

Ty Brown's

THE 8-MINUTE

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR CURE:

HOW TO QUICKLY GET YOUR

DOGS TO QUIT BITING,

CHEWING, & BEING

AGGRESSIVE



The 8 Minute "Problem-Behavior" Cure



How to Quickly Get Your Dogs To Quit Biting, Chewing, and Being Aggressive

By Ty Brown

Aggression

Let me tell you straight off that aggression problems with your dog are serious problems. These are not issues to be taken lightly. In fact, I would recommend that in some cases you take your aggression problems to an experienced trainer that can walk you through the steps to either fix or control the issues that cause your dog to be aggressive. The reason is that the majority of dog bites that happen while training a dog occur while attempting to fix dog aggression. That's right, you can definitely run the risk of getting bit yourself if you attempt to fix this problem. Sometimes it is best to be overseen by a professional.

That being said, you bought this book so you wouldn't have to go to a trainer. You bought this book to offer you solutions and solutions I will provide. As you apply these principles exercise caution and be careful.

There are different types of aggression and the next sections will deal with them individually. The solutions are specific to the type of aggression your dog is displaying, so evaluate which type of aggression he has and train accordingly.

Before you deal with dog aggression, I want to put in my two cents about preventing dog aggression. I have many clients that complain that their dogs want to fight with other dogs and I have come to several conclusions.

First off, if you want to avoid dog aggression, avoid other dogs. I know, this is easier said than done, and for many people they want

to have their dogs around other dogs. Dogs are like people in the sense that each one has a unique personality. Not all dogs are going to be lovers of other dogs. That doesn't mean that you can allow fights but it does mean that sometimes you don't force the issue and attempt to force your dog to like other dogs. What I am mostly shooting for with this idea is, AVOID DOG PARKS. I recommend this to all my clients, whether or not they have an aggressive dog.

I have given a nickname to dog parks. I call them 'disease ridden fight clubs'. That is what they are. If you have trained your dog properly you now have control over your dog in any circumstance. If you take your dog to a dog park you have control over your dog, but you have zero control over other dogs.

Go to any dog park in America and you will see what I mean. The vast majority of dogs are very disobedient and ill-mannered. So while you may have perfect control over your dog it is likely that another dog could come right up to your dog and start a fight, all the while the other dog's owner is screaming for the dog to stop and come back. Why put yourself in a position where other dogs could come up to your dog and start a fight?

On a related topic, many dog owners are very bad at properly vaccinating and caring for their dogs. Dog parks are a huge problem when it comes to spreading diseases. You may as well take your dog to the vet's office and sit in the lobby all day long so that your dog can mingle with the other diseases that are hanging around.

So just avoid dog parks. If you want an area where your dog can run free and you can play fetch, find another open area or park where you aren't likely to find dozens of other dogs.

I have also found, through experience, that one of the best ways to avoid dog aggression is to manage it through obedience training. I have a male Rottweiler. As a puppy I socialized him with hundreds of other dogs in the hopes that he would be fine with other dogs as an adult. Now that he is an adult he can get along with a few dogs but generally speaking he doesn't like other dogs. It is part of his character and it is likely something that won't change. This part of his character can be managed, though.

Now when I have my dog out and about and I encounter another dog I simply tell my dog to heel and walk on past. I know that he probably will not like the other dog we are encountering, so I merely prevent a potential issue by having him under control. I don't even have to address an aggression problem because I prevent it from ever happening. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If more dog owners were able to control their dogs we would see much less problems with dog aggression.

The formula for dealing with aggression

In my business I deal with a lot of aggression issues. Every dog is different. Some dogs only show aggression to other dogs, some dogs show aggression to adults, or children, or just men, or just while at home, or only while in the car, etc. While every dog is different there is a basic formula that I like to use that I follow with just about every aggression case. I follow the formula differently with each dog but I have found that this tried and true method gets results every time.

1) Control the dog. Step one with dealing with aggression is always to make sure that you have control over your dog. You can't fix or control aggression unless your dog will reliably sit, lie down, stay, and come on command. Your dog should also understand the word 'No' and should reliably stop any behavior on your 'No' command. This isn't normal control, though. Many dog owners are able to get their dogs to sit or lie down. You must have control regardless of the scenario. This means that your dog has to understand the command 'lie down', for example, on such a level that when he starts to feel aggressive you can simply tell him to lie down and he will.

Controlling your dog is a must with an aggressive dog for obvious reasons. You've got to be able to control your dog in tense situations. What control also does is helps you to gain dominance. I have mentioned this several times throughout the book but it is especially true for dominant dogs. Many dogs are aggressive because they feel like the 'Alpha' dog. If your dog feels like the Alpha dog he may very well feel the need to defend his 'pack', meaning you and your family. If he doesn't feel like the Alpha, however, you may find that he doesn't take it upon himself to show aggression to defend his pack. So by gaining dominance through obedience it is possible you could see huge improvements concerning your dog's aggression.

