



Leadership Program

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The Leadership Program is for people with dogs who rule the home and exhibit problem behaviors. This is a gentle and fair program designed to earn you more respect from your dog. If your dog is aggressive, please consult a professional dog trainer for solutions to specific problems.

Aggression is dangerous and requires the services of a competent professional dog trainer.

- Leadership is not about being harsh or unkind. .
- At first, Leadership may confuse your dog because it is new.
- Before long, Leadership will make your dog happy.
- Leaders make the rules: is that you or your dog?
- Leadership is about controlling resources.

Resources are the “stuff of life,” all the things your dog needs or wants. We control resources for humans! So why not control them for dogs? If your two year old child wants to grab every candy bar off the shelf at the store, we do not permit her to do so. (Controlling food.) If your four year old child tries to run into the street, we stop him. (Controlling space.) If your eight year old child does not want to do homework, we insist that she does. (Controlling time.)

Here is a new word that will help you become a Leader, one who your dog not only loves but also respects. The word is **NILIF**. It stands for:

Nothing In Life Is Free

Nothing is life is free? That’s right. Nothing. Everything is the opposite of Nothing. For a period of time, we will control **Everything**. So what will we control for our dog? **Resources!** Before we define the term, remember that we control resources every day for our children. We do this as a gift, for their physical and psychological well being. We can and must do the same for our dogs, especially those who exhibit symptoms of poor psychological adjustment. Dogs that have clear Leadership from their owners are not unhappy, nervous, or aggressive. Deprived of Leadership, dogs may withhold affection from their owners at times, and then demand affection at others. They may bark or growl at their owners, refuse to follow commands, or to permit grooming. In some cases, deprived of Leadership, dogs may bite their owners or others. Dogs who growl at or bite their owners do so when they are afraid, or when they are attempting explain ‘their rules’ to people who “just don’t seem to listen.” If your dog bites you when you try to remove him from *your* bed, here is his message to you: “This is my bed. I let you sleep here too, but it is my bed. You have no right to remove me from it. I have told you and told you by growling. Now I must show you by biting.”

This is life in the Backwards Zone, where the dog is convinced that he owns the house and everything in it, including the people. Yet, try as they might, dogs do not make good human Leaders. They live in a confusing human world. To flip the situation around, you must employ good Leadership skills and NILIF. Before long, you will find your dog becoming more relaxed, more affectionate, more tolerant and much happier.

NILIF is about controlling resources.

Resources that are important to dogs are: • Food • Water • Toys • Time • Space • Smells on the walk • Affection •

Your dog needs every one of these resources. If your dog, however, believes he gets all of these things because he was born a Special and Powerful puppy, into a home full of servants, he will appreciate none of them. So to be perceived as a Leader, you must control resources, making it clear that you are the fountain of all things good, and that you are to be respected. Help your dog earn resources as payment for a job well done.

Here is how we control each resource

Food: No more free feeding. Food is to be given at designated meal times only, not left available in the dog bowl all day. A very high percentage of problematic dogs are allowed to pick at food all day long. In nature, dogs must work hard to find food. The psychology of the dog depends on working for food. Feed your dog twice per day. Have him sit before you put the bowl down. Release him to the food. This is working for food. Remove what he doesn't eat within 10 minutes. Do not offer food again until the next meal time. Do this for the rest of your dog's life. Treats, including bones, rawhide and pig's ears, are also a food resource. For the first two weeks of the NILIF program, do not feed treats. This will help your dog get on a regular meal schedule, and also shows you are no longer a servant. After two weeks, if you want to give your dog a treat, ask him to do a small series of jobs to earn it. Tell him to come, and then sit. Use the treat as a reward, not as a bribe. (If your dog guards food, or high value treats, consult your professional dog trainer for help in dealing with food guarding behavior.)

Water: Dogs need frequent access to water, especially in hot weather, after exercise, or after eating dry food. Frequent access does not mean 24/7 access. When you're home, take up the water bowl. Offer it when your dog needs water. Sit your dog, put the water down, and release your dog to the bowl. If he doesn't want to drink, put the bowl away and try again a bit later. Do this for the next two weeks.

Toys: If you have toys all around the house, pick them up, put them in a box and put the box in a closet. When you think your dog would enjoy playing with a toy, you select one from the box and give it to your dog. Ask your dog to sit or down before giving the toy. Do not play tug of war with your dog for 30 days. (If he has bitten, never play tug of war with your dog again.) Allow your dog to play with the toy, or play with him. Periodically remove the toy from the dog. Ask him to sit, and then give it back, or replace it with a different toy. When you decide playtime is over, once again, put away all the toys. Do this for the next 30 days. (If your dog guards toys or objects, consult your professional dog trainer for help in dealing with guarding behavior.)

