**Pack:**

Pack Leader Job:

Enforce discipline (exercises from taking toys away, feeding, eating first, controlling aggression, obeying commands, establishing heircy)

**Things we do to elevate the dogs pack order:**

Pet dog when he nudges us to be petted.

Feed dog before we eat

Let dog go out door before we do

Let dog bolt out of car before we can get the door open

Letting dog sleep on bed – marking on bed

Letting dog mark in house

Letting dog pull us down street

Letting dog lead us to meet another dog

Letting dog bark at us for attention

Letting dog get away with commands

Not setting boundaries: (example: owner who rescues a dog obsesses with what a sad life the dog had and therefore allows the dog to get away with anything with only minimal correction. The problem is that they are transmitting fear and weakness. No dog wants to follow a weak leader; therefore, the dog begins to feel comfortable as pack leader showing behavioral problems that did not exist in their head before.). This can be true also for owner who cottle, make excuses, or baby their dogs.

Dogs are territorial

Dogs are Possessive

Dogs are pack animals

Dog Pack dynamics change with each introduction and separation of an animal. Once you have three dogs, you have a “pack”.

Dogs have rank drive:

Three dogs develop rank order which includes a pack leader, you. Each dog in a pack knows where their order is. When dogs don’t have a strong human pack leader, one of the dogs will emerge as pack leader.

There is also pack leadership within the k-9 pack. That dog is usually the one that sits away from the action and steps in when necessary.

**So who is the pack leader?**

**First comes the human, and then comes the first dog in line.**

**The pack leader is never obxnious, pushy, bullying, loud, or reactive. This behavior shows their overcompensation for their weaknesses. A pack leader stands tall, not overly dominant but not overly reactive. Assesses the situation and then takes action when necessary…It’s usually the dog who said “I’ve had enough”. They usually dog overly play, don’t growl, allow others to come to him/her, but is not overly interactive.**

Simple delinquent behaviors lead to serious intra-pack aggression. The more dogs in the home, the more “in charge” the human pack member must be….regardless if they live there or if they are just visiting each other.

Worst dog fights are inter female dog fights.

When fights begin in a larger pack (3 dogs or more) most of the time the dogs will gang up on the weakest dog…even if they all live together… (Dog parks)

Once a dog has been attacked, it is traumatized. These dogs will always be leery of new dogs and they will have negative feelings within a pack.

A dog can love you and not respect you. Love and Respect are two totally different things.

Most dogs don’t want to be pack leaders. When it’s forced on them, they get stressed and nervous. When dogs have strong human pack leadership this does not happen. The human leader makes it crystal clear that ANY aggressive behavior is unacceptable in the pack and will not be tolerated.

Human pack leaders must show their dog that they will protect them from others. This is a very important issue that the average dog owner does not realize…Hence, we teach person to person walking, standing to protect your dog when another dog approaches. Etc.

**Two Dogs: Introduction – Like Slow courtship/dating**

Fight/argument ensues; dogs will go on but do not forget about it.

When first introducing, it should be slow and if done correctly during the first few weeks (not days), the dogs harmony is established. Don’t go to fast and just assume they are all getting along. That is the number #1 pitfall people make. Don’t skip steps.

* New dog in home let him explore without the other dogs around.
* Then put new dog away so other dogs can come smell your home and get a feel for the new guest
* A day or so later, new dog in crate, other dogs, nearby but not bothering or charger or smelling crate. Dogs get to see how the other dogs posture, walk, communicate, figure pack order.
* Then walk dog’s together, current dog in front, and then behind…
* Walk dogs together a few days later, side by side with TWO people…don’t attempt to walk them together.

Let the sniff and smell for a very very short period of time, and withdraw the dogs, feeding both so they return their attention back to you instead of the other dog. If you see any posturing, pull them away and reprimand behavior.

Let the introductions escalate in time to where they can stand together comfortably without getting into each other’s space.

Feed all dogs in separate areas where you can control other dogs visiting the bowls…no visiting.

Do not let new dogs share bones.

Slowly have new dog and old dog on house leash…make sure one person is holding each dog…

As the dogs become more comfortable you can drop the leash, but let them drag it…this will give you an outlet to grab the dogs away from each other in case a dog fight ensues.

Take your time with introductions. This is a marriage; it needs to be built on foundation. If you rush the foundation, you will have problems in the relationship.

**Changes in Pack order:**

Changes in pack order occur constantly. Withdraw one dog from the pack, withdraw one human, add a new dog, add a new location, have a sick dog, and all things change.

You have to adapt to change.

**Pitfalls to avoid:**

Watch the age of the dogs you are mixing – should not be same age. Age provides separation to the pack order. Does not mean automatically older dog is pack leader. Older dog can become pack leader when he gets his nerve up to challenge current leader, old dog may not want to submit pack leadership mentally even though he physically can’t handle that job...young dog might be feeling oats and try to establish leadership but doesn’t have the nerve for it yet. Etc.

Two dogs same sex, same age – one will be forced to submit to the other. If they can’t reach agreement or test that agreement, fights will begin, if you cannot see the warning signs, some dogs will fight to the death.

Same sex – typically opposite sex works best.

Factors – same sex, age

Littermates

Sibling rivalry

Same sex female fighting

Same sex male fighting

Feeding close proximity

Feeding same treats, dog becomes possessive of treat

Dog becomes possessive of toy (same toys)

Coming home from work = Anxiety when owner comes home, dogs jostle for attention (possessiveness)

Going outside – dogs jostle for position at the dog, accompanied by some snapping or growling.

Playing – Playing can escalate to where one dog pisses off another…A warning growl is given and the other dog decides not to back down.

**Training and Correction:**

NEVER Allow dogs to posture or growl at each other.

Never allow dogs to fight over a toy or treat.

If you have a dog that steals the other dog’s toys, take it away, replace with another, and give original back to first dog.

If dog eats their cookie and goes for the other dogs, put the first dog in a down and do not allow him to reward himself with the other dogs treat.

Correction should be on nylon choke or dominant dog collar. For some dogs, correcting a dog that is heightened anxiety and adrenaline for another dog, using a prong will increase that stimulation. We want to take the drive out of the dog, not add to it.

If your dog is standing stiff legged, tail head high, eyes dialiated, ears erect, stiff wag of the tail, this is a sign of dominance or assertiveness…this could be a dog that will pounce if the other dog performs motion he is not happy with.

**Dog Parks:**

Frequent visitors have already established pack order..New dog comes in, game on.

Survival of the fittest in a dog park.

Dogs are usually not well trained and owners cannot correct or control them fast enough if a situation happens.

Your dog will be attacked or will attack another dog at a dog park, it is inevitable.

Doggie daycare is very similar….dogs are thrown together and left to fend for themselves to work out their order. For a dog that does not want to submit to that order, a dog fight will ensue…the difference between dog parks and doggie day care and the wild is that we have domesticated the dog to be a social animal and when they become unsocial, it is unacceptable…and the owners have an emotional attachment to the well being of the animal. In the wild, the only one looking out for the animal is the animal himself or the beta.