2) Control the environment the dog is in. I often enter a dog owner's home to hear that the dog shows aggression every time they take the dog to the park and allow him off leash. My reaction is always (after pulling my hair out first) to tell them to stop doing that!!! If you know that your dog is going to show aggression under certain circumstances then don't put your dog in that environment.

Controlling the dog's environment doesn't always mean that you need to keep him away from everything. It just means that you need to understand that there are certain triggers for your dog and you need to manage them.

For example, I once worked with a dog that sometimes felt threatened by kids. When I would take the dog for walks and children would want to approach I would always control the factors. First, I would simply have the dog sit by my side so that he was under my control and felt my presence. Then, if the children wanted to approach and pet the dog, I would instruct them to come up one by one and calmly pet the dog in a certain way. By controlling the dog's environment, who approached him and how, I was able to avoid a situation that the dog felt called for aggression.

With nearly every type of aggression there is almost always a way to control the dog's environment so that he doesn't feel the need to show aggression.

3) Attempt to show the dog that there is no need for aggression. Dogs show aggression for various reasons. Often these reasons are fear based. The dog is in a situation that frightens him and in an effort to right the situation or protect himself he reacts by getting aggressive. When confronted by situations that cause stress or fear dogs can display three reactions: fight, flight, and avoidance. Most dogs choose flight and avoidance but some, like yours, choose to fight their fears.

If your dog has aggression that is caused by fear then one of the best things you can do is desensitize your dog to whatever causes him fear . You can show him that there is no need to be afraid. There is an old phrase that we fear what we do not know. The same

is true for dogs. If we can acquaint your dog to what he does not know, it is no longer a source of fear. No fear equals no aggression.

4) Correct the aggression when it manifests itself. For many dogs even though you control the dog, the environment, and desensitize the dog to the cause of the fear, it is very possible that you may still see aggression rear it's ugly head. In that case the key is to properly correct it and show your dog that in no way is it acceptable to show aggression.

Addressing 'dog aggression' head on

This is pretty much self-explanatory. Dog aggression is when your dog displays aggressive tendencies toward other dogs. Dog aggression normally occurs between either two males or two females. Altered animals are less inclined to fight.

Of course, there are exceptions to this and males and females do sometimes fight with one another. Generally, though, if you have a male and a female together you will be fine.

I often get requests from clients for help with an aggressive female who bites and nips at male dogs. It is perfectly normal for a female, when meeting a male, to put him in his place by growling or nipping at him. This is normal and shouldn't be interpreted as dog aggression. If the female persists, however, and tries to do harm to the male then you must step in and correct the dog aggression. If the male doesn't respect her attempts to assert herself and decides to fight back you must also address this issue.

There are a few different ways that your dog will show this type of aggression. Some dogs are prone to barking and growling and trying to pull toward any dog that he sees. Other dogs are a bit more

covert. They will allow other dogs to approach or will approach other dogs, normally with their hair raised, and after sniffing around will begin growling or even fighting. Whatever the case we are going to tackle the issue in basically the same way.

I am going to offer you two techniques. Pick which one is going to be easier for you to apply and you feel will work the best. Both are very effective and one is not necessarily better than the other.

Dogs display dog aggression for a number of different reasons ranging from fear to a love of fighting and everything in between. The basic idea behind fixing the problem is showing Buddy that showing aggression results in an incredibly horrible experience and it is much better that he avoids aggression at all costs.

Method One- The lifting method

To use the lifting method you are going to need to employ a choke chain. As I mentioned in the beginning of this book I normally don't like to use a choke chain, but for this method it is second to none.

Choose a choke chain that fits to his neck and gives you about three inches of excess chain when it is pulled tight. To put the choke chain on correctly face Buddy and the choke chain should be in the shape of a 'P' as you slip it over his head. If it looks like a '9' you have put it on backwards. Remember, 'P' for perfect and '9' for no.

Once you have Buddy collared and leashed up you are going to have to take him to where he has shown his problems before. This could be tricky. Obviously if your dog has shown before that he is aggressive you probably aren't going to have many neighborhood dog owners allowing Buddy near their dogs.

If Buddy shows aggression merely upon sight of another dog it is going to be a bit easier as you won't have to rely on proximity.

As you have him in the park or in the neighborhood be on the watch for other dogs. As he begins to show aggression toward another dog, this could be a growl, hair raised, lips raised, aggressive barking, snapping, etc. lift him up with the leash and choke collar. Lift him up enough so that his front feet are off the ground. Hold him there for several seconds until he begins to cough or struggle a bit for breath and then slowly lower him to the ground and tell him to sit. As he sits, calmly praise him.

If he returns to show aggression immediately lift him again just as before. You must lift him up until the point where he is short of breath because at that moment he is no longer thinking of aggression, instead he is thinking of catching his breath.

