

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR BEST FRIEND**

### **Why Does My Dog Do That?**

- **Key Behavioral Factors**
  - **Canine instincts inherited from the wolf**
  - **Personality**
  - **Environment**
  - **Conversations with pack mates**
- **Behavior Is All About Conversations**
  - **We apply human thinking to our dogs**
  - **We inadvertently reward unwanted behavior**
  - **We inadequately reinforce desirable behavior**
  - **We inadvertently give our dogs a big, high-pressure job**
- **The Solution – make dog-friendly changes in your interactions with your dog in 5 key areas:**
  - **Status**
  - **Feeding**
  - **Perceived Danger**
  - **The Hunt**
  - **Play**
- **Dog Listening – learn to think like your dog and ‘speak’ its language.**
  - **Based entirely on nature of the dog**
  - **100% dog-friendly**
  - **Training done on your/your dog’s turf**
  - **Your dog will behave well voluntarily**

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***Kind Behavioral Training for More Joy with Your Dog***

# DOGS DON'T BITE OUT OF THE BLUE

**A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF BITES CAN BE PREVENTED BY AVOIDING EYE CONTACT AND NOT INVADING A DOG'S SPACE.**

**(See pictures for the dog that would be happy to see you. Observe your dog for the signals it sends.)**

Think how you would feel if a stranger locked eyeballs with you and walked into your personal space. You would feel uncomfortable to say the least even if the person was someone you had met before. You certainly would not want the person to stroke the top of your head.

To canines, eye contact coupled with movement is like talking is to us. So, when we make eye contact and approach a dog that does not know us well or at all, the dog can easily conclude that we are challenging its leadership or intend it harm. If the dog concludes that you are a threat, it is apt to use its only line of defense – its teeth. To keep ourselves, our children and our canine friends safe, here is what we need to do:

- 1) Do not make eye contact with the dog or talk to it. This avoids putting pressure on the dog.
- 2) Stop well away from the dog/its owner and ask if you can meet the dog. If the owner says the dog is not friendly, is nervous or is in training, thank him and move on.
- 3) If the owner gives you permission to interact with his/her dog, ask for the dog's name and call it to you. By coming to you, the dog is showing you it is comfortable with you and is also subordinating itself to you. If the dog does not come, this indicates it is not comfortable with you, so take a raincheck.
- 4) Make sure the dog comes all the way to you (or your child) so you do not have to move into its space. Brief eye contact is okay, but do not stare into the dog's eyes. Give the dog a chance to interact with you and sniff a bit. Then, you can give the dog some scratching behind the ear. Move slowly and let the dog see what you are doing. Do not put your hand directly over the dog's head, as this can be read as dominance by the dog. If your child is too young to follow your guidance, it will be best to let your child just see the dog.

- 5) Keep your face away from the dog's face. If you get your face too close, you may startle the dog into a quick bite. This happened to Kyle Dyer, KUSA Anchor in Denver while on-air. So, be especially careful when having a small child meet a large dog and be sure to keep your child's face away from the dog's face.

A dog with a wagging tail is simply in a heightened state. This can mean that the dog would like to meet you or might be afraid of you. Almost all dog bites are delivered out of fear. You can happily interact with most dogs by following the above steps. Please remember that it's what we do that counts, not what the dog does.

Thanks so much to Doggone Safe [www.doggonesafe.com](http://www.doggonesafe.com) for use of their image!

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Calls are always on the house with no strings attached.

**Dogs Don't Bite "Out of the Blue."**  
Many bites can be prevented if people learn to read a dog's body language.

- Panel 1:** A German Shepherd sitting with its tongue out and body wagging. Text: "This dog's whole body is wagging calmly and he is panting. He is happy to see you."
- Panel 2:** A black dog yawning. Text: "He is not yawning because he is tired. He is anxious and he hopes you will leave him alone."
- Panel 3:** A black and white dog with a high, stiff tail and closed mouth. Text: "Her tail is high, her body is stiff and her mouth is closed. 'I'm warning you. Back off!'"
- Panel 4:** A tan dog with a tucked tail and a worried expression. Text: "A tail tucked in, even if wagging a bit, means a very worried dog. 'Please stay away from me.'"
- Panel 5:** A black dog with a slow, stiff tail wag and a tongue flick. Text: "The tongue flick and the slow, stiff tail wag tell you this dog is very unsure. 'Go away.'"
- Panel 6:** A yellow dog turning her head away. Text: "This dog is turning her head away in order to avoid conflict. She doesn't want to be bothered."
- Panel 7:** A brown dog with a half-moon eye and a closed mouth. Text: "The half-moon eye and the closed mouth tell you this dog is uncomfortable. 'Leave me alone!'"
- Panel 8:** A black and white dog with a "freeze and stare" expression. Text: "The 'freeze and stare' is a very dangerous sign! This dog will bite if you persist."

