... the tendency to imitate head use and/or paw use," wrote University of Vienna researcher Friederike Range, the lead author of a study on this dog-human imitation behavior. "This finding suggests that the dogs

brought with them to the experiment a tendency automatically to imitate hand use and/or paw use by their owner; to imitate these actions even when it was costly to do so."

So now you know why it bares its teeth when you growl at him!

## **Chapter 3: They Know What You're Thinking**

**T**his may sound stranger than fiction but it's true. Even though they are unable to speak, they can read your mind.

They have an uncanny knack of picking on their owners' mood (happy, sad, depressed, tired or stressed) out and knowing exactly what's going on in their owners' minds, and act, accordingly. Not for nothing they are called man's best friend.

According to a recent report carried in the *Learning and Behavior*, dogs are



exceptionally  
good and  
intrinsically  
wired in being  
able to sense  
when they've  
got your  
attention and  
when you are

### **Try it on Your Dog**

Sometimes you panic and find yourself emitting remarks so profoundly inane that you would be embarrassed to say them to your dog. Your dog would look at you and think to itself, "I may lick myself in public, but I'd never say anything as stupid as that."

Dave Barry

distracted or depressed. It's a kind of a 'sixth sense' that they are born with. Both dogs and horses have it (the latter in a sinister way) but cats don't.

Indeed, it may not be entirely incorrect to say that dogs can read our minds better than we can read theirs. In fact, we often

make the mistake of presuming – wrongly –  
that dogs don't  
have any  
mind/thoughts  
to speak of!

It's no  
rocket science

**Dogs Make Excellent Listeners**

They never talk about themselves  
but listen to you while you talk  
about yourself, and keep up an  
appearance of being interested in  
the conversation.

Jerome K. Jerome

for a dog to decode its owners' thoughts. Since  
they have an elephantine memory, they  
quickly learn our "language" – both verbal and  
non-verbal and begin to make good use of it.  
That's how they are able to mirror our moods.

Scientists have found dogs pick up not  
only the words their masters say, but also  
their "intent to communicate" with them.

Indeed,  
analyzed for  
their thought-  
processing  
ability,  
scientists say  
dogs'  
intelligence is  
on a par with a

### **What an Intelligent Dog**

I went to the cinema the other day and in the front row was an old man and with him was his dog. It was a sad funny kind of film, you know the type. In the sad part, the dog cried his eyes out and in the funny part; the dog laughed its head off. This happened all the way through the film. After the film ended, I decided to go and speak to the man. "That's the most amazing thing I've seen," I said. "That dog really seemed to enjoy the film." The man turned to me and said, "Yeah, it is. He hated the book."

Unknown Author

two-year-old child, especially in following eye contact. That's why dog trainers often use 'eye commands' to school a dog. If only they knew how to speak as well, our canine friends could have made first-rate detectives!

These skills may appear extremely strange, impossible and human-like but they

have also been found in other animal species such as chimpanzees, horses or apes.

You may have heard owners say their dog listens better than their toddler and they are telling you the truth because that's most often the case. Dogs do listen and they listen better than we humans do.

Owners of dogs who make faithful companions to the visually challenged, hearing impaired or dumb know that it would be impossible to imagine their world – nay, their very survival - without their four-legged friends. Not without reason, a wag once said, “Dog is always regarded as human’s best friend and there is even a saying about “A dog

is the only thing on this earth that loves you more than he loves himself.”

A huge body of research, most recently an article in the *Learning & Behavior*, mentioned that dogs are not only able to correctly interpret human body language and behavior they can also become adept at using it to their advantage!

When caught in the act, they give their owners

their famous ‘hang dog’ expression that prompts them to sign and say, “He knows

### **Mood Mirrors**

Dogs understand your moods and your thoughts, and if you are thinking unpleasant things about your dog, he will pick it up and be downhearted.

Barbara Woodhouse, dog trainer

what he's done  
and he is feeling  
sorry.” That’s  
something you  
can’t readily  
expect from a  
cat or a fish, not  
even a dolphin  
that is otherwise  
believed to  
understand  
human language too!

### **Amazing Abilities**

Well-known biologist Rupert Sheldrake meticulously documents pets' and their owners amazing sixth sense with regards to each other:

- They instinctively know when their owners have met with accidents or have died in faraway places
- Cats and dogs try to hide when they sense they are going to be taken to a vet
- Telepathic distress signals sent to human owners who suddenly know that a pet they left at home has died
- A sense of earthquakes and other impending natural disasters

His animalistic instinct may have guided the dog to do something extremely silly, such as chew on his owners’ favorite dress or upholstered armchair, but it would also be the

first to know it has done something  
unpardonable and feel sorry for it. Ask any  
dog owner, he/she will vouch for this behavior.

## **Chapter 4: Are You Reading Your Dog's**

### **Body Language?**

**W**hat is your dog trying to tell you?

And I am not referring to their woofs and grunts, alone, although they communicate the most through these sounds and other non-verbal means. Their facial expressions and postures are particularly meaningful. Indeed, some hand and facial expressions, such as pulling on the ear lobe, touching the nose and hand across the mouth are sure signs of deception or withholding truth, just as it is with humans!



Since they don't have linguistic expression, these are the only ways they can convey

#### **Signs of fear or concern include**

- A lowered stance,
- Tail pointing down or tucked under their body, wagging frantically,
- Eyes diverted and dilated pupils.
- Another more outward sign is excessive barking.

discomfort, pain, affection, empathy and a slew of other feelings and emotional states.

De-coding these non-verbal signs will give you vital foresight - such as when is your dog upset, scared, edgy or preparing to snap at a stranger, and you can respond accordingly. There are definite rules about reading what's going on in your dog's mind. For instance a bark can indicate both

fear and anger, but there is a subtle variation in the barks issued by these two emotional states. If you spot an erect tail, you can know for sure that your pet is alarmed, alert or upset about something. A wagging tail of course implies pleasure, affection and a mix of all kind of positive, happy emotions.

### **Dogs Get Us. It's That Simple**

There's a certain look, a gesture, posture, smile that's unique to every dog and an owner who has spent considerable time with the pet is quickly able to download and decipher it. As mentioned before, since dogs are such sensitive fellows, and they make such a 'manly' effort to understand you, the

least you can do is reciprocate in kind and try and understand them.

### **They Are Great Communicators**

#### **Signs of confidence include**

- Standing erectly,
- Tail pointing straight up or
- Wagging in a slower sweep,
- Ears pricked up or completely relaxed
- Smaller pupils.

When your German Shepherd begins to sniff and snarl at a closed door, jumping and throwing itself at it in the most bizarre fashion, you know that he's happy to see you back from work.