I know this method sounds extreme. The truth is that it is very extreme. With rare exceptions there will never be an excuse to correct your dog this hard or cause this much stress to your dog. The reason why it is important here is that aggression is such a serious problem.

Aggression is a problem that is very ingrained or 'hard wired' into your dog. When he shows this aggression he does it because he feels that he needs to show this aggression. He feels that this is his only option. The only way to properly cure him of this 'need' is to use a level of compulsion that is greater than his desire to be aggressive. Extreme problems require extreme measures.

Let's examine what goes through Buddy's head with this method. He sees the dog and as usual feels that he must show aggression.

As he does he is immediately lifted up until he reaches a very uncomfortable point. At that moment his thoughts leave the other dog and turn to his own dilemma. At that point he is told to sit. As he sits, the struggle and panic and stressed out feelings leave him. Not only that, he also gets praise which feels good. His horrible experience is over and chances are that at this point he doesn't know why he had that experience.

So he tries again to show aggression and immediately the same bad experience is repeated. Again, the stress is relieved as he forgets about the other dog and sits. If this experience is repeated a few times he will soon begin to associate his aggression with such a harrowing experience. He may still have the desire to show aggression but he will know that showing aggression will result in such a bad experience that he'd better not do it.

As you apply this principle you can slowly reduce the dog's threshold for aggression. In the beginning perhaps your dog starts to show aggression at fifty feet from another dog. Soon you should be able to get your dog within forty feet. Then it is thirty, then twenty and so on. Each distance threshold that you breach with your dog is a new learning experience. Before the training he literally didn't know that he could be so close to another dog without showing aggression, now he is learning new limits and new behaviors. Keep at it and you will find that you can walk your dog comfortably without worry of potential attacks.

If your dog only shows aggression with close contact you are going to have to arrange for a guinea pig. Find a friend or a member of an obedience club to help you out with their friendly dog. Set up the situation such that you can have the dogs near each other and as

your dog begins to show aggression, your friend can pull his dog away as you apply the lift method to your dog, thus ensuring the safety of their dog and providing the training opportunity for your dog. Repeat the experience a few times until Buddy can tolerate the presence of the other dog.

With a dog that has these aggression problems the chances are that you will always have to supervise him when in the presence of other dogs. Some dogs will leave these training experiences with such a foul taste in their mouth regarding aggression and will never attempt it again. But with other dogs your only hope is preventing the problem with proper supervision and maintaining his training through repeated experiences where Buddy doesn't show aggression.

Method two- Distance Method

This method relies on creating distance using compulsion to change a dog's frame of mind and creating a negative association toward aggression.

For this method you are going to use a pinch collar and leash.

Have Buddy on leash and put him in a situation where you feel he is going to show aggression. Just as he begins to show aggression toward the other dog immediately turn in the opposite direction of the other dog while giving several, very firm corrections and saying 'No' over and over. As you finish correcting him tell him to 'lets go', praise him for following you, and continue in the opposite direction. Walk several more feet then do a U-turn and return in the general direction of the opposing dog.

If Buddy shows more aggression, repeat the same process. Continue this process until Buddy doesn't show aggression. The occasion that you walk Buddy near the other dog again and he doesn't show aggression is when you know you are making progress.

It is very important, though, that you don't praise him for not showing aggression as he passes the other dog.

What? Don't praise him for doing the right thing? What is that about? I know, it goes against much of what you have so far learned but I will explain the reasoning. After several times being corrected Buddy is going to know that when he walks by the other dog that if he shows aggression it is going to be a bad scene. When you walk him past the other dog you may have accomplished that he doesn't show aggression, but he may be thinking in his mind that he would like to get aggressive. If you praise him for this thought process it is only going to work against you. You don't want to praise him if he is thinking that he would like to take a chunk out of that other dog.

Better to walk him past the other dog, have no show of aggression, tell him to 'lets go' and then praise him for obeying the 'lets go' command. Understand? Good.

As with the lifting method the distance method has the potential to cure aggression problems forever. Also, as with the lifting method the distance method can sometimes be only a tool to manage an aggressive dog.

Ladies and gentleman, don't dismay. I know these methods seem rough and extreme. Sometimes with dog training you have to fight fire with hotter fire. Don't let this deter you. Stay firm and you will

see that you can literally accomplish miracles with your dog's behavior.

Human aggression

This is serious business. I mentioned in the section on dog aggression that you have to fight fire with hotter fire. Well, in the case of human aggression, you are going to have to fight fire with a forest fire.

Let me explain first the real deal with human aggression as it is normally very misunderstood. I was once at a veterinarian's office where there were several dog owners with their dogs. One owner had a dog that was growling at many of the other people in the room. One person asked, "Is your dog normally that aggressive toward other people?"

