

Tips for Retraining Humans

Your dog will set the rules if you don't learn how.

Cesar Millan

The number one mistake people make in their relationships with dogs is treating them like people. You wouldn't interact with a horse like you interact with your sister. So why do humans insist on treating dogs like people?

I see it every day with my clients; they think that their dogs will stop tearing up the couch if they just love them more or show them more affection. These strategies might work in the structure of human relationships, but in the animal world, Nature didn't hard-wire dogs to interact this way. Instead, Nature instilled dogs with a powerful pack instinct. This way of being is how dogs communicate and experience the world.

If you love your dog, treat him like a dog. A dog needs a stable pack leader to lead a balanced and happy life. The recipe is really that simple. Humans are the ones that make these relations complicated.

Retrain Your Brain I realize this turns upside down most thinking about the human-dog relationship. But think about it if your husband mistook your needs for the needs of a chimpanzee, where would that leave you? Confused and disoriented.

Its the same for dogs. But their confusion and disorientation manifest in bad behavior such as tearing up the couch or barking constantly. Most of these dogs who are probably loved and well cared for by their owners feel lost in a vast ocean without a life raft. Think of the life raft as the strong, stable pack leader. He or she provides a source of strength and guidance that helps the dog navigate through a complex world.

Become His Leader You can become your dogs pack leader by acting like an animal pack leader would. The pack leader tells the pack, through his calm, assertive energy, what do and where to go every day, all of the time. The pack leader doesn't project emotional or nervous energy and neither should you.

Your dog will look to you to establish rules, boundaries and limitations. Remember, your dog will set them if you don't. Your dog is an animal, guided by animal instincts. Dogs have found themselves in an odd predicament by living with humans. But if you treat your dog like a dog and provide him with the pack dynamic he craves, your companion can live a rich, rewarding life -- even among humans.

Next month: The Food Philosophy

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.