

## **GDOC – Leadership Talk**

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### **The Dog Pack**

To be an effective leader of your dog you need to understand and use effectively its pack structure (Peck Order) Dogs are sociable animals, they interact a lot with each other, they have their hierarchy but they are never equal in rank. To avoid constant conflict over “Boss Dog” each group has a peck order. Only one dog is the boss at any given time. This Boss Dog is in total control of its pack. Every other dog, which lives within the boundaries of this pack, answers to the leader. Every other dog is placed in order of dominance in the pack with the most submissive dog at the bottom of the pack. The pack structure is the dog’s whole way of life. It is how it lives within a community of other canines or with your family. If you want your dog to fit happily in your family when training your dog, you must be a confident leader – and there must be an understood hierarchy. Then you and your dog will have peace and understanding.

## **The Human Pack**

When we bring home that cute little puppy most people think they are adopting it into our family. How wrong they are! We have just become members of the dogs pack, replacing its Mum, Dad and littermates. Regardless of whether or not we acknowledge the peck order in our family the pup picks it up and slots itself in- as high up the order as we will allow! This is fine if it is a submissive pup and accepts it's place at the bottom of the pack but there is a problem if the pup is shown no leadership and is allowed to show dominant behaviour towards all or some family members. Understanding this code of behaviour by which a dog lives will allow us to live with our dogs without causing undue stress.

## **Leadership**

- ❖ For Owners to become good leaders they need to develop an inter relationship with their dog and when doing this they need to be Firm Consistent and Kind to their Canine Companion. They need to apply the 5 C's, ie be consistent, constant, clear, confident, and have control.
- ❖ **Consistency** –Never tell your dog “No” to-day but “Yes” to-morrow. For example, don't allow it to jump up on you and expect it not to jump up on your children. Don't allow it to

come into one part of the house to-day and expect it to stay out tomorrow. Be fair to your pet.

- ❖ **Constancy** – Training is ongoing. It is necessary for you to be constant in everything you do for the rest of your dog's life, be it twelve years or more.
- ❖ **Clarity** – Make sure your commands are clear and properly understood by the dog.
- ❖ **Confidence** – You must always maintain confidence in yourself and your dog. Know what you are doing is right for both of you. Be self assured and full of confidence – be sure what you want your dog to do before you ask them to do it.
- ❖ **Control** – If you have all four of the above, you now have the fifth C. What a great relationship you have established with your canine friend.
- ❖ **Voice Control** – Learn to use your voice effectively.

Ask your dog to do things don't order them- eg "Sit" Use a *firm reasonably strong voice* not a quiet ineffective tone.

*Reprimand or discipline voice* – When you need to reprimand your dog growl at it in guttural tones "BAD Dog", "UH-Ugh", These don't need to be shouted but delivered firm and guttural.

*Happy and joyful voice* – This is light breezy happy tone of praise – “Good Dog” “Well Done” “What a Good Dog”

- ❖ As a good leader you need to control the resources eg. Food ask the dog to do something for it, sit drop shake, high five etc. Do not just feed dog when it wants to be fed and do not leave dry food for dog to feed whenever it wishes.
- ❖ Have some fun time interacting with your dog. Play fetch, play ball; this encourages handlers to be animated and motivating to their dog.
- ❖ Reward compliance – look for it and reward it. If your dog does something well praise it.”Good Dog’ – don’t forget use a very light voice when praising.
- ❖ Show the dog the importance of you being a worthwhile leader, train the dog in basic manners, such as to wait whilst you go through door first, dog is asked to sit to be fed meal, dog sits on the floor on their mat you sit on the lounge, dog sleeps in their crate, on floor on their bed or mat not in bed with you.
- ❖ To be a really good leader you need to understand the dog’s signals. This is too much to discuss to-day and is another talk, which we will need to do later. It is called Calming signals.

Thank you for your interest are there any questions?