The 'very enlightened' tough guy answered with a smirk, "Yeah, he has been that tough since he was a puppy."

Idiot!! Fool! Cretin! All right, I didn't shout those things in the lobby but I was certainly thinking them. This guy obviously thought that he had himself a dog that would offer him protection. He thought he had a tough or vicious dog that could handle anyone. He could not be more wrong if he tried.

Why was the dog acting like that? He was afraid! That's right. He was so afraid of other people being near him that he felt the only thing he could do was to growl and threaten others. That dog was horribly unbalanced. Can you imagine if a human acted that way? Imagine nearing someone in a store when all of the sudden they shouted, "Get away from me you \$#@&*!! I hate you, go away."

It is safe to say, that guy is probably being fit for a straight jacket as we speak. Yet that is exactly what this dog was doing. Someone near him was so stressful that he was doing whatever he could do to get rid of him, in this case growling.

During the last several years I have been working with some of the worlds best protection dogs. These are dogs that with one command are capable of going from a casual and normal state of mind to high level aggression in a matter of seconds in order to protect their human family. They are taught to bite with a crushing bite. They can take a full grown man down and halt any would-be attacker.

Do you want to know something interesting? In every day life they are the picture of confidence. Every person they meet is their best friend. Kids can crawl on them and the elderly can lean on them for support. Their owners can rough-house with them and their dogs will happily submit.

The reason they are capable of such polar extremes is because of their confidence, character, and lack of fear. They have such inner confidence that it doesn't matter who approaches. They aren't worried and have no need to show aggression, unless instructed to by their owners. This is the definition of a true protection dog, a dog who can function on a normal basis and can be taken to the office, the park, the neighborhood barbecue, the nursing home and anywhere else a variety of stimuli can be found.

In fact, one of my earliest memories of dogs is that of a police officer bringing his K9 partner to my elementary school to teach us about the K9 program. Part of the presentation was when the officer allowed some kids to come pet his dog. This was a dog that at any

time may be asked to go and attack someone, but was perfectly fine allowing small children to approach and pet him.

So when you see so called 'vicious' dogs or encounter the naive owner who has the growling tough dog, the chances are good that this dog is not being protective, or mean, or anything of the sort. He is probably too scared to deal with the world in a normal fashion.

Were that dog to ever protect himself or his owner from danger it would probably be done out of fear and with much trepidation. That is how a large portion of dog bites occur every year. They are termed 'fear bites' and are characterized by an insecure dog who feels he needs to defend himself from a danger that isn't really there.

The remainder of human aggression normally falls under a few other different categories:

1) Territorial. A territorial dog is one that will show aggression toward humans that are treading in territory that he feels belongs to him. It can be displayed by both a confident dog and a fearful dog. You will see this type of aggression normally at fences or the front door. You must examine this type of aggression as it is not necessarily one that you should get rid of right away.

For some people, having a dog that protects the house by barking at passers-by is heaven sent. This type of dog can prevent break-ins and home invasions. In fact, studies have shown that the mere presence of a dog, any dog, greatly reduces the chance of a break in.

The important thing with a territorial dog is teaching firm obedience so that he can immediately be controlled should you decide to let

whoever it is into your home. For other people, however, having an aggressive dog at the fence is embarrassing or unwanted or even a liability. If you like this type of aggression, allow it and praise it. If not, I will show you how you can get rid of it.

2) Prey drive. Prey drive is a dog's innate desire to chase and capture his prey. The same urge that compels Buddy to chase a squirrel is the same drive that compels him to chase a ball. This is prey drive. Unfortunately, it can also sometimes be the same drive that compels him to bite a human.

A large percentage of dog bites occur on children that were running near a dog. This bite will often occur on the child's back side. The child goes running past the dog, the dog's prey drive kicks in, and a desire to chase and capture his prey is sparked. The unfortunate result is a bitten child.

You also see this occur with joggers and bikers. Anything that is moving swiftly can stimulate a dog like this. This must be trained out of the dog. It is okay for a dog to have strong prey drive and love chasing sticks, balls, and toys. It is not okay, however, for that drive to impel your dog to bite another person.

3) The fighter. Some dogs are so confident and have such a desire to dominate their 'enemies' that they engage in fighting with other people. Their desire to show aggression doesn't come from fear but from a sheer desire for combat. This must be trained out of the dog or he will become a very dangerous and uncontrollable weapon.

4) The possessive aggressor. Some dogs will show aggression to people that go near their food or toys. They do it merely to protect what is 'theirs'.

5) Fear biters. I mentioned at the beginning of this section that fear biters are often mistaken for aggressive, tough dogs. Through proper training you can help cure a fear biter.

Whichever type of aggression you are dealing with I am going to teach you a method that will work for all types. It is ultra-important to note, however, that if your dog displays this type of aggression that you must never put yourself in a situation where you aren't able to control the dog. That is to say, if your dog has these aggressive tendencies you can't just let him go play with the neighborhood kids in the front yard or mingle amongst guests at a party.

