

Nonverbal Signals Every Dog Owner Should Learn

When your dog recognizes you as the pack leader, you will enjoy the connection that you have sought all along.

Cesar Millan

Dogs communicate first through their nose, their eyes, and then their ears. Humans need to understand how the dog interacts on a primal level with his pack leader in order to connect with their own dogs.

Project calm, assertive energy. This is the key to connecting with your dog. The mom or the pack leader always projects calm, assertive energy. Dogs in the pack balance that energy with a calm, submissive way of being.

Humans often project excited energy when they interact with their dogs. They shower their dog with affection, which feels foreign to the dog.

Always begin your day with calm, assertive energy before you share affection. This fulfills your dogs needs as an animal before your own.

Set rules, boundaries and limitations. This is the hardest thing for people to do. They even wait to introduce any rules or training until the puppy is at least six months old!

The dogs mom sets these rules from day one: where they can sleep, how far they can walk, when they can eat. These rules, boundaries and limitations nurture a healthy state of mind.

As adults, dogs look to their pack leader to set these rules. They don't question the pack leaders position and the pack leader doesn't look to the dogs to affirm his position. This is the natural balance of the pack.

Without rules, boundaries and limitations, your dog will not respect you as the pack leader. Make feeding a ritual. When puppies are little, they wait to be fed by their mother. This waiting is a form of work. When feeding, we ask the pack to work for food and water this is why we walk the pack before they eat. Dogs don't get fed when their mind is excited, nervous, tense or aggressive. They get fed when their mind is calm and submissive.

Walk the walk. If we study dogs in their natural habitat, walking is how they earn food and water and experience the world. Dogs would rather walk than do anything else because they get to work their body and their mind.

A big back yard is no substitute for a primal activity like a walk. A dog with a big back yard can still develop frustration because the physical energy needs to go somewhere. That is why daily walks are so important. When walking, make sure that you are in front of your dog. This allows you to be seen as the pack leader. Remember, dogs always follow the pack leader.

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Next month: The Energy Connection Between Dogs and Humans

Get more tips from Cesar.

Note: Cesar Millan is a professional. Please consult a qualified trainer before attempting these techniques with your dog.

For more information, visit Cesar Millans Dog Psychology Center where the express purpose is to rehabilitate and maintain a dogs natural state of being.