

# Dog aggression?

■ BY HARRY KALAJIAN

Although the topic of dog aggression is huge, we have shortened it as much as possible. Aggressive behavior of any kind should not be taken lightly, and even when dogs are young, don't assume they will outgrow it. It only heightens their actions and behavior.

Dogs may not be born aggressive toward other dogs or people. Aggression could be a result of circumstances from an early stage or a learned behavior through negative experiences. However, some dogs are born with a dominant trait and at times will demonstrate dominant aggression even when they are two months old. Other dogs may have experienced some form of abuse or a threatening situation during their young age or even later in life, where they had no choice but to be aggressive to eliminate that negative factor and avoid its recurrence.

Dogs that are born with a dominant aggressive trait must be quickly taught through obedience that it is not acceptable. Once they are guided in the right direction, certain things also must be avoided in play -- for example, tug-of-war games. If Fido shows any form of aggression, you must swiftly address it, just like the mother would do. You must also seek a professional dog trainer who understands behavior in depth to help you. A trainer will show you how to correct and stop the behavior. The trainer will show you the proper steps needed to accomplish that. If you don't stop that aggressive behavior, you will have lots of trouble later as Fido gets older and stronger.

Dogs that are born with dominant aggressive traits may show that behavior not only toward dogs but also

but also toward other animals and people.

Why is it that some older dogs that were good natured and playful end up being aggressive toward other dogs? Dogs don't change overnight. Something has happened to them, and they will forever be insecure and aggressive. These dogs have at one time or another been attacked by another dog. In Fido's mind, if he is first to show aggression toward another dog, he will not be attacked. If and when he does show aggression of that nature toward another dog and the other dog takes off, in Fido's mind he has won, and it will reinforce his tendency to attack first again. As time progresses, Fido will always be ready to exert his aggression toward others. It's a form of insecurity. However, that can change quickly. If Fido tries to take on a more powerful and aggressive dog,

Fido will most likely lose. Now Fido will become even more aggressive and alert.

Many owners claim their dogs have never been attacked or have never experienced anything negative. But owners don't see everything; it could have happened at a park, boarding facility, veterinary office or with the dog walker. A simple nip from another dog can start a progressive buildup of aggression, even if it's for a ball.

Socializing Fido is one of the best ways to avoid aggressive behavior, but doesn't guarantee it. Every dog is different, so each dog must be analyzed and worked on as a unique case. For that, use a professional trainer. Socialize Fido everywhere you go, and make sure you don't allow Fido to jump on people. Ask your trainer how to stop the jumping. As a start, walk your dog around outdoor mall.

With so many people around, it is a good way to desensitize Fido and get him used to people. Find a bench to sit on, with Fido sitting by your side as people pass by. Correct as necessary. Follow your trainer's step-by-step guidance. For older dogs or adopted dogs with aggression issues toward people or dogs or both, it is best to use a professional trainer. There are too many variables to have one answer to correct the behavior, and each dog is different.

Please note when the behavior of your dog needs to be corrected or modified. Many factors must be taken into consideration: age, breed, gender, past environment, present environment and the cause or trigger event. The more information, the quicker it can be analyzed. Also be prepared to accept the fact that certain behaviors may not be fixable or even modified.

When it comes to aggression issues of any form, find a professional trainer to guide you in the right direction.

If you are planning to do protection training, an aggressive dog is not a good choice. A confident, stable and well-balanced, dominant dog is better suited for the job.

Always remember: Patience, persistence, consistency and repetition will be your keys to success.

Failure is not an option if you are willing to put in the time and effort during and after classes on your own.

Have a woof woof of a month.

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