A dog that is displaying these types of aggression has some serious issues that need to be considered. Anything less would be a liability for you and whoever your dog encounters. Always have him on leash and under control in these situations. By under control I mean doing a down stay or right by your side.

Making introductions

With this type of aggressive dog don't ever let people approach him to meet him. Help any new person in Buddy's life have them meet a certain set of guidelines when introductions are being made.

Allow Buddy to make the introduction to new people. If Buddy shows aggression because he is scared of new situations you can easily predict what is going to happen if a person approaches him, hunching over so they can pet him. He is going to interpret it as a threat and react in kind.

Allow Buddy to approach new people and have them display a certain type of posture. That is:

- Don't face Buddy head on, rather, adopt a somewhat sideways posture. A head on posture can be seen as a challenge where as facing sideways is more submissive.
- Don't stare Buddy down. It is not a problem to look at him, but don't lock eyes and challenge him.
- Get down on Buddy's level. The most ideal way for an introduction to be made is with your friend sitting down on a chair and allowing Buddy to make the introduction. In absence of furniture, your friend can squat down to be more on the level of Buddy.
- Don't make quick movements. Allow Buddy to come at his own pace and sniff around. Slowly pet him and help him to feel comfortable with the new situation.
- Use food if possible. If Buddy won't maul someone to get a treat allow them to give him a hot dog or other treat. As I mentioned before, a great deal of aggression is caused because of fear of the unknown. Imagine the turnaround in perception you can give Buddy. Previously, the unknown, scary things were other people, but now those same people are great hot dog dispensers. You can completely change Buddy's frame of mind and convince him that new people aren't scary, but rather, they typically have treats. Obviously you are going to have to set up situations where this can work. You will have to plan for your friend to already have the treat before meeting Buddy, but I have seen this method work wonders.

Okay, so you have done a good job in allowing Buddy to meet people and you have been controlling the situation, but he is still barking aggressively at passersby. Possibly he is showing aggression when the doorbell rings and you don't want him to. Perhaps he is

even growling when anyone new approaches him. It is time to correct this behavior.

The way you are going to correct it is by using the distance method that I discussed in the section on dog aggression. The very instant that he begins to show his aggressive behavior you are going to immediately begin correcting him and taking him in the opposite direction of his perceived target. As with the dog aggression tell him to 'lets go' and take him in a U-turn back toward the original target.

More aggression? Repeat the process. No aggression? That is okay, don't praise him, just keep walking.

Your ability to correct this type of aggression hinges on your relationship with your dog. It is imperative that by this point you have established that you are in charge, that you are the alpha member of the pack. The way you are going to have done this is through proper obedience training discussed in the opening chapters of this book.

The reason for you being the Alpha is simple. If you haven't established yourself as dominant then your dog doesn't respect you. Period. That is how it works in the dog world. If your dog does not respect you and has aggressive tendencies toward other people there is a good chance that when you try to correct him for human aggression that he is going to think, "Hey, who the heck are you to be correcting me?" He may also turn his aggression toward you. Like I said earlier, though, you can often avoid this reaction through proper obedience training.

Sometimes, however, even if you have established yourself as Alpha through obedience training you may still encounter a problem while attempting to correct human aggression.

When your dog shows aggression toward you I do not classify that under the same category as human aggression. (No, it isn't because I don't consider you to be a human) I give it a category of it's own. I call it handler aggression. Handler aggression is any time your dog shows aggression toward his owner or handler. The next section will deal entirely with handler aggression.

Before I touch on handler aggression, however, let me briefly give more insight into the solutions for the different types of aggression.

The territorial dog

Believe it or not this is a type of aggression that I often encourage people not train out of their dog. If your dog's aggression is limited to only barking at people who pass by your house than I almost always believe that this is not a bad thing. There are a few cases where I would say otherwise, but in general, this is what dogs do and what they were bred for. They were bred to be watchdogs and alert their human caretakers.

Many would even argue that this is not aggression. In most cases I would agree. In most cases a dog who barks at neighbors and people on the street is merely sounding the alarm and not shouting out threats.

What I find to be best for this type of dog is to teach him something to diffuse the barking when it gets too loud or inappropriate. There are two things that I will teach a dog in a case like this.

1) Use the down stay. If your dog is barking too much have him come to your side and tell him to lie down and stay. If you have done a good job with this exercise then this will be enough to stop the barking. He can't be looking out the window barking at people if he is lying down next to your side. You can obviously use other commands to diffuse the situation. You could have him heel by your side for example.

2) Teach your dog a 'quiet' command. Have your dog on a long line and training collar around the house. When he goes up to the window to bark at your neighbors merely give him little tugs on the leash as you tell him the command 'quiet'. These tugs don't need to be corrections, per se, just enough of a pull to distract your dog.