**ENA** For more information about dog bite prevention, visit [www.doggonesafe.com](http://www.doggonesafe.com). **doggone safe**

## DOG-FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES

-  It's What You Do That Counts, Not What Your Dog Does
-  You Make The Leadership Decisions
-  Be Non-Confrontational
-  Be Calm
-  Be Consistent
-  Be Convincing
-  Be Patient & Persistent
-  Plan Ahead
-  Learn From Mistakes & Move On
-  Make Training Fun For You And Your Dog (Don't Over-Train)
-  Have A Party When Your Dog Performs As Requested (Reward With Treat, Praise, and/or Affection)
-  Have Fun

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## LEADERSHIP SIGNALS MEMORY JOGGER

### LEADERSHIP SIGNALS

#### 1) STATUS

- MOVEMENT.** Always call your dog to you for positive interactions.
  - Only go to your dog to correct (redirect or put in timeout) or prevent from being harmed.
- EYE CONTACT & TALKING.** Make eye contact or talk only when you want something. (Then, tell your dog what you want.)
- AFFECTION & ATTENTION.** Always give on your terms except when:
  - Dog must go out
  - Dog alerts you to danger
  - Dog makes eye contact during hunt to ask you “where to?”
- SEPARATION. Pack leader comes and goes as s/he pleases.**
  - Prior to separation, no interaction (eye contact, talking or petting)
  - Upon reuniting, no interaction – go through reuniting routine:
    - Dog leaves you alone, walks away, lies down & relaxes (golden 5 minutes). (*See consultation summary.*)
    - Then, can call dog to you. Be sure to reward with a tidbit, praise and/or affection.
- MAINTAIN YOUR PERSONAL SPACE** – no dog in your space unless invited.
- WHO IS ON THE THRONE?** – your bed or other furniture.

#### 2) FEEDING. The Pack Leader Eats First.

- Gesture eat -- you eat, put bowl down, step away. (*Do not walk with the bowl after eating.*)
- Gesture eat daily for 2 weeks. Then 1 to 2 days weekly. (*Go back to daily if you need to tighten up.*)
- Always pick up bowl when dog vacates it.
- Vary feeding time when dog starts expecting food. (Never give dog food when it seeks it.)

#### 3) PERCEIVED DANGER. Danger takes precedence – no need to reunite. The Leader Decides (Handles Danger). If inside –

- When your dog barks, thank it and call it to you. If this doesn't work –
- Go look (get in front of dog), thank, ask dog to come with you. If this doesn't work –
- Put dog into timeout. (*See timeouts article*)
- Danger On The Hunt.** Thank & flee

#### 4) THE HUNT (WALK). The Leader Always Leads The Hunt.

- Practice calling your dog to you when you wish (unless you need to reunite first). Recall builds trust.
- You & your dog are calm from start to finish (eliminate triggers).
- You go outside and come back in first (decisions are made from the front of the pack)
- Follow the leader – practice stop, start, change direction (SSCD). Remember the learning to swim analogy.
  - Off-lead indoors
  - On-lead indoors & outdoors
    - Do SSCD 30 minutes (*minimum 10*) daily with each dog
    - Wherever you do it, it counts.
    - Break into short sessions

#### 5) PLAY

- You choose the toy and initiate play.
- You make up the rules.
- You end the game.

#### CORRECTIONS (no eye contact, no talking)

- Ignore** – turn your head away or turn yourself sideways to your dog.
- Push Away** – use if dog comes into your space uninvited.
- Redirect** – walk dog away by collar or leash.
- Timeout** (separate dog from pack) – use for persistent behavior or serious misconduct.
- Movement** – stop movement to correct, move to reward.