On the other hand, a lame-duck walk conveys that it may be feeling under the weather. Throw two mugs of water on it and it

will behave like a wet lamb and would remain meek and submissive, until you have finished giving it a thorough scrub.

Once you begin to tune into these emotions and correctly decipher the body language that accompanies them, you can respond appropriately and try and resolve the crisis and deal with whatever is making the dog uneasy, irritable, scared or unhappy.

If you have already figured out that your pug feels insecure about meeting strangers and scared of the sound of lightening, thunder, fire crackers or a vacuum cleaner, you can work on mitigating the impact of those circumstances.

Here are a few more tips that will help you understand your dog's language:

- ✓ When your dog lifts his ears and tail and haunches, know that his hackles are up and he is in a very foul and aggressive mood. The same goes for a stiff body walk or a ram-rod straight tail.
- ✓ On the other extreme, if he crouches and tucks his tail inside his legs, know that he's feeling threatened and scared. The poor guy doesn't wear pants or he might soil the carpet in this kind of an emotional state. A calm reassuring tone from you might diffuse the crisis and ease his tension.

- ✓ If the animal slinks close to the ground, wags his tail between his legs, flattens his ears or rolls unto his back, he is being submissive and will be act to your bidding. You have nothing to worry about when your pet is in this state, but if he puts this behavior on display with a total stranger, know that something is totally wrong and be concerned about the situation, particularly if your animal is also your watch dog.
- ✓ When your dog is excited – as when he's in heat, or meets a prospective partner on the street - his body may wriggle all over and he may even roll his lips back in a canine smile.

- ✓ Growling is the dog's way of saying: "I don't like that." Ignoring this statement is potentially a dangerous response that may further irritate the animal. Failing to address the issue can also boomerang. This would be an invitation to the dog to snap and bite.

## **Reading Your Dog's Mind**

Interpreting your dog's behavior can be a child's play if you remember that dogs and humans aren't the same. They may share some traits (as discussed in the previous section) but they can't be the same, because after all, the two belong to two different species, altogether!

For instance, if you find your dog unusually “quiet” on a particular day, it would be a mistake to presume that he, like a human being is contemplative or brooding – he may in fact be sensing danger.

Likewise, different situations can elicit the same reaction in some species of dogs. For instance, if he hides behind you, growls when you are ushering in your guests; stiffens his tail when he meets a naughty child – in all three situations the emotions are the fear – fear, albeit the behavior varies.

Fear in a dog often leads to aggression, more so because logic does not prevail with an animal. You can’t, for instance, tell your pet



that his fear of strangers is unjustified. The best news is that since most such behavior is an imitation of your behavior, the day you begin to understand the hidden motivations behind your behavior, would be the day, you'd begin to understand your pet! Period. It's as simple as that.

Meanwhile, what you can do is let your dog know that YOU have all the necessary skills and ability to protect him, keep him away from harm and make his environment safe for her. It's the same assurance that you would give to your child, until she grows up and learns to fend for herself. A dog in contrast, will never be able to be completely self-sufficient and that's what makes their

position in the house so vulnerable. Rest assured that they understand this and always will remain grateful for your care and protection.

Another body signal that you could look out for is - sudden closing of his snout, when he even stops panting. You might again think that he's contemplating over some life and death issue, which is not a great deal off the mark because contrary to what you may imagine, dogs also think. Your pet at this point may be thinking about doing something or focusing on something of major importance to him. You can bet, he'll soon be on the move... either to get on with the new play activity that he's just thought of, or to give a

closer inspection to whatever has caught his fancy.

With patience and a bit of experience, you can also develop the sixth sense that your dog has and know what ticks in that space between his two flapping ears!

## **Chapter 5: Do Dogs Make Facial Expressions?**

**Q**uick. Look at this picture. What is the dog in this picture doing, if not making a face and conveying an intelligent expression?



What does this dog-expression convey to you?

Looking at this picture might raise the following questions in your mind:

- Do dog-smiles indicate happiness or a frown?
- Are dogs inherently able to “read” our faces because their expressions are so like our own?

- Do dogs mirror our facial expressions?
- What does a nervous twitch on a dog's face indicate?
- Do dogs take cues from our internal emotional states and respond accordingly?

Facial expressions appear when small muscles in our faces twitch to express a feeling, say a smile, a frown, raising or lowering of our eyebrows and a lot more.

What would you say this dog is doing in this picture?

I often pose this question to my friends at a party and get a mixed response. Half the

group says the animal is smiling while the other half says, he is actually grimacing, while an odd-few say he could be in pain!

That's

### **Wild fact**

Dogs have about 100 different facial expressions, most of them made with their ears. However, bulldogs and pit bulls only have 10, due to their breeding. As a result, these dogs easily get misread by other dogs and often get into fights.

how well we know our four-legged friends!

Other animals give happy expressions too but since they don't share our intimate space, we aren't too bothered about them.

Even scientists haven't been able to figure out what does a dog-smile indicate.

Does it imply the same emotion as a human-smile?

One group of scientists maintains that a meaning of a smile is different for these two species.

However, lots of scientists (and of course pet lovers!) would like us to believe that animals smile, simply because they are happy!

### **Reading Your Dog's Mood Correctly**

Although a dog doesn't have as vast a range of emotions to express as facial expressions as a human being, if you somehow become good at mastering the art of



deciphering even this limited range, you can develop a very strong bonding with your pet.

For instance pet owners say that while narrowing or half-closure of a dog's eyes indicates either pleasure or submission, and eyes open wide indicate aggression; this may not always be true and has to be taken with a pinch of salt.

In the wild when two animals continue to stare at each other in studies silence, occasionally letting out a growl, or a hiss, you can safely take it from me that they are preparing for combat. In this kind of a situation, the expression will change only when one gives in to the other, lowers his head

and turns away, thus clearing the other animal's territory.

As an owner, you should not try to outstare your dog when he is betraying aggressive or nervous tendencies—as this can provoke an attack. Nevertheless, a pointed, gentle eye contact reassures the dog and drives in your authoritative relationship with him.

Mild-mannered breeds, such as Labradors, may appear to be smiling when they bare their teeth to reveal a lop-sided grin. Or even when they snarl and draw their lips back tight to reveal a complete jaw. In this case, the smile may carry the same meaning

(friendliness) as with humans, but don't make the mistake of assuming the same with other, more ferocious species.

### **Did You Know That Dog Ears Can Be Incredibly Expressive?**

You may not have known this but dogs convey a wide variety of expressions via their ears. Here is a list of a few:

- ✓ **Pricked forward:** Signifies attention.

When a dog is highly engaged in some activity, his ears would prick forward.

Mostly used as a hunting expression, this connotes curiosity and intent to sounds before chasing. This usually

happens when they smell a cat or a mouse in the vicinity.