As you distract him enough to quiet him you must praise him. Repeat this process as often as needed. It will take awhile to teach him that quiet means to stop barking but if you persist you will find that he learns what the command means.

Handler aggression

Handler aggression can happen under a variety of circumstances but typically only happens for one reason. It will happen when a dog feels that his relationship with you has been violated. Let me explain what this means:

Buddy has been living his life believing that he has a certain rank or place in the familial structure where he belongs. In this case, Buddy believes himself to be a strong, confident dog that is in charge of the comings and goings in the home. He feels that he 'owns' his 'owner' and that his owner is the one that takes commands from him.

Now imagine under these circumstances that owner now begins giving commands and corrections to Buddy. Well this radically changes everything! Now Buddy's underling, the dog owner, is telling him what to do and attempting to back it up. For most dogs this wouldn't be a problem and they would learn that there is a new family order. Not so for Buddy. He is much more bold, has much more dominant tendencies, and isn't apt to take orders from anyone. So instead of allowing himself to be 'pushed around' so-to-speak, he decides to put his owner back in his place by enforcing his own style of correction.

This is handler aggression. A dog who doesn't want to allow himself to submit and instead will use aggression to get his way is a handler aggressive dog. This is a big problem. The reason being, a handler aggressive dog interprets many actions as being a challenge to his dominance. A dog like this sees normal obedience training as a challenge to his dominance. A dog like this interprets a child accidentally tripping over him as a threat. A dog like this views a look from his owner as a challenge to his power.

Dogs like this are unfortunately very misunderstood by many of today's trainers. Many trainers today prefer to go around the issue and show Buddy that he doesn't have any reason to show this type of aggression. Their approach involves not addressing the issue in hopes that if you don't give a dog a motive to show aggression you are better off. They avoid confrontation knowing that it will bring out a negative reaction from Buddy and instead rely on a strategy of planning all situations so that Buddy doesn't feel challenged and can live his life without conflict. In essence they don't want to 'poke a sleeping bear'.

The problem with this method is that the issue is never addressed. Perhaps you can avoid situations that would challenge him but that isn't going to stop him from thinking like he does. He will still have this handler aggressive mentality, it just might not become visible because of a lack of motive.

However, what happens the one time that you unintentionally give him a motive by stepping on his tail or moving his food dish? The key is to address his mentality head on and show him that under no circumstances is he allowed to possess this mentality.

Chances are, if you have a handler aggressive dog that his motive will come when you begin obedience training. Remember, obedience training teaches most Buddys that he has to submit his will to yours, but this Buddy is different.

How are you going to know what handler aggression is? Good question. I am going to differentiate two different types of handler aggression.

'Mixed Signal' Handler Aggression

I call this type 'mixed signal' because that is just what it is. A lot of dogs fall into this type of handler aggression. If your Buddy has this type of handler aggression it is the easier of the two to deal with.

Remember, handler aggression occurs when a dog feels his relationship with you has been breached or violated. His response is to stick up for himself. A dog with 'mixed signal' handler aggression is a dog whose aggressive tendencies aren't so overt. When the power paradigm shifts Buddy will display aggression. He will do it more out of confusion than a desire to fight you for asserting your dominance.

He may growl lightly or the hair on his back may come up. His lips might begin to curl a little bit or he may bark or snap out of protest.

A dog with 'mixed signal' aggression usually won't back it up with an actual bite. He is merely showing his protest and uses growling and hair raising to show it. For this reason many would say that it isn't handler aggression because the dog never backs up his threat.

This behavior needs to be treated carefully, however, because if it is not dealt with correctly it can actually turn into full blown handler aggression. You see, in a situation like this the dogs psyche looks like the following. He is originally put into a situation that confuses him. Out of confusion he displays a certain 'aggressive' behavior. If his handler reacts in fear or alarm Buddy has now learned something from this. He has learned that when he feels this confusion he can throw out a growl or a snap and mom or dad will back off.

You repeat this enough times and soon a dog that was a bold dog but perhaps didn't have too many aggressive tendencies might turn to aggression much quicker because he has learned that it is a solution to his problems and his confusion.

So what are you going to do? First off, when you recognize that your dog may display 'mixed signal' handler aggression don't stop your obedience training. Just slow it down a little bit. Let things go nice and easy. Spend a lot of time showing him each exercise without putting too much pressure or compulsion on him.

Perhaps for awhile instead of a leash correction to make him sit just pull up on the leash with tension until he sits. Do the same for lying down and the other exercises.

What is going to happen is that he is not going to feel the same stress and pressure. You aren't going to be giving him strong corrections so he isn't going to feel that his relationship with you has been violated. But at the same time he is going to be submitting his will to you. When you say 'sit', because you are using the leash to make tension until he sits, he is going to sit. When you tell him to 'lie down' he is going to lie down. And so forth.

