





CHANGING PUPPY BEHAVIOR

Pups –
8
weeks
to 4.5
months

- Bonding (imprint)
- Follow the parent figure
- Easy to manage (well, we think they're easy)
- Major problems – housetraining, destruction, loneliness, etc.

As the Puppy Matures....into an Adolescent

Problems
develop
that can
worry
owners

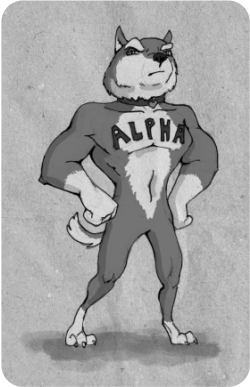
- Puppy starts to wander
- Puppy startles at strange sounds and sights
- Puppy starts destructive cycle in earnest
- Puppy begins to challenge other dogs – including adults
- Puppy challenges OWNER
- Puppy forgets everything owner ever taught him!

EACH PUPPY IS AN INDIVIDUAL, BUT -

- Confident puppies _usually become confident adults
- Submissive puppies usually become subordinate adults
- Fearful puppies often become aggressive



Role
Playing



THE FUNCTION OF ROLES IN ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR

Each dog's temperament is different

Each dog's relationship to its littermates is different

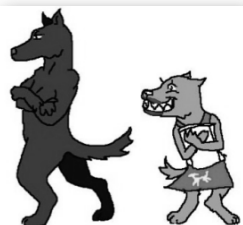
Each dog's relationship to its mom is different



Young dogs who continually play the part of the dominant member of a grouping will maintain that role in **that** pack.

However, given a different pack, the hierarchy changes, and dominant pups become subordinate.

This is important for us!!!!



WHAT IS DOMINANCE



We hear a lot of dominant and submissive dogs...what do they?

- Dominance means different things to different people
- Some think it means bullying
- Some think it means resource guarding
- Some think it means aggression

WHAT IS DOMINANCE

Science considers it to be the ability of an organism to control all the resources it wants to – power, authority, control

- Food when it wants to
- Objects....beds....toys
- Dominance and leadership are not the same thing
 - Dominance is selfish
 - Leadership is selfless – providing for the welfare of others



SUBMISSION, FEAR AND FLIGHT

Submissive means placating, compliant, acquiescent, subservient, docile, deferential and meek

- It is very different from fearful
- A submissive dog will seek forgiveness if she does something "wrong"
- A fearful dog will try to increase the distance between her and the scary person, place, dog or thing

SUBMISSION VS FEAR

Submissive dogs are generally great pets

- They wish to please
- They are sorry if they transgress
- They like being obedient

Fearful dogs are difficult pets

- They choose fight or flight quickly
- They often play "catch me if you can"
- They learn to bite to drive enemies away





DOMINANT OR SUBORDINATE?

If allowed or inadvertently encouraged, even naturally subordinate dogs can develop social dominance over owners and other family dogs

- Bullying, demanding behavior, incipient aggression, resource guarding



ADOLESCENCE

Many adolescents try to establish a relationship and take on a role with any new dog or human they meet



MANY ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS HAVE THEIR ROOTS IN ENERGY AND EXPLORATION



Too much energy and no good place to put it

- The chemical make-up of arousal is the same for excitement and anger
- Adrenalin can flood the brain quickly, causing instant issues
- Most owners wish to "break" the problem – it's much better to diffuse or redirect it



AROUSAL (EXCITEMENT)

- Each dog must be taught to control his own response to high energy
- He needs to learn to be calm in non-calm environments
 - Impulse control is imperative, and should start as soon as possible
- A tired adolescent is usually a good adolescent (though not always)







FEAR

Many puppies can appear to be normal, and develop fear issues in adolescence


Young dogs go through several fear-sensitization periods

- During these times, they are sensitive to learning – both what we want them to and what we don't!
- A young dog that is attacked during one of these periods might become aggressive towards particular types of dogs – black dogs, prick eared dogs, big dogs, small dogs, etc.