- ✓ **Flat ears:** Can signify two opposite emotions - fear or aggression. A dog is afraid when his ears rest flat against his head. The same gesture also signifies aggression.
- ✓ **Ears way back:** This gesture connotes sadness. To be sure, your pet is unhappy or sad about something when he pulls his ears tightly back, but not rest them flat against the head.

### **Dogs' Eyes: Mirrors to the Soul**

Your dog also plays a lot of emotion through his eyes. Learn to decide his eye-

expressions and you can literally peep into a dog's soul!

Here are a few other emotions they express through their eyes:

- ✓ **Eyes wide open:** He is alert: When your dog is feeling playful and ready for an interesting activity, his eyes will fly wide open
- ✓ **Staring eyes:** He perceives a threat or challenge. Dog-stare is usually not a good sign.
- ✓ **Avoids eye contact:** Yes, dogs also avoid eye contact, but not when they are embarrassed to meet a person. Their avoidance behavior usually indicates

submission. If your dog cannot look at you in the eye, take it that he is guilty (somewhat similar to embarrassment), polite or submissive.

- ✓ **Winking:** That's very, very naughty.

Your dog is being playful if he blinks his eyes at you. This is another body language sign that they share in common with human beings.

- ✓ **Squint eyes:** A sure sign of aggression.

When a dog is angry and preparing to attack, he narrows his eyes. An attack would follow. Be prepared for it.

## **Demolishing Myths**

Here are a few, common myths about dogs. After reading these, you can learn to pick and decode your dog's body language correctly:

- ✓ **Smile always implies happiness:** Not necessarily. As discussed earlier, different dog species use a 'smile' expression differently. It can connote happiness or aggression. To be able to correctly decipher the meaning, you need to co-relate the smile with other body language signs. Only when a dog is relaxed will a smile mean a smile.
- ✓ **Yawn means boredom.** On the contrary, a yawn can mean many things. Again

interpret it in context to the other body language signals and the dog's physical environment. Sometimes, a yawn in a dog can mean tension or confusion.

Otherwise, a dog can also yawn when he is tired or bored.

✓ **Stretched mouth implies pain:**

When a dog stretches his mouth back and slightly opens it, it can mean he is either in pain or is very sick. Sickness can also be corroborated with heavy panting.

- ✓ **Lip licking signifies a whole lot of emotional states:** Again, dog's lip licking (as in humans) can mean he's starving,



sexually aroused or is stressed and feeling threatened. Of course, when a dog licks another dog it usually implies courtship. This is akin to human kissing.

✓ **Bared teeth show anger:** Wrong. When a dog is aggressive it bares the teeth but it doesn't mean it might attack. When the muzzle is not wrinkled it shows the dog is showing anger and issuing a warning. An attack would follow only if you ignore these initial war cries. If the teeth are bare, lips pushed back and muzzle is wrinkled then the dog is surely preparing to mount a massive attack. Step in and prevent it.

In the final analysis, dogs talk to you all the time. The onus is on you to stop, pause and listen. The rewards of this would be many. You would be able to choose the most appropriate behavior in response; you will not upset the animal and you will end up making great friends with him.

The dog feelings and behavior are widely researched subjects in animal psychology. Being a responsible dog owner you must understand your dog's emotions and treat them right. This would help you establish a deep and intimate relationship with your dog. Even at this very minute, your dog is talking to you.

An important question is - are you  
listening?

## **Chapter 6: Caring for Your Dog: It's Not Easy, But it's Not Hard Either**

**N**ow that you've brought your four-legged friend home, it's time to prepare for the easy and the difficult bit!

Even though having a pet can completely change your perspective on life, it's a big responsibility. Actually, a very BIG responsibility. Having a pet means committing to look after another life, making small sacrifices and making time for the new addition in the family.

Of course,  
the biggest  
responsibility of  
all is committing  
your undivided  
(well, almost)  
LOVE and  
affection.

### **Did You Know?**

Did you know that each day in the U.S., an average of 10,000 humans are born? Sure, that's a lot, but gets this: on the same day in the same country, an average of 70,000 puppies and kittens are also born! Do the math. As long as these birth rates exist, there will never be enough homes for all the animals. The result is that each day, American animal shelters are forced to destroy approximately 30,000 dogs and cats.

It's not  
easy but its well worth a try for the infinite  
gains it brings!

Your returns your investment – in the  
form of food, water, safe shelter, regular  
veterinary care, exercise, companionship-  
manifolds in huge dollops of unconditional

love, loyalty, and friendship. However before you bring a pet into your home, make sure your house is pet-ready. Make sure that:

✓ There any holes, broken concrete, drains, or swimming pools that your pet could fall into or get stuck in?

✓ There are no dangerous gaps in the fence, or a broken gate, that might allow your new pet to wriggle out of your yard?

✓ There are no medicines, drugs, poisons, like snail bait, antifreeze, or other toxic chemicals within a pet's

reach waiting to be drunk in one fatal swallow?

✓ No dangling electrical cords hanging in the house or outside. Secure them tightly with a cord and industrial tape.

### **Giving Him a Fitting Start**

These are some of the things you could do...

### **Give Him a Name, for Starters**

This can be a fun exercise for the whole family. Get everyone involved in the naming ceremony.

### **Buying Dog Food: Which Is Best?**

There days  
dog owners are  
spoilt for choice.  
Pet food  
manufacturers  
invest billion of  
dollars on finding  
out what can be  
most nutritious  
and tasty dog  
food. Choosing  
the right food for  
your pet is there

the first step to owning a healthy, well-fed,  
well-cared for pet. Experts recommend four

### **Things to Do When You Choose Your Pup**

**Don't buy on impulse.** No matter how cute he looks, find out all about the breed before you zero in on your cutie pie

**Research:** Books, magazines, and web sites. Find out everything that you need to know. You have to pair nicely with your dog.

**Get to know your pet.** Spend time. Get to know him better. See what his personality is and whether the two of you are compatible.

**Find out about leash, licensing and vaccination.** You will find this information on your local government's web site.



criteria to consider: taste, digestibility, calorie intake, and price.

Further, read all the labels carefully.

Foods, even packaged pet food have definite shelf life, so read the manufacture and expiry date carefully, before you feed him out of a box.

### **Groom Him Well**

Make sure that your pet is clean, washed, well-groomed, thick fur with trimmed nails, clear eyes, and clean teeth keep that makes him look, feel and smell nice. Above all, hygiene is good for the dog's general health and upkeep as well.

### **Coat Care**

Without regular brushing and combing,  
your dog's hair can develop mats. Matted hair  
pulls and inflames your dog's

sensitive skin

and can be

painful when

you try to

remove it. Buy

a fine-toothed

### **He'll Teach You Love**

"Nobody can fully understand the  
meaning of love unless he's owned  
a *dog*. A dog can show you more  
honest  
affection with a flick of his tail  
than a man can gather through a  
lifetime of handshakes."