Little by little you are laying the foundation for a relationship that is more balanced in your favor, meaning that he is getting more and more respect and understanding what to do when you give him commands.

As you progress on this level you can soon give him small corrections for disobeying. Soon after that you can give him normal corrections for misbehaviors and then move to off leash training.

With a dog like this you need to always be careful, though. You can quickly become his master or the alpha member of the pack but that doesn't mean that anyone can deal with him however they want.

Just as he showed certain tendencies when you began his training, he will show those same behaviors to anyone else who deals with him in a way that he doesn't care for.

So the question is, how do you know if your dog has 'mixed signal' handler aggression or the worse kind. The answer isn't easy. It mostly comes from knowing the dog. Is your dog going to back up his growl by nipping your arm or is he just bluffing? This can be a tough question to answer.

Some indicators may be the level of aggression he shows. If his hair is coming up but he is bowing slightly, then he may not back it up with anything further. If his lips are up and he is growling heavily, then you know that he is probably pretty likely to take his aggression to the next level if you push him harder.

If you are convinced that his aggression towards you doesn't spring from some sort of confusion or 'mixed signals', read the next section.

Overt handler aggression

The next type of handler aggression can be labeled 'overt' handler aggression. This is dangerous stuff. In all reality if your dog has this type of handler aggression you should seriously consider whether or not to keep him or put him down. A dog like this requires a very serious handler. One who can be in charge of every situation that the dog will be in.

A dog who has overt handler aggression is the dog who is aggressive to anyone and everyone. This dog may also display food aggression, toy aggression, territorial aggression, and dog aggression. If you have a dog with overt dog aggression you likely know it. There is a good chance that you and or others have already been bitten by this dog. There are many questions that you have to ask yourself about a dog like this.

Will the dog be around children or uninvited guests? Will he be in social situations like picnics or backyard parties? A dog dealing with such dominance and aggression issues is not going to be the dog for most people. A dog like this should not be left alone with other people and shouldn't be handled by anyone other than the owner. This

dog is so dominant that any perceived threat, whether real or imaginary, is going to be met with his method of conflict resolution.

Even with sound training the chances are that you will never be able to achieve a sense of normality with a dog like this. You won't want to play fetch in the park with a dog like this.

There are many techniques that can work to manage and sometimes even eradicate this type of behavior but the harsh reality is that they should only be attempted by a professional or under the supervision of a professional. Please contact my company and we will be able to design a program based on your dog's particular tendencies and behaviors.

Puppy Biting

Dogs communicate a great deal with their mouths. At no other age of dogs is this more true more than the puppy stage.

Puppy biting is a normal problem. Most puppies do it. This doesn't mean that you can't and shouldn't fix this behavior problem. Not only is this problem annoying, but if left unchecked can cause disastrous results later on. Puppies who are allowed or even encouraged to bite as puppies may develop dominance issues as adults. It is better to get rid of this problem early.

A puppy with its mother will bite and nip at her and the other puppies in the litter. Even Mom will at times get annoyed with the behavior and will put a stop to it.

I have taken my method for correcting puppy biting right from dog mothers. When a puppy is biting at his mother and she wants to

stop it she will quickly and firmly bite his muzzle or his neck. From this I developed two methods:

1) As Buddy bites at you immediately take two fingers and rap him on the muzzle while you tell him 'No' in a firm but calm voice. The instant he stops calmly praise him. If he goes to re-bite you, repeat the process.

2) For some puppies, especially puppies that are a bit older or more rambunctious, the first method is not enough of a deterrent. Their desire to play and bite outweighs the negative reaction of getting rapped on the nose. For these dogs you can use the leash and training collar. For very young puppies use a flat collar.

As your puppy bites you grab the leash and give two or three quick, firm corrections while you tell him 'No'. When he stops biting calmly praise him. Remember, though, he is just a puppy. Don't make the corrections too hard, just enough to encourage him to stop the behavior.

Immediately following the correction I recommend that you end the play session with your dog by getting up and moving away. In this way he no longer has the option to bite you AND he will soon start to realize that his biting ends the fun play session that he is having with his owner.

Your puppy bites as a means of asking for attention and play. By making biting uncomfortable for him and showing him that the attention comes from not biting you can quickly train him to stop.

Chewing

Don't you hate this one?! I must say that except for going to the bathroom in the house the worst complaint from owners comes from chewing.

Chewing is caused by a number of different reasons. Some dogs do it out of boredom, some dogs are just destructive in nature and enjoy causing a mess, some dogs chew out of nervousness or separation anxiety. At its root form, however, chewing represents a lack of something. That may be a lack of exercise, a lack of pack structure, a lack of discipline, a lack of supervision, a lack of appealing chew toys, or several other 'lacks'. Whatever the cause, the solution is pretty much the same. You must make chewing on your things have a very negative association if you are going to get your dog to stop and at the same time you must help fill in whatever is lacking.

