

# Dog Training 101

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## 1) Understand Your Dog's Perspective:

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Dogs do everything for a reason. When we interpret the issue properly, we can develop a solution. If your dog frustrates you, consider why he did what he did based on his perspective.

Dogs have a very special view of the world. They want to:

- Feel safe, comfortable, entertained, and well fed.
- Be part of a social structure (i.e. family) with a leader who meets their basic needs.
- Have a role in the social structure that feels right.

Dogs misinterpret our behaviors because they do not understand our complex (human) emotions, decisions, and plans. To dogs, human complexities make us look crazy.

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## 2) Recognize Your Dog's Communication:

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Dogs only understand concepts that can be demonstrated without using words. This is an important reason why problems develop between people and dogs. We (humans) depend on words. We believe that we can just talk to our dog and he will do something.

Dog communication starts with body language and voice tones. You can learn a lot just by looking at your dog, and he learns a lot just by looking at you. He learns by listening to you, too. He listens to your voice tones when you communicate with him. He remembers the pitch of your speech to help determine your intentions.

When we speak to our dogs as if they were human, we unknowingly send them the wrong message. Remember, our dogs think we are dogs too. Clear communication helps you and your dog to appropriately bond and have a stronger relationship.

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## 3) Know Your Dog:

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Your dog has a unique personality. Many dog owners treat their current dog in the exact manner as their prior dog. All dogs are different and each dog must be treated as a unique individual in order to relate to them properly.

We must appreciate his uniqueness and his preferences. Dogs differ widely in their energy levels, playfulness, and curiosity. They also differ emotionally, as with nervousness, shyness, or confidence. You must understand your dog's unique characteristics in order to relate to him.

The unique characteristics of your dog greatly impacts your training experience and how your dog benefits from your help.

All dogs share basic traits, but individual differences mean that no two dog training programs will ever be exactly the same.

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## 4) Outcomes Explain Behavior:

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Dogs learn best by association – they learn by what occurs immediately after the choice they make.

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For example, many dogs like to bark at the mail man. By barking and showing dominance towards the mail man, the unwanted intruder leaves. That desirable outcome for the dog reinforces his action.

Also, some dogs become aggressive or manipulative because it works for them. Unlike humans, dogs are not mean-spirited or vengeful; they just do what they know and what works for them.

When we can show our dogs another way, we can teach them to make better decisions. Training is most effective when it produces reliable, rewarding outcomes for the dog.