*Gene Hill - The Dog Man*

metal flea comb to loosen the matted hair, at

least once a week, after you have given his a

thorough wash. If your dog's coat is heavily

tangled, don't use a comb on it; you'll just end

up hurting her; use the flea comb instead.

Regular brushing will keep his fur  
shining and skin healthy by improving blood

circulation and  
by releasing  
natural oils to  
the skin surface.

Usually, a weekly  
brush will do the trick.

#### The Best Psychiatrist

"There is no psychiatrist in the  
world like a puppy  
licking your face."

*Bern Williams*

### **Pedicure**

Because your dog doesn't wear shoes,  
don't overlook routine dog foot care. She more  
than you is vulnerable to developing scrapes  
and abrasions from cement and gravel  
walkways. Examine your dog's feet on a  
regular basis to make sure she hasn't picked  
up any foxtails or goat head stickers. Tease  
our grass blades gently from the paws with a

pair of tweezers. Clean small cuts, and apply antibiotic ointment or cream on it to provide instant relief. Seek veterinary treatment for severe sores and cuts.

## **Dental Care**

Although dogs don't usually get cavities, they can be vulnerable to gum disease caused by tartar buildup. When calcium deposits (plaque) hardens, it forms tartar (or calculus), that can cause inflamed gums and a sore mouth. This condition is called gingivitis.

Gum disease is one of the most common problems veterinarians see in dogs. Besides causing bad breath, it can make eating and chewing painful and the infection can later

spread to other parts of the body, causing more damage and suffering. Indeed, any kind of bacterial or fungal infection must immediately be shown to the vet otherwise it can cause infections and permanent damage in vital organs, such as kidneys and heart.

## **Ear Care**

Your dog's ears are delicate, sensitive, finely-tuned organs that enable him to pick up even the faintest sound from the surroundings. Don't let anything mess up this natural 'alarm system.' Infections can cause painful, even fatal ear problems in dogs, so take him to a vet as soon as you spot a problem. Give your dog's

ears a complete cleaning weekly or monthly, as needed.

Always be on the lookout for the early warning signs of an ear infection, which is a not-so-uncommon problem for dogs. If you spot your dog frequently shaking his head, there could be reason to suspect he has sore ears. Remain alert to foul-smelling ears as well – that’s another sure giveaway of ear infection that needs urgent treatment. Whatever the problem may be – a discharge or a sore – take him to the veterinarian for a thorough check-up.

## **Eye Care**

Like the ears, your dog's eyes are also very sensitive, ultra-fine organs.

Check your dog's eyes daily, and wipe away dried matter from the

corners of the eyes using a moistened cotton ball. Examine the eyes for redness, tearing, or discharge. Eye infections that don't clear up within 24 hours should be examined by a trained veterinarian.

The most commonly occurring eye problems in dogs are excessive tearing

### **About Sandy**

My most satisfying aspect of animal training is a very simple moment. After a show when I leave the stage door... and there is a crowd gathered, sometimes I hear someone say the following and it makes it all worthwhile. "How did they make that dog do that?" I smile because I am the only "they" and I do it with love.

William Berloni, dog trainer, about transforming a severely abused dog from the pound into Sandy in the Broadway production of Annie.

(usually caused by allergies, infections, injuries, or irritation), conjunctivitis (inflammation of the membrane that lines the eyelid, the conjunctiva), and foreign objects in the eye. An unusual amount of discharge in the corners of the eyes or a reddish or “meaty” appearance of the conjunctiva is signs of conjunctivitis.

Conjunctivitis is especially common in dogs that ride with their heads stuck out of car windows or spend a lot of time outdoors in windy, dusty weather. In mild cases, conjunctivitis sometimes clears up on its own. If the problem persists, take your dog to the vet for an examination.



## Bathing a Dog

Dogs  
don't need to  
be bathed  
frequently, if  
not daily  
whenever they  
get soiled or  
smelly. He's

### Can't Think Like a Canine

Men cannot think like dogs....  
[There exists] a sharp difference  
in the mental capacity of humans  
and canines. For example, a  
human who is given an intricate  
problem will spend all day trying  
to solve it, but a canine will have  
the sense to give up and do  
something else instead.

Corey Ford

going to resist it, but make him accept it as a  
necessary evil, something he has to brace  
himself for, at least once a week. Get him  
accustomed to the bathing ritual from a young  
age, so he doesn't throw a fit everything you  
give him a scrub.

Have everything you need laid out within easy reach before you start the water: brush, cotton balls, shampoo, and towels. Also, place a rubber mat in the bottom of the sink or tub so your pup won't slip and slide. Then fill it with warm -- not hot -- water.

Gently let the dog in. Brush him thoroughly, from the skin out, to remove tangles and loose hair. Place cotton balls snugly -- but not deeply -- in your dog's ears so that soapy water doesn't enter it and cause fungal infections later.

Place your  
dog in the water,  
holding her  
gently but firmly.  
Wet her from the  
head down,  
making sure you

### **I Love Them All**

I like them all—pointers, setters,  
retrievers, spaniels—what have you.  
I've had good ones and bad of  
several kinds. Most of the bad ones  
were my fault and most of the  
good ones would have been good  
under any circumstances.

Gene Hill

keep water out of her eyes and ears. Apply the  
dog shampoo – every chemist has it. Now,  
lather him up, working the shampoo down to  
the skin. Don't let the shampoo get into the  
dog's eyes and ears.

Lastly, rinse him thoroughly with  
lukewarm water. When done, pick him out of  
the tub, pat her dry and tell her what a good  
pup he is. Towel-dry her until she is damp. He

will also wriggle and shake off water droplets from his body – all pups do that and it could be fun watching them shake themselves dry! Else put him out on the veranda to dry.

### **When to Take Him to the Dog Parlor**

Frequent trips to a skilled, professional groomer are not needed, but if you take him to a parlor once in a while, you'd be pleasantly surprised to see his new, freshly groomed look.

For dogs with long, thick, or heavy coats, it's best to make this trip more often. Other dog owners can do the job very well at home – and cheaply – with a little learning, patience and practice.

If a dog's coat is heavily matted or soiled, it may be better to have the entire coat shaved, without causing any injury. Again this job must best be left to a professional.

All said and done, remember that the average life span of a dog is around ten to fifteen years. Ask yourself if you are willing to make a commitment to the care and well being of your dog for that long, otherwise junk the idea.

## **Chapter 7: Communicating with Your Dog:**

### **Body Language and Calming Signals**

**D**ogs, being flock animals, have a language for communication with each other. Canine language comprises of a large variety of signals that use body, face, ears, tail, sounds, movement, and expression.