The first thing to try in the case of a chewer is bitter apple spray. This will only work for a percentage of dogs but it a good place to start. This spray can be purchased at the pet store and it has a very nasty taste to your dog. Spray it on the areas that Buddy has chewed or you think he may chew. There are now several reactions that I have seen occur with the bitter apple spray:

- 1) It works! If so, great. You have quickly and easily curbed Buddy's chewing habits. Congrats, you are one of the lucky ones.
- 2) It works, but only in the place that you have sprayed it. Buddy now avoids those places but has found new places to chew. Try spraying those places as well, but you may need to go on to the next phase which I will discuss in a moment.
- 3) It works, but only until the spray wears off. Buddy learns that if he smells the bitter apple that he better not chew. But if he doesn't

smell it, that shoe is fair game. Your options are to continually make the rounds in your house spraying things down, or go on to phase two.

4) It doesn't work at all. Buddy doesn't mind the taste, or worse, he likes it so you have basically sweetened up the end of the coffee table for him to chew when you sprayed it. No other choice except to go on to the next phase.

The Next Phase

The next phase consists of corrections designed to make chewing a very negative experience for Buddy. There are a few steps to this phase:

1) Correct him while he chews in your presence. If you are in the beginning stages of teaching Buddy house manners he is going to be on leash and near you at all times anyway. If not, he will be in the crate. This will make it very easy to curb his chewing problem because the only chance he will have to chew is with you right next to him. As you catch Buddy chewing quickly grab the leash he is wearing and give him a couple firm corrections while telling him 'No' several times.

After a few such incidents Buddy is going to stop chewing in your presence, but his habit may not be kicked, yet. Go on to the next step.

2) Okay, I will admit right off the bat that this next step is a dirty, tricky step. We are going to do what I call canine entrapment. We are basically going to set Buddy up in a sting and correct him when he performs the bad behavior.

Take whatever object that Buddy used to chew on when he was in your presence, whether it be a shoe or a chair or couch or whatever. Spread something that is irresistible for Buddy on that area, such as peanut butter or canned cheese. When Buddy goes to lick the delicious area repeat the same type of corrections you gave him in step one.

What you are showing Buddy through this is basically that no matter how tempting your things are, his mouth has no business touching your possessions. I have had many clients ask me whether or not they should correct their dog just for licking the shoes. The answer is yes, you need to correct him. His mouth does not need to be on your stuff, bottom line.

3) Buddy should now be 'chew-free' in your presence. He now knows that if you are present he can't chew anything or bad things will happen. For some dogs, this is enough. They are cured of chewing.

For other dogs, however, their understanding of not-chewing is tied to you being there. When you aren't there he may revert back to his old ways and begin chewing. What you are going to do in this case is more canine entrapment, but on a more difficult level for you. You must devise a way so that Buddy thinks you are gone but you are really able to watch him.

Use windows, mirrors, or any other tool to be out of the room and/or out of the house while still able to supervise Buddy's behavior. Then take the same shoe or chair, spread it with the same stuff and wait. Also, use new objects that you think Buddy may be interested in chewing and use them as bait. If Buddy goes to lick the good

stuff you immediately burst out of your hiding place to give him a correction. If he avoids the place come back after five, ten or thirty minutes and praise him as you enter. He won't know why you are praising him but he will associate your return as something positive.

The last thing you want to do is provide outlets for Buddy. Remember, his chewing is caused by a lack of something. Make sure that Buddy is getting a good walk every day. This will go a long way in making sure that Buddy has constructive things to do with his energy. Make sure that he is going on a positive walk, by that I mean that he is by your side and aware of you. If you let him pull on the leash and go hog wild he will expend physical energy but not mental energy. If he is walking properly, however, he will be using both physical and mental energy and your walks will go further in exhausting Buddy. Make sure that Buddy gets training every day.

Training helps to occupy the mind and can help reduce the propensity for chewing. Make sure that Buddy gets enough interaction with his human family. All dogs are different, some dogs can be just fine with small amounts of interaction. Other dogs need a lot, however, or else they chew.

I often find that many dogs will chew while left alone. It is their nervous energy that manifests itself by chewing. Give Buddy a 'high value' item to chew while you are gone. No, not your expensive shoes. You create a high value item by doing something special to one of Buddy's toys. Take a durable toy like a hard bone and play with it every day with Buddy for ten to fifteen minutes at a time. Allow the toy to collect your scent. Throw the toy and have Buddy retrieve it. Basically make a special time every day where you play with your dog and his toy. When you are done with the play session take the toy away and then only give it back when you leave. Now

Buddy has a high value toy with your scent that can be comforting to chew while you aren't home.

If you do this training well you can effectively rid Buddy of his chewing habits.