The learned behavior can stay with them throughout their lives

- Behavior modification can be difficult and time consuming

A dog that is stung by a bee may never want to go back to that place again!



ADOLESCENT DOGS NEED HUMANS TO HELP THEM



As dogs grow, their vision widens – they explore more of the world than they did as pups. They experiment, and they need guidance.

- Our job is to expose them to the world we want, and only that.
- Reduce the number of times the dog is placed in a position where he can make the wrong decision

To keep them safe and to know what safety is

To maintain dependency now and throughout the dog's life

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS



MANAGEMENT

Do not allow your dog to practice bad behaviors – he will only get better and better at them

- Try not to leave him in a distracting yard, unless you must
- Don't allow fence fighting or barking out of windows/glass doors
- Call the dog back as soon as it begins
- Make sure your young dog sleeps in a place of your choice

Use tie-downs to help teach impulse control


Luke



Management (con't)

Discourage mouthing and other "controlling" behaviors

- Encourage object play
- Encourage play with appropriate canine adults



RELATIONSHIP

- Be predictably unpredictable with your adolescent – keep him guessing where you are
- Be slightly aloof at times – keep him guessing as to how to please you
 - Change his eating schedule in minor ways so that he understands he must please you in order to be fed
 - Hand feed some of the meals...not all

ADOLESCENT NEEDS

- In order to become a fully functional adult, adolescents need to understand the rules of the game – whatever they may be
 - Dogs are naturally crepuscular – they are most active during the morning and evening hours
 - Adolescents are less so, but they can learn to expect activity at those hours



PREDICTABILITY

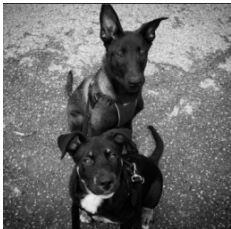
- Predictability is extremely important in the formation of appropriate habits
- *Exercise, relaxation and training are all equally important*
 - More problems occur in adolescents after active weekends
 - Monday morning syndrome
 - A poorly conceived exercise/relaxation plan will make your adolescent worse, not better
 - Like daycare or dog walks three days a week, but not the other days – it can be confusing for some dogs



DOG WALKERS

- Most dog walkers operate midday, which isn't optimal but generally necessary
 - The more consistent the walkers are, the better (daily if possible)
- The fewer dogs they have, the better – some dogs require singleton walks, others do well with two other dogs
 - After that, the more dogs you have the less enjoyable the walk, since the walker has to spend most of her time managing the dogs, and the dogs have no **space** to themselves
 - Space intruded on creates **stress**
 - Stress creates potential for explosions

- Dog Walkers
 - The dogs being walked should be as consistent as possible
 - More fearful dogs require predictable walks; confident dogs require novelty
 - Most adult dogs do not need outside dog walkers unless the owner works long hours, will not or cannot walk the dog twice a day



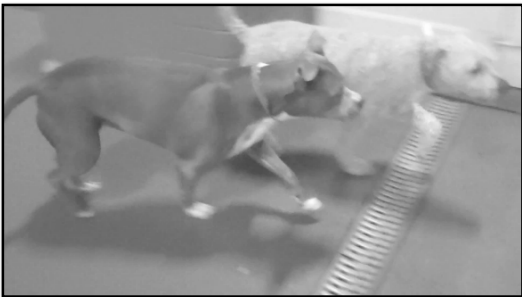
DAYCARE

- Can be very valuable, but needs forethought and follow-through
 - What happens at the daycare every day?
 - Are the dogs put on a schedule including down time (not just letting them do it as they wish)
 - Are they monitored?
 - Do they get people time
 - The more dog-focused a dog becomes, the less likely they will need and obey their owner
 - Dogs are not naturally as dog-focused as people believe, unless other dogs are the only play partners available
 - A good daycare has a reasonable dog/human ratio, and provides people social time



DAYCARE

- A good daycare has individuals working who understand what stress looks like, and provides education to those who don't
- Techs should be able to decide
 - When to allow dogs to work out their relationships
 - When to intervene
 - Which dogs are bullies, introverts or shy
 - Which need predictable companions
 - Which do well with new attendees




TRAINING


- Develop an addiction in the adolescent dog – and make sure it's attached to you
 - Frisbee
 - Ball Playing
- Obedience – all the exercises – they all teach things dogs that they would not do by themselves



SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Fearful adolescents





Fear...