#### **Speak With Your Body**

Sometimes, when your voice command doesn't work so well, you should also use your body language to maximize the effectiveness of your order. Dogs can actually understand our gestures very well. For example, when you point at something, he won't assume you're just stretching your arm, but will look toward where you're pointing.

Another interesting trait is that a dog's innate ability to communicate via sign language is easily lost or reinforced through practice or experience.

If you

begin to understand the meaning of a dog's sign language – the signals that they use with each other and – and start using it among yourself, you can increase your ability to

### **Less is More**

Dogs can understand lots of words, but most of them, just like kids, don't understand and don't like hearing lengthy sentences.

Therefore when you tell your dog to do things, keep your command short and simple. Try to say it slowly. Enunciating is even better.

Believe it or not, dogs can also pick up on your tone of voice and learn what kind of mood you are in, then respond accordingly. So watch your tone of voice when you talk to your dog. A grumpy owner will likely make a mean dog.

communicate better and instantly connect with your dogs.

## **Use of Calming Signals**

The most important of all signals are the calming signals that this species uses to maintain social hierarchy and resolve any kind of dispute within the flock.

Dogs have this superlative ability – that, we as humans also have, to an extent – is to calm themselves when confronted with shock (threatening or stress-inducing circumstance) and calm others, as well. As an instance, let's imagine a situation where a dog has to greet and acknowledge another dog (although that doesn't happen; their first response is to bark



and chase away the intruder). Dogs are fiercely territorial.

They know that an intruder implies food scarcity, scarcity of mating partners etc., so their first,

involuntary reaction is to gang up against the new kid on the block!

A soft whoof may mean, "I am the boss here. Don't mess with me."

A whoof! Woof! May mean, "Take the warning and clear out fast", while an

### **Talking to a Dog Is like**

### **Talking to a Baby?**

Are these people talking to their babies or their dogs:

"Coochie-coochie-coooo!"

"Who's a clever little boy?"

"Oh my God, the living room carpet is ruined!"

unending stream of whoof! Woof! Means, “If you don’t move, I shall tear you to pieces. Stand warned!!!!”

As in a corporate circle, this should be sufficient warning from the ‘boss dog’ to the ‘underdog.’ Underdogs that don’t pay heed to these warnings in the underworld, dog world or the corporate world invite a lot of trouble and risk their position in the hierarchy.

The sign language that dogs use is very sophisticated and elaborate and there are different modes for conveying different moods and intentions. Above all, the language is universal to all dogs and no matter what breed

they belong to they understand each other extremely well.

Confusion arises when they use the same sign language for communicating with their human masters, as well on the assumption that the latter would understand them as well as dogs do. Unfortunately, humans do not understand dog language, as well as, dogs do. But with patience, time and a little effort, they can be taught to read and comprehend dog language.

For starters, dog language has to be interpreted in context to other dog signals, such as tail wagging. Even tail wagging can mean different things at different points in

time, depending upon the wagging speed. A slowly wagging tail indicates uncertainty while a wildly wagging tail can indicate excitement and happiness. This latter sign is used to greet their master after an interval.

Some dogs (not all) also use this sign to convey a calm mental state, and not necessarily as an appeasement gesture.

Likewise, bared teeth do not always imply an agitated mood. If you were to interpret it as such and use this as an excuse to hit your dog, you may actually end up agitating him – so don't even try!

Instead you could use one of the following commands to calm an agitated dog, after determining that he is truly agitated!

### **Dog Calming Signals**

Here are a few common dog signals that you can learn to read:

#### **Head Turn**

Head turn implies the dog wishes to avoid a conflict of any kind. Yell and shout at your dog and he's quietly turn its head indicating he's finding it difficult not to retaliate, yet wants to avoid a run-in with you.

This is the dog's way of telling you to calm down, forget it and bury the hatchet.

Sometimes, he won't even bother to do a complete head turn, but just avert his eyes and avoid a direct eye contact with you. Find out what's bothering him and try to resolve the issue and pacify your pet.

### **Tongue Licking**

When a dog rapidly flicks the tongue over the nose or lips, he is letting another dog know he poses no threat. It's a very quick, submissive, gesture, a subtle cue that other dogs are able to spot and respond, accordingly.

### **Slow Movement**

When your dog feels threatened or worried he will resort to slow and ponderous movements. This may happen when you

angrily summon your dog. At such a time, he may choose to approach you in a measured, slow manner, hoping to calm you down before he reaches you. And if you are unclear about the meaning of the gesture, you may presume he's trying to annoy you.

## **Curving**

Curving is also a calming signal. Ever noticed your dog curve into a banana shape when you are angry with him? The gesture says he wants you to 'cool it.' Another occasion when they may use this posture is when they are sniffing a new dog and walking around him in circles in a slow, curvaceous

walk. Relax and allow your dog to finish the ritual before you impatiently pull the leash.

## **Freezing**

Often dogs will completely freeze when worried or threatened. You will often witness this kind of a behavior at the entrance to a veterinary clinic. His memory tells him it's not a pleasant place and he begins to feel a wee bit scared. At this point your dog's flight, fight or freeze instincts kick in.

Flight (escape) is impossible since he is on a leash; fight is often the last resort, so freeze is what he will do in this situation. When he does that, don't panic. Understand why he is frozen stiff, what you can do to calm



him and gently tug at his leash to get him to move again.

### **Paw Lifting**

The paw is often held out as a peace gesture when the dog feels unsure about its surroundings, threatened by other dogs or stranger-humans. Sometimes, it's used to convey friendliness. You may also witness this gesture when you have something the dog craves for – such as candy, or a piece of a bone.

### **Yawning**

Dogs, like humans yawn when they are bored stiff. The gesture conveys discomfort and distress. Quite often it is accompanied by

a head turn. Circumstances where this gesture is commonly used may include when he:

- ✓ Hears angry shouts
- ✓ Hears heated arguments
- ✓ Has spotted an unfamiliar dog in his territory
- ✓ Is nearing a vet's office
- ✓ Has met an aggressive dog
- ✓ Has been through a long training session

You can diffuse a stressful situation by yawning yourself to let the dog know it's okay

to feel a little stressed out and that now is the time to unwind and relax.

### **Do All Dogs Use Sign Language?**

Yes, they do.

But some dogs don't like to play by the doggie rules. Or they may lose this ability later after an injury or traumatic event. Puppies are extremely fast at learning these calming signals, so it appears that the ability is innate – they are born with it!

They may ‘forget’ the use of this ancient language when they discover, the hard way that calming signals don’t always prevent dangerous elements. Those unfortunate events happen despite the use of these calming

signals. Too much time on the leash can also make them lose this ability to communicate with other dogs and humans but on the other hand, this cannot be a valid excuse to not leash them at all!

