

When dogs 'Take Over' the situation

■ BY HARRY KALAJIAN

Young puppies or adopted dogs of any age have one thing in their mind and that's "Take Over". In the beginning when you bring them home they show you a cute happy playful side of themselves. You totally fall in love and cuddle them, take them outside, and enjoy their company. They sleep near your feet, couch, or on your lap, feeling their warmth; your heart just melts.

After a few days or weeks later you think you have hit jackpot, you lucked out, but did you really? The truth is during that time your dog has been analyzing you from head to toe and has watched to see your weaknesses and your limits. Why are they doing that? Very simply they want to Take Over as leader to be the Alpha. If your dog doesn't see you as a leader they will want to assume that position. Once they do it's a lot of work to regain that position from them.

They are going to daily test you and your limits. They will keep a mental note of what they can get away with; getting on the couch, pulling on walks, barking for attention, stealing your sandwich, tearing up your shoes, pottyng inside, and the list goes on. They know this because they were never trained not to nor corrected,

guided, or addressed. Talking, yelling does nothing; because for each unwanted behavior nothing was done to correct it, so the issues will still remain. Each action of unwanted behavior should have an equal reaction from the owner. Almost all bad behavior is caused by their owners.

Here is an example: owners take their dogs everywhere they go and one day they decide not to take them. Now your dog will be either destructive or bark nonstop because you have created "separation anxiety". Instead of dealing with the problem, owners resume by taking their dog everywhere to avoid the separation anxiety behavior. Now the owner has made the situation worse and the dog has won. To break that separation anxiety it will take weeks and weeks of training before you can have it under control.

Another example; your dog barks to go out, so you do thinking it has to go potty. 10 minutes later again it barks and barks to take them out, again you take them out. Your dog is using Pavlov's law against you. They realize that if they bark enough you will take them out, your dog now became your boss.

Another example; if your dog jumps and leans on you, and you have pet

them they will always jump on you. That behavior eventually transfers onto others all because they associate jumping with getting pets. When they are young it's cute, but as they get older it's not. So if you complain that your dog jumps on you or on others remember from day one you have taught them that behavior. Pet them from day one when they sit and don't when they are jumping and leaning on you. Can this behavior be fixed? Yes, as long as you are consistent and follow the trainer's instructions.

To avoid "Take Over" from day one, correct/modify and guide. Don't allow something because you feel bad. "Don't," because they don't. They just want the Boss position. Don't lie to yourself by thinking, oh when they get older it will change, it doesn't it gets compounded.

Seek a professional trainer from the start, they will guide you and teach you how to communicate in dog understanding language. If you listen and follow the trainer's instructions religiously, you will prevent those behaviors from the get-go. It's never too late to train your dog; it might just take a bit more time because of their age.

However, if you don't practice, train, or be consistent don't expect

changes. You're at fault not your dog. Remember all bad behavior is the result of no guidance from day one. Don't take your dog everywhere; let them learn to be able to stay at home also. Don't allow your dog to dictate what they want, it's you that dictates and makes the decisions you're the Alpha Boss.

When choosing a professional trainer seek the no-nonsense trainer, not the bribing type with treats.

If you are interested in having your dog evaluated and trained, give us a call at 941-447-8234. To reach your goals in training and you're willing to put time then follow my formula to have success; patience, persistence, consistency & repetition. If you still fail, it's on you not your dog. You didn't stick to the formula.

Have a woof woof of a month.

With over 35 years experience, Harry Kalajian covers all aspects of training, behavior, ethology and psychology. Visit Executive Dog Training Inc. and executivedogtraining.com or caninebehavioraldiagnostics.com. Call (941) 447-8234