Sometimes it pops out with the change in hormones. Sometimes there have been warnings

- Increased flight distance
- Difficulty in accepting strangers (canine, human or both)
- Barking or lunging, particularly when on a leash, confined or in her own territory
- Misdiagnosed by owners, who may believe it is defiance

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION FOR FEAR

Consistent exposure at a level the dog can handle

- Some stress is good...
- Too much can be counter productive
- Signs of too stressed – unable to eat, or gobbles treats, hyper-vigilant, constant panting







BULLYING

Bully dogs target the weak or the young, often mounting them

- Play tends to over the top
- Get "turned on" by fear
- Behavior mod
 - Play partners should be carefully chosen
 - Obedience is very important
 - Targeted play is very important
 - Interruption when they are overly aroused



Dog Parks...where adolescents go to learn

....What?

DOG PARKS: ARE THEY GOOD FOR DOGS, ARE THEY GOOD FOR OWNERS, HOW DO THEY HELP OR HINDER A DOGS BEHAVIOR??



BENEFITS OF DOG PARKS-- MOST INTERACTION AT DOG PARKS IS POSITIVE

- Exercise
- Safety - for dogs and for non-dog people
- Socialization- for dogs and owners



BUT....THERE CAN BE PROBLEMS

• **If you're not careful**

Design flaws from behavior standpoint

Entrance to Dog Park

- Even double gates (airlock) don't prevent greeting problems
 - Dogs gang up at entrance when new dogs come in



Size

- Large dog parks are best, with limited visuals for the dog
- See...chase...catch
- Small, flat and boring – not so good

Structures

- Both fearful and bully type dogs use them to their own advantage



DOG-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

Dog Parks contribute to the breakdown of the relationship between owners and their dogs

Resources are not under owner control

The reinforcement has nothing to do with the owner, so they don't need 'em

- Safety – the dog learns that the owner can't keep him safe
 - dog's perception of environmental safety is what matters....not owner's perception
 - [Dog Park Bullying](#)



DOG-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

- Potential Aggression
 - If they're not protected by their owners, how do dogs cope?
 - Running or hiding, both of which quickly start pack mentality in other dogs that might normally be very friendly
 - [Rough Play and fear](#)
 - Aggression--does it work, how?
 - [Doesn't work here](#)
 - [Part II](#)
 - [Possession](#)



WHICH DOGS ARE NOT GOOD CANDIDATES FOR DOG PARKS

- Fearful, unsocialized or slightly unsocialized dogs--most likely to use aggression
- Pushy, overbearing, strong willed dogs
 - Most likely to use environment to intimidate and bully
 - Often pack up to bully others
- Paper Tigers--dogs that try to be dominant but aren't stable enough
 - They target the younger and weaker
- Dogs that live together
- Older dogs that have closed their circle of friends
- Puppies!



Which leaves...what?

Young, stable dogs who play well with others!

The responsible use of dog parks falls directly on owners and their ability to manage their dog effectively

UNEDUCATED OWNERS

Most owners have less control over their dog than they think
 They use dog parks as babysitters
 They are unaware of the effects of high arousal and how it contributes to their dogs behavior... (i.e. chasing other dogs, territorial display , or possession aggression)

INFORMED OWNERS



Are aware of their own dogs' limitations and weaknesses



Have enough voice control to pull their dog out of a situation so that they can prevent dangerous levels of arousal



Can recognize and be willing to leave the dog park in order to protect their own dog's safety

THE GUILT FACTOR

Do dogs really need to play with other dogs?
Are owners doing their pets a disservice by not having them play at a park?