

## **DOES YOUR DOG REALLY KNOW IT'S BAD?**

Dogs are not mechanical creatures, nor are they humans. Their brains do not work in the same way that a human's does. They lack human reasoning and some of our more complicated human emotions, but this is replaced with their own unique abilities that we would not trade for the world. That is what makes animals so special; they differ from humans. Taking the time to learn how they think and what makes them tick will help you successfully communicate with your dog. Give your dog what THEY need, rather than only taking what YOU want from your dog. Those who do for others are, generally, happier than those who only focus on themselves.

If you had a snake as a pet, you would more likely see the snake as the animal it is and try and give it what it instinctually needs. For example, a hut to hide under. But for some reason people humanize their dogs and perceive them to have human tendencies. In doing so, the dog suffers because he does not get his instinctual needs met.

Dogs do not reason, they react. Dogs never premeditate their actions. Meaning, they never think, "I am going to go and bite that mailman today." When a dog bites, there is a 99% chance it is the human's fault for not communicating with the dog properly. There are certain things our fellow canines need to be satisfied and happy. When they don't get it they react accordingly.

Dogs and animals in general have a universal language. They read one another's energy/emotions. Humans are one of the only species who cannot do this to the extent that other animals can. So, your dog knows you are displeased when you walk into the room because they feel your anger and the energy that is produced by this emotion. They do not understand it because you are displeased by them chewing up your couch or that peeing on the floor was wrong. The only way to make a dog truly understand something is wrong or bad is to catch him at the moment they are committing the deed, or the split second before.

Dogs are pack creatures and just because the alpha member is shunning them doesn't mean they know why, they just recognize the fact that you're displeased. The slinking behavior is a generalized plea for forgiveness for crossing over boundaries or limitations the pack places on its subordinates (lower members of the pack), not an acknowledgment of a specific wrongdoing.

Here is an example; if your dog chews something up and in the past you have yelled or corrected them after it was chewed, let's say the trash, your dog now thinks it is bad for that trash to be on the floor. However, if your correction did not come at the right time, your dog may not understand that the act of chewing the trash is the unwanted behavior. Only that it's bad to have trash on the floor. SO, the dog chews the trash, sees trash on floor and suddenly it's BAD. They slink away or display signs because they know you are going to be upset and they will be punished. Yet, they chew the trash again because they do not know that CHEWING the trash is the unwanted behavior. Your dog knows you are mad, but unless you caught him in the act, he does not know

why. Consequently, if you throw a piece of paper at the trash, miss and the paper falls to the floor, they may bark as they know trash on the floor is not in compliance with how the world is supposed to be. They will bark to alert you that something is out of place. When you pick it up and place the paper in the trashcan, order will have been restored to the universe and they will settle down.

Tip: Don't use his name when correcting him. His name should only be used for positive reinforcement.

In order for dogs to successfully live among humans, the humans must be the pack leaders. In the wild, pack leaders do not give affection to lower members of the pack unless it is earned by exhibiting wanted behavior. What they do give are rules the pack must follow, limits to what they are allowed to do, and boundaries that the pack must not cross. This social structure makes the dog feel safe and secure. When dogs live with humans they experience a human trait called affection. Love is embedded in all animate creatures and affection is the exhibition of that love. However, affection is not as frequently displayed in the dog world as it is in the human world. An example of affection in dogs is displayed by licking, like when a group returns after hunting and is greeted by the puppies/adolescent dogs that did not participate in the hunt. Affection between two different species is something humans have introduced to dogs and humans must learn the proper times to give it in order to properly communicate.

Affection is wonderful and dogs thrive on this human characteristic. However, too many times we give our dogs only affectionate love and we overlook the most important canine instincts. The thing that keeps the pack solid and the members secure is consistent, firm, confident discipline. When a dog is lacking in the latter, they lose their direction, become unstable, confused, insecure and unhappy. The lower dogs look to the pack leader for guidance and direction. Their instincts tell them that without a strong, consistent pack leader, they will not survive. Therefore, it is instinct for a dog to try to take over if they do not see you as a consistent strong leader.