Maybe what you can, as an owner on guard, do is keep him at an arm's length away from a threat inducing stimuli, such as another dog, and leave the rest to the dog. He will figure out a way of communicating with the other dog.

After reading this section, can you recall any calming signals you may have spotted in your dog?

Jot those down here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 8: What Owners Often Misunderstand About Them

**T**here is a subtle difference between a dog's body language and a human being's. First of all the range is different. Our symbols are more complex, evolved and elaborate. Their sign language is less evolved, but there could be a few similarities.

### MYTH:1

#### He Bit Me Unprovoked

WRONG! Subtle body language signs that convey important meaning about a dog's current state of mind are often overlooked. If these signals were 'picked up' and the person had changed their behavior towards the dog, the bite may not have happened.

For instance, when we are tense, our body also stiffens and we kind of freeze dead in our tracks. When pleased, we nod our heads vigorously; while a dog wags his tail. These are minor cultural (oops species) differences.

That said dogs do have a fairly rich body language that they use to great effect. They use it to convey

## **MYTH: 2**

### **Dogs Like to be Hugged and Kissed**

Well, not necessarily and certainly not all dogs. Whilst there are dogs that do accept hugging and kissing, others simply tolerate our human show of affection whilst others simply don't enjoy our 'human' greeting protocol at all. Dogs can be desensitized to our hugs and kisses, but to assume that all canines like how we physically show our affection can put you and the dog in an awkward situation.

every which  
mood state -  
relaxed, happy,  
nervous,  
frustrated or  
angry.

And  
sometimes we  
are also  
mistaken in  
assuming that  
what we have  
read about dog

language or the gestures that we use; imply  
the same in the dog world as well.

Unfortunately, it's not as simple as that.

### **MYTH: 3**

**This dog will like me because  
all dogs like me and I know  
dogs.**

WRONG! All too often, this statement is followed by the person approaching a dog who visibly does not want to be approached. The dog often displays signs such as turning their head away, yawning, stiffened body posture, or whites of the eyes showing. All these indicate the dog doesn't want contact with this person and, unsurprisingly, can end in the dog acting defensively.



Because dogs don't have a well-developed speech pattern, and their range of body signs is also somewhat limited; they often use the same gesture to convey more than one mood – and that's where all the confusion begins to kick in!

A wagging tail for instance can convey pleasure and happiness under one set of circumstances and boredom, fear or protectiveness.

The poor animal may only be using his tail to shoo away a fly!

The problem is that with animals, you can never tell!

A dog behaving aggressively may be a mean dog, or he may be a beloved pet that is defending his territory, or proclaiming his ownership over a treasured toy, his master, or his food!

He may be afraid, or in pain. A dog destroying property or leaving a mess in the front yard may be bored, angry (because he's been left alone at home to fend for himself), may not really fathom that what he's doing is unacceptable, or may have a serious medical condition that needs to be attended to.

Therefore, whatever you do, don't generalize. What applies to one dog, may not

apply to another. And of course, what applies to you, may not apply to your dog, at all.

Remember what we said earlier about you two belonging to two different species?

### **Common Myths and Misconceptions**

We have already discussed the mystery of a wagging tail. You may nod in satisfaction and conclude that your pet is happy. So he is wagging its tail. But he may also be nervous. In such a situation, you would play it wise if you pay close attention to the wagging style.

Is the movement slow and ponderous?

Is the wagging fluid and smooth?

Is it furious and jerky?

All three gestures may imply three different emotions.

A fluid wag from side to side with the tail held high may imply a happy state of mind.

A nervous wag is usually jerky and the tail is held parallel to the ground.

A slow and ponderous wag implies just that – the dog is himself confused. Doesn't know whether he has reason to be happy or nervous, say, when he's meeting his owner after a long gap.

Think of Tom Hank's dog in the movie *Cast Away*. It was spoofed in so many

television

commercials

later to convey

doggie-

intelligence!

Very few

people realize

that dogs,

much like

humans, can

be extremely

adept at

masking there

true feelings. For example, if you are playing

hide and seek with your dog and it somehow

senses that you are unhappy about a situation

#### **MYTH: 4**

**My dog gets enough exercise  
from being left in my big  
backyard.**

WRONG! Whether they have a smaller or larger backyard, dogs don't typically go off and 'exercise themselves', but instead look forward with baited breath to be taken away from their every day yard and investigate the world they live in. Like us, dogs benefit greatly socially and physically from exposure to new and stimulating environments. It's great for their wellbeing and for the state of your backyard!

at work, he will act dull and listless, even when he is having fun with the game, because dogs like to mimic their owners' body language and that's another point where all the confusion starts!

Dogs like babies take cues from the humans around them. If you laugh at a comedy sequence, they laugh with you; if you cry, a minute later they will begin to cry with you. They need you to help them decide how they should behave in a given situation.

They don't really trust their emotional intelligence. They trust yours.

Another thing: Dogs do like to act close to their masters. They prefer to be in the same

room, under the table or desk where the master is working. You may read it as a gesture of affection. But in the doggie world, he's just following the head of the pack!

Also remember that while a dog is making eye contact with you, it does not imply that he's paying close attention to what you are saying. In fact, a prolonged eye contact may indicate trouble for you. A submissive dog will gaze at his master, then admit defeat and drop his eyes. But not a dominant dog. He will wait for you to break eye contact first, and if you don't, he may respond by charging at you!

Have you had a dog that was so slow that just when you thought his house training

was complete, you  
one day stumble  
upon a puddle on  
the rug where he  
has urinated!  
Again, don't make  
the mistake of  
assuming that  
your toilet training  
has failed.

#### **MYTH:5**

##### **Dogs See in Black & White**

Dogs can see color, but not the way most humans do. Based on the types of cones in the canine retina, dogs probably see colors best on the blue side of the spectrum. Canine color vision is thought to be similar to red-green colorblindness in humans, though not exactly the same. It is believed that dogs see primarily in blue, greenish-yellow, yellow and various shades of gray.

Perhaps he has a medical condition.  
Sometimes, a dog urinates to indicate he's  
scared, or it may signal his submissiveness.  
Don't react. Just try and get to the bottom of  
the things. Find out the real cause to every  
doggie act. Finally, destructive chewing of your



favorite shirt could be a sign of boredom, a signal that your pet needs more time and attention and certainly more excitement and stimulation in his life to put his teeth on a more appropriate place!

Or simply, the dog may be facing separation anxiety.

### **In sum...**

The many ways and means by which a dog communicates to you can be so complex and perplexing that it would take ages and loads of understanding before you can proclaim you know your dog completely.

