

## Behaviour and Socialisation



These are both huge topics contributing to the health and happiness of dogs everywhere. Appropriate breeding, socialisation and training can dramatically reduce the incidence and severity of behaviour issues. Luckily there are lots of things that can be done to set us and our dogs up for a great life. Stressed parents create stressy puppies, so good behavioural health of relatives is just as important as physical health. Breeders can get pups off to a healthy start, and even offset some potential genetic components of stress by providing novel, enriched environments. Stimulating all senses in those early weeks helps to develop brains that are better equipped for navigating life later on. Puppy Myth: people often tell me that they know puppies should be left to cry it out when they are left alone overnight. Puppy Truth: in actual fact, leaving puppies to cry it out can increase attachment issues and anxiety as they learn that nobody is going to help them when distressed. Remember, they are still babies, and need the security of their family. Sleep downstairs, or have their bed/crate in your room and gradually increase separation if you need to, once they are more settled.

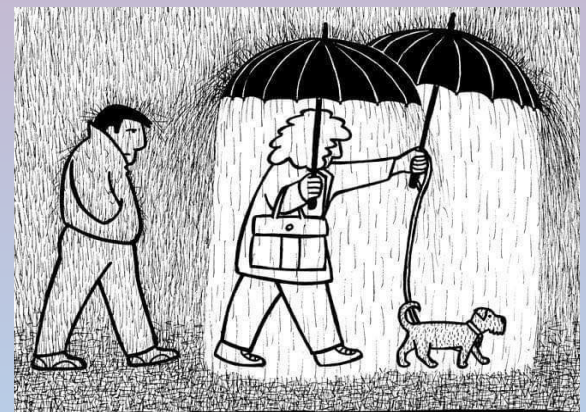


Good socialisation is far more about quality than it is about quantity. Over-socialising can be just as problematic as under-socialising. Find some people and dogs you can introduce your puppy to and spend some time with, preferably including other puppies they can play with too. Moderate their experiences to make sure that they are positive and appropriate for the individual. Look for signs that they might need a break or more space such as: over-excitement; excessive barking, jumping, grabbing, or anxiety or fear; lip licking; holding their weight back away from something or someone; showing the whites of their eyes; holding their ears back; yawning; moving away or lowering their body and/or holding their tail down.

As they grow up, continue positive and appropriate social experiences, provide novelty either via walks or activities you do with them at home. Focus on mental stimulation and bonding with your dog.

When it comes to behaviour there are almost always things we want to change. The key is to think about what you want your dog to do not just on what you want them to stop. Does your dog bark at the doorbell? Focus your energy on thoroughly teaching them to sit on a mat, for example, and then get someone to press the doorbell periodically and practise asking your dog to sit on the mat for a reward they really like.

As with so many things, focus your energies on what you want, not on what you don't.



BOB HAD NEVER BEEN IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT HIS POSITION IN THE FAMILY PECKING ORDER



Dogs are highly social and want to be with their owners whatever they are doing.