

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO SAY PLEASE

Good manners are important, right? Well, it is important for your dog to learn manners also. Learning how to “Say Please” will improve your relationship with your dog, as he comes to understand that good things are not automatically his – good things come from YOU.

All you are going to do is this -- whenever your dog wants something, you ask your dog to do something for you first.

First teach your dog to do something. It can be shake paw, sit, lie down – anything. Make sure you have practiced in different locations and that your dog understands what the word means.

Make a list of your dog’s most enjoyable activities, and tape the list on the fridge as a reminder.

Here are some to get you started: going for a walk, going outside, belly rubs, playing ball, getting on the couch, eating dinner, petting, tossing the squeaky toy, coming inside, playing with another dog. Now you think of some more-- just observe your dog and notice the things he or she enjoys.

From now on, before every enjoyable activity, ask your dog to sit, or whatever you decide. I use Sit because it is so easy, and I’m lazy. All you are doing is asking your dog to say, “Please may I do such and such”. It’s just basic canine courtesy.

If your dog will not do as you ask, do not repeat yourself. Just turn and walk away, completely ignoring the dog for a few minutes. **There has to be a meaningful consequence for the dog not doing what you ask.** The door does not open, his dinner dish does not get put on the floor, the leash does not go on, you do not pet him, do not throw the ball, etc. Whatever he was wanting does not happen. The idea is to arrange it so the dog will *want* to do as you ask. Wait a couple of minutes and try again.

This will get much easier the more you do it. And you will see a noticeable difference in your dog’s attitude. You will see more willingness to listen to you.

By asking the dog to “Say Please” before getting something he desires, the dog comes to believe that you hold the keys to all good things in the universe. You become much more important in your dog’s eyes.

Here is a great quote from John Rogerson, who is a wonderful trainer from England: “In a typical 24 hour period, how much influence do you have over your dog's behavior; and, how much influence does your dog have over your behavior?”

Do you want to be the trainer, or the trainee? Do you want your dog to listen to you, or are you going to let your dog ignore you? Teach your dog to say Please.