But remain patient, and mark my words, you will get there someday, sooner rather than later.

Meanwhile, all that you need to bear in mind is that dogs like children, don't lie. You can take their gestures at face value, because they are too naïve to hide their true emotions behind false symbols.

Dogs' language is primarily based upon visual cues. That's why they mimic our body language better than we can mimic theirs, but with a slight twist.

The payoff to learning to read what your dog is saying will not just make you a better master, it will also help you immediately

respond to your dog's emergency needs and prevent a disaster. This will automatically lead to the development of a more rewarding, trusting relationship between the two of you.

## Chapter 9: Know Your Dog; Train Your Dog

**F**irst ask  
yourself  
why you  
desire a well-  
trained, disciplined  
dog. Is it because:

### **Don't**

Don't make the mistake  
of treating your dogs like  
humans, or they'll treat you  
like dogs.

Martha Scott

- ✓ Your earlier pet was extremely  
disobedient and an embarrassment to  
you?
- ✓ You're fed up of your dog's frequent  
tantrums.

✓ You can no longer stand his constant whining and barking.

✓ You finally

want to develop a healthy relationship with your dog...

### **Recognize Peter Pan**

A dog is like an eternal Peter Pan, a child who never grows old and who, therefore, is always available to love and be loved.

Aaron Katcher,  
American educator and  
psychiatrist

Whatever be the reason, despair not.

Every dog needs to be trained and your demand is justified.

Disciplined pets are a joy to the family and maintain harmony and order in the house.

Set rules also make dogs feel secure and 'settled in.' They don't exactly like surprises of

any kind. Just make sure that you set the same set of rules for each day, whatever be the circumstances, or your mood swings on a particular day.

### **Reasons to Train Your Dog**

- ✓ Training finds a productive channels for a dog's surplus energy
- ✓ Training builds your dog's behavioral repertoire.
- ✓ The more acceptable behaviors a dog learns, the less room there is for undesirable behaviors.
- ✓ Training is fun!
- ✓ Training increases the odds that a dog will stay in the family for his lifetime

Let's face it...not everyone knows how to train a dog. It doesn't come easy to everybody. But just as you try and instill a sense of discipline in your child, you have to act responsible with a dog and make him adhere to certain ground rules of the family.

Without that, you will end up having to constantly yell, scold or punish him.

Remember dogs are social animals. You have to socialize them so they are less animal and more social. Don't let him get away with anything and everything – soiling your rug, tearing apart your new dress, knocking off things, barking incessantly, dig holes in your porch, picking up issues with other dogs and snarling at little children or attempting to God forbid! **Bite** them!

Those are certainly not signs of a domesticated animal. On the other extreme, don't be overly harsh with your dog. Training before the pup has turned six months of age

could be fine if the puppy is having fun at these sessions. Else, be a little more patient and understanding. In the end, exploring, playing and learning together is also a kind of "training" for your dog, through which you can teach him so many big and small things. Whatever you do, just make sure that your training sessions are:

Loads of fun for your pup and are not taken as drudgery.



Further,  
expect a few  
setbacks. Not  
crushing defeats,  
just a few, small  
setbacks. Their  
memory or

### **A Tribute**

Dogs are our link to paradise.

They don't know evil or  
jealousy or discontent. To sit  
with a dog on a hillside on a  
glorious afternoon is to be  
back in Eden, where doing  
nothing was not boring -- it  
was peace.

Milan Kundera

intelligence is not as sharp as ours, so you'll  
have to be patient and do tons of repetition.  
What you taught him yesterday would easily  
be forgotten, if you don't make him practice  
that at least once every day for a whole week.  
Gradually, before you know it, he will learn.  
Just sit back and watch.

## Chapter 10: All Work and No Play Makes

### Your Pug a Dull Dog

**S**pare the exercise and you will make him dull and listless.

Before you decide to keep a pet, you must

factor in

exercise into

your routine.

He would

need plenty of fresh air and exercise, and not

just in your front yard!

#### **All Dogs Are Wolves**

Even the tiniest Poodle or Chihuahua is still a wolf at heart.

Dorothy Hinshaw Patent in *Dogs: The Wolf Within*

You can of course choose a breed that does not need heavy dose of activity, but some limb movement, they all need and must have.

Daily, regulated dosage of exercise will channelize all his pent-up negative emotional energy - anxiety, stress, loneliness, and aggression. Buy a pedometer for yourself and your pet and step out of the home for a brisk run, walk, bike, cycling expedition, swimming, anything.

### **The “No, No” Words**

Throw out these words from your vocabulary - punishment, discipline, bad, judgment, obedience, dominance, alpha, and submission. Teach him by example. Don't yell

at him and he won't bark at you. Don't litter your room and he won't litter your home. Don't talk down to him and he won't scare the hell out of others he perceives are less powerful than him. Be a leader.

You need to learn how leaders establish rules and set up win-win situations for others (read dogs) to follow. Use scientific instruction techniques to modify your dog's unruly behavior.

Over time your dog will learn that the consequence of every bad behavior is bad and good behavior is good. As mentioned before, don't make punishment, intimidation, dominance, fear or force a consequence. Just

withholding a treat from your dog is a good  
enough  
negative  
reinforcer,  
unless he's  
done  
something really upsetting.

### **A Friendly Creature**

The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue.

Unknown

## **Don't Terrorize Your Dog**

Whatever you may do or not do, don't be a tyrant. The dog species is not meant to be meek or quiet, so don't expect him to behave non-characteristically. Don't create a new species of a fearful dog, who hides behind you, mistrusts all strangers and all children. Fear

is not a healthy or likeable trait, in anyone, dog or a human being.

Fear is almost as bad as aggression. You must find ways of weeding it out. It's also a trifle sad if your dog (or your child, for that matter) comes to fear you instead of follow your rules out of love and respect. Somewhere inside the dog should know that you are making him follow these rules for his own good. You are not trying to control his environment; you are only trying to make the environment safe for everyone in the house, including him.

In the end, obedience training is extremely important for potty trained. It's also

important for correcting other problem behavior such as chewing, biting, jumping and incessant barking.

### **Don't Set Same Rules For Every Dog**

Different species of dogs must have different rules set for them. Investigate the breed you are interested in before you set house rules for it. Breeders, veterinarians, trainers and owners can all guide you about the training needs of different breeds. Some breeds learn quickly; others demand lots more time and patience.

With all breeds, being too hard on the dog will only make him more rebellious. You have to gradually bring him round to see your perspective and adopt your rules. You must

certainly tell your dog what to do, but also learn to respect him for whom he is. Don't expect a lazy breed to overnight turn into a vigorous, exercise-loving dog and vice versa.

Also reward him for good behavior – if he does something to please you, reward him immediately. Just a pat on the back, a light rub will do the trick and in all likelihood the behavior will be repeated.