Time: You are the one who decides what you and your dog will do at any given moment. We make an exception for those times when your dog asks to go outside for potty. However, do not respond to your dog's demands to do anything else specific. You set the timetable. For example, if you have decided that your dog should lay quietly by your side for a few moments, do not respond to his attempts to distract you from that goal. Merely place your dog on leash, tie the leash to the chair you are sitting on and gently prevent him from leaving the area, barking or soliciting play. Eventually, he will settle and lay down all on his own. This is called tethering. Do this several times per day for five to ten minutes, and do it for 30 days.

Space: You get to decide where your dog will put his body. Space belongs to you. Teaching your dog to "Yield" space to you is 'dog speak'. They understand that the one who controls space is the leader. When you walk through a room and your dog blocks your path, do not walk around it, walk *through* the space your dog is occupying. (Shuffle Charlie Chaplin style if necessary to avoid stepping on your dog's toes.) Do it quietly and assertively. If your dog is aggressive toward you, do this under the direction and supervision of a professional dog trainer who is experienced with dog aggression problem solving.

A very high percentage of dogs with problem behaviors sleep in their owner's bed. If your dog has bitten when on a human bed, your dog should never again be permitted on a bed, or even allowed in your

bedroom. Simply close the bedroom doors. If your dog has bitten, do this for life. Your dog should sleep in a room other than a bedroom. If your dog has not bitten, do this for the next 30 days. Getting up on furniture also sends the wrong message to dogs with problem behaviors. It tells them they are your equal, and that you are not the Leader. If your dog has bitten, then have him drag an 8 foot line in the home when you are observing him so he doesn't tangle and choke. If he should get up on furniture, *do not say anything or even look at your dog*. Simply take the end of the line, turn your back, and walk away from the furniture, impersonally removing your dog. Be persistent, and eventually your dog will learn to stay off furniture. If your dog has bitten, furniture is banned for life. If your dog has not bitten, do this for 30 days if you don't mind your dog on furniture. If you do mind, do this for life. When walking through tight spaces, such as through doorways and gates, simply use your body to block the openings until you have walked through first, or make your dog wait for permission before you allow it to pass through the door space. (If your dog has bitten when guarding space, consult your professional dog trainer for a solution before trying this approach.) Do this for life.

Crate training is very healthy for the dog's state of mind. Dogs are born in calm, quiet space such as a whelping box. Instinctively, they can learn how to enjoy this private space. A dog who calmly permits you to crate him periodically respects your authority. To help your dog learn to enjoy the crate, never place him in it as punishment. Instead, toss a treat into the crate, and allow your dog to enjoy his treat in his very own master bedroom. Remember, the crate should not be placed in your bedroom. Your dog will learn to enjoy his space faster if you feed him some or all of his meals in his little room.

Smells on the walk: Sniffing interesting smells when on the walk is part of being a dog. But it is also a resource. When your dog stops to smell in the first few moments of the walk, keep going and deny your dog this resource. After your dog is walking attentively, grant this resource by allowing him the occasional stop to sniff. (If your dog exhibits aggression to dogs or people on the walk, or if he pulls uncontrollably, consult your professional dog trainer for solutions.) Do this for life.

Affection: This is the hardest resource for humans to control, yet it is one of the most important. The one who decides when you show affection to your dog will control the relationship. Affection can be defined as: talking to your dog, touching your dog, and giving eye contact to your dog. Do not give affection when your dog demands it. Instead, help him earn your affection by doing a come, a sit or a down. Then use affection as a reward for a job well done. Do not give affection when your dog is anxious, irritable, demanding, or aggressive. If your dog has not bitten, give only the skimpiest amount affection for two weeks. If your dog has bitten, consult your professional dog trainer for solutions, and give only the skimpiest affection, as reward for a job well done only, for 30 days.

Here is a secret known to all professional dog trainers: Dogs are easy; people are not. I will not spend a lot of time trying to convince you to use the Leadership Program. I will simply tell you that I train many dogs with problem behaviors. This program works for the vast majority of them. After a short period of confusion due to the changes, the dogs become far happier than they were before the program. That is because dogs do not want you to be their mother. They want you to be their Leader. Give your dog the Life gift of Leadership. You'll both be far happier.

