

Why Rules, Boundaries and Limitations are Key in a Dog

The sooner you set rules, boundaries and limitations, the sooner you get to enjoy a healthy, happy, and balanced dog.

Cesar Millan

We've learned in other lessons that dogs follow calm, assertive leaders. The pack leader, the mother or the male, embodies calm, assertive leadership.

Dogs communicate through energy at every moment. The pack leader projects calm, assertive energy and the rest of the pack responds with calm, submissive energy. This is how the pack achieves balance.

From the moment puppies are born, the mom sets rules, boundaries and limitations. She tells her puppies how far they can go away from the den, when to eat and she walks with them.

The mother also allows the puppies to share activities with each other. When she wants play to end or just disagrees with what's going on, she picks up a puppy and takes him to another spot.

In all of these ways the mom sets rules, boundaries and limitations and in doing so nurtures her puppies healthy state of mind. As adults, dogs look to their pack leader to set these rules.

Understand the Animal in the Dog

If you are to understand the animal in the dog you must forget human psychology when dealing with your canine. Mother Nature created pack dynamics to guide the development and adult lives of dogs. Dogs become unstable when they live with us and lack a calm, assertive pack leader.

Humans have the power to understand pack dynamics and we possess the ability to replicate pack dynamics. By doing so, we connect with our dogs on a primal level. The key to this is you as pack leader.

To achieve this you must duplicate the action and attitude of a canine pack leader.

Set and enforce rules, boundaries and limitations in a calm, assertive and consistent way. Feed your dog after his mind reaches a calm, submissive state and never reward unstable behavior. Walk with him every day like his canine pack leader would. And only share affection after projecting the calm, assertive leadership that nature has intended your dog to follow.

Start Early, Start Young

People ask me when they should start setting rules, boundaries and limitations. The answer is now!

Most people get a puppy and wait to teach him rules, boundaries or limitations until he is six months or one year old. Meanwhile, the puppy is teaching you rules, boundaries and limitations. At this point rehabilitation is required because you will have to regain the position you lost a long time ago.

So start now — the sooner you set rules, boundaries and limitations, the sooner you get to enjoy a healthy, happy, and balanced dog.

Next step: How to Let Your Dog be a Dog

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.