Praise and rewards are the keys to successful training. If your dog works hard at pleasing you with his good behavior, the least you can do as a proud and appreciative owner is reward him for his efforts and make him happy in turn!



Disciplined dogs make for wonderful  
pets. With love and patience, you can reach  
there.

## **BONUS CHAPTER: Dog Etiquette from the Owner's Perspective**

**O**nce upon a time, dogs were

banished to  
the barn or the  
backyard,  
while only the  
celebs would  
tot their tiny,  
lap dogs to red  
carpet affairs  
in true celeb

### **The Perfect Pet Gift**

- Don't buy a dog for a friend or family member.
- For dog lovers, canine-themed products make great gifts.
- Toys, treats, and gift certificates are good doggy presents.
- If you want to buy toys for a dog, consider factors such as age, breed, sex, and size.
- If buying treats, purchase healthy treats made from fresh ingredients, with no chemicals or preservatives.

style!

Today, the rules of ownership have remarkably changed. And we expect even pets to follow rules when they are inducted into a family. As a clever wag once said, “puppy mischief can be cute, but a puppy with good manners is even cuter.”

Therefore, teach your puppy the basic socialization skills and the good sense to follow fundamental commands such as look, sit, down, stay, come, loose leash walking, leave it, wait, settle and greeting exercises.

### **What’s Up, Dog?**

Quick. Answer these questions to



**Save a Life...Adopt One  
More...Pet!**

There is always room for Just One More Pet. So if you have room in your home and room in your heart... Adopt Just One More!

figure out how much in need of training your pet is:

✓ Does  
your

dog jump up on you and your guests, steal food, looks untidy and behaves unruly?

✓ As you take him out of the house for some air, does your dog walk you rather than you walking your dog?

✓ What kind of dog would you like?  
A dog that is timid and submissive or one that is good-

natured, happy and adjusted, a well-mannered member of the family?

If your answer to these questions is ‘yes’ – remember that teaching your dog good manners is one of the best things you can every do for your dog, for yourself and

### **Taking Care of Pet Nannies**

- To find a professional pet sitter to care for your dog, contact your veterinarian
- Your pet sitter should be trained in animal-handling skills and first aid
- Confirm that the animal professional is bonded and insured and has at least three references.
- Introduce your pet sitter to appropriate neighbors and building staff
- Ask your sitter to keep a daily log of your dog’s activities.

other members of your family. Also remember that...

## **Good Manners Start At Home**

Charity begins at home. If you are rude and uncouth with your neighbor, you cannot expect your dog to be a model of impeccable behavior.

You also owe it to your neighbors. They may not love dogs as much as you do, so why make them suffer your pet's bad behavior in the elevator?

When riding in an elevator, take your dog (even when he is on a leash) to the far corner so that he's not perceived a nuisance by others. Do not wear a hang-dog (pun

intended) when he attempts to jump on strangers – it’s certainly not funny!

You must, at all times be in absolute control of your animal. Hurry through lobbies or take freight elevators or back exits if you haven’t had a chance to

instill these basic etiquettes in your dog. Never allow your dog to urinate on someone’s car tyre, the building’s entrance, or a plant on the

### **Best Guest Behavior**

- Only ask a close family member or friend if you can bring your dog along for a visit to their home
- If your host does not offer your pet an invitation, don’t try to change her mind.
- Pack your pet’s possessions, including an odor eliminator and stain remover, in case he has an accident.
- Take care when introducing him to dogs in the household.

front yard. If you have a young pup that cannot control himself, make sure to carry paper towels and odor neutralizer and use it as soon as he is done.

Don't take him on shopping errands to supermarkets where dogs are not allowed and then plead with the guard to hold his leash. For your pet's safety, leave him at home. A dog left tied to a post or parking meter is an easy target for teasing or theft, so don't even think about it!

Imagine would you do that to your child?

Then why do it to your dog?

## **Basic Petiquettes**



✓ DO NOT let your dog pee on  
your neighbor's hydrangeas.

✓ DO NOT let your dog poop  
on the lawn at the park.

✓ DO NOT let your dog drool  
on another dog

✓ DO let your dog enjoy a  
swim in a pool, but only if you're there  
to watch for his safety

✓ DO travel with your dog but  
do not assume that just because a hotel  
allows dogs, that everybody at the hotel  
is a dog person.

## **A Few More Tips On Dog and Owner**

### **Etiquette:**

#### **When At Home**

For your pet's safety and security of your neighbors and passersby, an unsupervised pet must always stay on your property. If your dog is left alone, keep him in a safe location where he cannot cause any harm or be harmed. In addition..

- ✓ Train your dog to pee in designated areas. If he leaves a mess on your neighbor's lawn, apologize and clean it up right away.
- ✓ Do not allow your dog to bark uncontrollably or jump on strangers.

- ✓ If your dog is an incessant barker, keep him indoors when you're not at home. If he barks when you are at home, learn ways to contain his barking so he's not a nuisance to the neighbors who may want a quieter surrounding.
- ✓ Keep your dog off of tables or countertops where food is prepared or served. Besides the risk of his getting sick from eating foods that are not good for him (such as chocolate), you run the risk of picking up germs that he may bring from the front yard. After all, you don't tell your dog to "wash his paws before coming to the dining table."

## **In Public**

- ✓ Keep your dog on a tight leash when outdoors if he doesn't heed to your voice commands. Further, supervise his whereabouts and behavior at all times.
- ✓ Be extra vigilant when there are children around. If, for some reason, you are unable to keep an eye on him, put him in his crate or another safe place away from the children. Children are three times more likely than adults to be bitten by a dog (of any breed); kids under the age of 15 are the most at risk of being bitten. Don't let your dog be the culprit.

- ✓ Pick up after your dog. Keep clean-up bags with you at all times for doggy messes, no matter where they occur.
- ✓ When meeting hikers or runners on a trail, step to the side to give them space to get by you.
- ✓ Supervise greetings between your dog and another dog or a person.
- ✓ Even if your dog is very friendly, do not let him approach every person you meet. Not everyone likes or is comfortable with dogs.
- ✓ When meeting a stranger, avoid putting tension on the leash, which may put your dog on alert to be wary. Keep an

eye on your dog's body language, but stay relaxed.

- ✓ If a stranger wants to pet your dog, tell him to let your dog approach him, rather than having him approach your dog.
- ✓ If your dog seems uncomfortable with greeting another dog or person, never force the meeting. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

All said and done, remember that while dogs can be domesticated, they would still remain some of their doggie traits and should.

So long as they don't forget that you are the master and you don't forget that you must

always remain in control of the situation, you have nothing to fear.

Congratulations on owning such a well-behaved, wonderful dog!