

***Resource Control: What's Mine is Mine and What's Yours is Mine***

Controlling rewards and all other resources is the most fundamental aspect of building your status. In canine culture just as in human culture, whoever controls resources controls everything and everyone else.

Rewards mean nothing unless your dog values them. If your dog has constant access to food because you leave it out for her, treats will lose their value as a training tool. You will not develop status unless you consistently demonstrate that you control EVERY potential reward in your dog's world. Controlling your dog's access to food and toys as well as her access to outdoors and indoors will increase their value while at the same time cultivating your status.

If you surrender these objects at your dog's request (or even worse, when she demands them) or if you make resources available at all times, then what incentive will your dog have to accept you as her leader? If you leave food out all day buffet-style; if you move over when your dog demands more space in the bed; if you throw a toy for your dog when she demands it, then you are effectively telling your dog, "You are my leader. I am here to meet your needs." This is not a message you want to send.

We want your dog to learn two very important lessons about your relationship:

1. Everything comes from you.
2. You expect her to earn everything you give her.

It is especially important that you not allow your dog free access to food. If someone showed up at your house every week with a paycheck whether you went to work or not, you'd probably be happy to sit and wait for your money. If you leave food out at all times, your dog will have less incentive to work for treats. She might come to see you as unnecessary in her life. Worse still, she might even come to see you as a nuisance or a threat when you approach her food bowl.

You should feed your dog on a schedule. Give your dog fifteen minutes to finish whatever food you offer her, then take up her bowl and put away any leftovers.

The same rule applies to toys. When you are not actively playing with your dog, she should not have access to toys. You want your dog's toys to be special to her. Therefore, they should only come out at special times. You may also wish to rotate the toys so your dog doesn't get bored.

It's tempting, but don't fall into the trap of leaving your dog with toys to entertain herself while you are gone. We know you are afraid your dog will get bored. But, "boredom" is a part of your dog's natural life. Without you, your dog's life should be on the boring side. If your significant other goes out with friends for the evening, you don't want to hear later, "That was the best night of my entire life!" You don't want your dog to look at you as though to say, "Who needs you? I have free access to food and *my* toys. I'll let you scratch my belly, but otherwise, you are of little value."

You should be the one to provide stimulation and excitement for your dog. But, let us be clear about this: your dog should have items on which she can chew. Your dog has a hardwired need to chew. But toys are not chews and chews are not toys. Leave her with a stuffed Kong toy, a knuckle bone, or some other safe chew. But do not play with these. They are to meet her need to chew, not her need to play.

Furthermore, you should establish boundaries within your home. For instance, you may want to keep your dog out of the kitchen while you are cooking and out of the dining room while you are eating.

You may wish to keep your dog off the furniture or out of certain rooms. As the pack leader, you are entitled to the prime lounging spots in your home. You should only allow your dog onto your couch or bed if you can enforce two rules: first, access to the couch is by invitation only; second, your dog must get off the moment you ask her to.

Finally, you should control your dog's access to the outdoors. Dogs establish territorial boundaries differently than we do. Dogs see the inside of a home and outside as two distinct territories. When your dog gets excited about going outside, it is because she thinks she's going to get to explore a new territory. Your ability to control when your dog goes out or comes in sets up a great way to establish leadership. Your goal is to have your dog FOLLOW you into the new territory. You can do this by asking your dog to Wait as you go through a door first. Ask your dog to Wait at least five seconds before allowing her to come outside after you. If she refuses to Wait, simply close the door in her face as you say, "Oooh, too bad," or "Uh-uh." And wait a moment before trying again. You can also use a body block to keep her inside until you give the release command.

### ***Building Status Using the Most Important Resource of All: You***

For your dog's training to work, you must get in the habit of controlling all Rewards and other meaningful resources, including *your personal space*.

Using access to our personal space as a method of communication makes perfect sense to us when we are dealing with other humans. Stand too close to a stranger and you can make them remarkably uncomfortable. Stand too far from a dear friend and she'll think you are upset with her.

Strangely, humans seem to forget all the rules of personal space when dealing with dogs, especially small dogs. We invade their space by picking them up or petting them whether they want it or not. Don't pet your dog when she does not want to be petted.

It is actually quite easy to ruin your dog's recall if you insist on petting her every time she comes to you. Petting your dog on recall might actually drive her away. Retrievers and working dogs in the middle of a game of fetch might even see petting as punishment because it distracts them from the ball or rope you have in your hand. On the other hand, if you are not overly affectionate with your dog while in the home, and she loves to be petted, she will work for affection while outside. Try it.

Dogs invade human personal space by nudging us with their noses, jumping in our laps, licking our faces, and jumping on us during greetings. Do not let your dog invade your personal space or anyone else's unless you extend an invitation. Never let your dog demand that you pet her.

Before you pet your dog, or allow anyone else to pet her, you should ask for a behavior. If you are sitting on the couch and your dog approaches as though she is about to jump on you, say, "Uh-uh," and stand up quickly, blocking her path. Ask her to Sit, say, "Good," and pet her to your heart's content.

You may also want to get into the habit of ending affection as well as beginning it. We recommend that before your dog tires of your affection and walks away that you instead say, "Enough," then pat her firmly twice on the top of the head. These will be the cues that she is to move away from you. After you pat your dog squarely on top of the head, if she does not move away stand up so she must move away from you. Then sit back down, but don't allow your dog to approach again unless you ask.

### ***By Invitation Only***

Our recommendation that you should control your personal space often leads to some confusion. Clients will sometimes frown and lament, "You mean Sophie can never cuddle in my lap again?" No, we don't mean that at all. You should be able to hug your dog as much as you like (as long as you are aware of how the dog feels about it!). All we mean is that such behaviors should be BY INVITATION ONLY.

All too often, we encounter owners who reward their dog for jumping into their laps one minute because they think it's cute and then punish their dogs the next minute because their paws are dirty. This is grossly unfair to the dog. It is much better to teach the dog to Wait to be invited into your lap or onto the couch.

Teach your dog to "Hug," "Up," or anything else you like as long as you are clear that they must earn the right to give a hug or jump in your lap or lick your face or to come into the dining room while you are eating. You should also have an effective countermanding cue, such as "Off," "Out," or "Enough," before you allow what, in the wrong circumstances, would be "bad" behavior.

You should reward your dog for coming to you whether you ask her to or not. Coming to you should always be a good thing. However, draw the line if your dog approaches you for the purpose of demanding attention. That is not acceptable. You want your dog to approach, but politely.