

Let's Learn About

Benevolent Leadership



This basis of good leadership is good will to all. Leadership isn't about dominance or showing that you are the top dog. It is about running things with the happiness of everyone as a whole in mind. It's about gentle guidance. It's about being able to think about the big picture. To do that, rules for behavior are very important. Politeness and manners ensure that everyone gets along well.

Politeness and manners can be emphasized throughout your daily life with your dog. Teaching impulse control is something every dog needs to learn. The key to successful benevolent leadership is instilling manners in your dog, so they have a behavior to fall back on. Once you convey to your dog that you are the provider of all; that you take care of all needs, that you solve all problems, etc., your dog feels confident that they only need look to you for direction. You will be building respect for your leadership but you will also be respectful of the partnership that you and your dog are building together. Being a benevolent leader that your dog can trust is the key to building the best relationship with your dog that you possibly can. Having a successful relationship with your dog is the ultimate basis for having a well trained dog.

Key points to remember:

- Have your dog work for every resource at first. i.e.: sit to be served dinner; sit to be let out; no rushing out the door, go out only on cue; sit to be petted; ask politely (sit) to be allowed access to couches and human beds. The sit can also be expanded to a "Sit" & a "Down" or sit plus other action.
- Raised surfaces such as human beds and couches are resources that need to be earned. They should be off-limits to any dog that you are having compliance problems with. However, there is no reason to limit your dog's access to beds and couches if you are not having such a problem. Enjoy their company there if you desire!
- Be in charge of play. If the excitement level is getting too high, stop the play and issue a "Settle" period, even if you have to leash your dog to you and sit quietly to obtain this. Reward for calm behavior. If calm comes easy, the reward can be a return to play.
- Reward your dog every time they look to you for direction. In the same vein, reward your dog every time they offer polite behavior without being asked. Rewards don't mean just food. In fact, they should mean verbal rewards, affection, play and life rewards more than food during the course of an average day. But food should definitely play a large part in rewards, especially for specific training. Good leaders lead without bribery, but they always reward lavishly! Make it the most wonderful thing in the world to please you and you will set the stage for success.

You and your dog are in this together. You are not adversaries. Your job is to look out for your dog and to teach him that you will handle every situation successfully, so he need never worry. Of course, training your dog involves teaching him to problem-solve and think on his own to determine what behavior YOU want, but you have the final say.

That is what true leadership and guidance is all about. Good leaders guide without dictating or smothering. Good leaders don't punish mistakes, they reward successes. Good leaders make following fun. Good leaders inspire their followers. It is up to you to be the most interesting game in town!



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