

Dog Bite Prevention

How to be safe around dogs!



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How do I know if a dog is aggressive?



Part I: The Art of Canine Communication

The Art of Survival

- Clear communication is essential; conflicts are dangerous!
- Dogs use visual, auditory, and olfactory senses
- They talk to us in “dog” language—quite different from human body language



The Problem

- Dad: “Sparky, COME!!” (Strict, dominant voice)
- *Sparky: “Please don't be angry.” (Licking nose, yawning, turns head away)*
- *Dad becomes angry for real— Sparky obviously isn't listening!*
- *Sparky is punished for using his calming signals to calm dad.*



Calming Signals

- Yawning
- Licking
- Turning away/turning of the head
- Play bow
- Sniffing
- Walking in a curve
- Moving slowly or not at all

Yawning

- When? Feeling threatened, nervous, excited
 - Angry voices, someone bends over him, at the vet's office, excited to go for a walk



Licking



Turning away/turning of the head

- Works great in dog language—we, however, rarely interpret it correctly!



Play Bow

- Invitation to play
- Also used to calm other dog



Sniffing



Sniffing

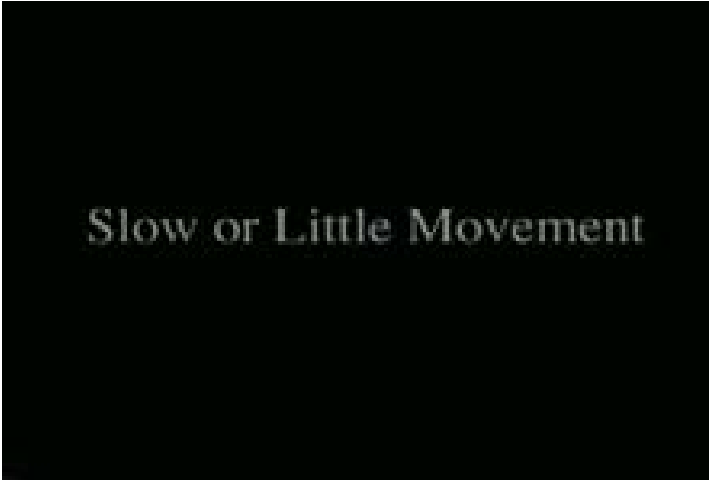
Walking in a curve

- In dog language, it is very rude (threatening, even!) to walk/run straight towards the head
- Dogs like to meet by walking around each other, so let them!
- You shouldn't approach dogs head-on either; come along their side



Slow or very little movement

- Dog stops moving—standing, sitting, lying down
- Dog may refuse to move when spoken to in an angry voice; may freeze when approached
- This may be a dog's only means of “calming” another dog if escape is not possible
- Not to be confused with an aggressive “freeze up”



Slow or Little Movement

Aggressive freeze-up



“Hackles up” / Hair-raised



Piloerection

Tail wagging



- Tail wagging = friendly dog

NOT ALWAYS!!

- Beware of the high, fast wagging tail
 - High state of arousal, very “wound up”

High, fast tail wag



Tooth displays



Pupils dilated



Learn to read your dog

- These calming signals are a dog's way of avoiding and solving conflicts and allows them to live together in a peaceful manner.
- Dogs are experts at it!
- Watch your own dogs—eyes, ears, body posture—you'll see the calming signals everywhere!



Let's review

- Yawning
- Licking
- Turning head
- Play bow
- Sniffing
- Slow/no movement
- Shake-off
- Aggressive freeze-up
- Hackles up
- High, fast tail wag
- Tooth displays
- Pupils dilated
- Tap-out/roll onto back

Fighting or playing?



Fighting or playing?



What do you see?



Pause for questions



Part II: The Gift of Growling

I'm warning you...

- NEVER punish a dog for growling
- The wrong rationale:
 - Growl = Bite = May have to put dog to sleep
 - So nip biting in the bud by punishing the first sign of inappropriate behavior!
 - **WRONG!!**



A Cry for Help

- “Stop it! I might bite!”
- Aggression is caused by stress
 - Fear, threats to resources, intrusion, pain
- You can teach a dog to suppress the growl, but you don't take away the stress that caused the growl



Don't punish the growl!

- Dogs don't want to bite—the growl is a warning
 - Identify what's causing him stress
 - Remove him from the situation
 - Develop exercises that weaken the stressful association he has
- A dog who doesn't growl WILL “bite out of nowhere”



Example

- Let's say Fido growls at a child while on a walk
- You yank on the leash and shout, “NO!”
- You do this every time Fido growls at a child



- Fido begins to like children less and less, and he also learns not to growl at them

Example cont'd...

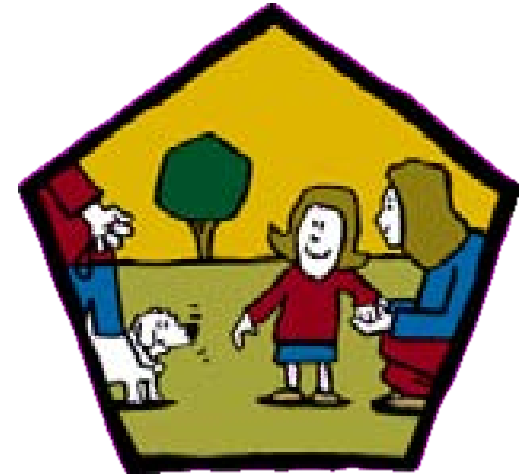
- Convinced he now accepts children, you allow a kid to pat him on the head
- Fido is now *super stressed* and can't hold back
 - he lunges forward and snaps at the child's face
- Teach him to not be afraid of kids—but don't teach him to not growl



Remember these warning signs

- Hackles up/hair raised
- Aggressive freeze-up
- Tail wagging fast, high
- Tooth displays

Responsible Adults



- Teach their kids about dog safety
- Always supervise their children when dogs are around
- Always ask a dog's owner for permission before petting the dog or allowing children to pet the dog
 - And never assumes the dog is good with kids, even if the owner says so (supervise closely)

City of Olathe Requirements

- All dogs must have proof of current rabies vaccination (3-year vaccines accepted)
- All dogs must be licensed on an annual basis
 - \$5 licensing fee (spayed/neutered)
 - \$25 licensing fee (*not* spayed/neutered)
 - Dog must wear its license (tag) at all times



What happens when a dog bites?

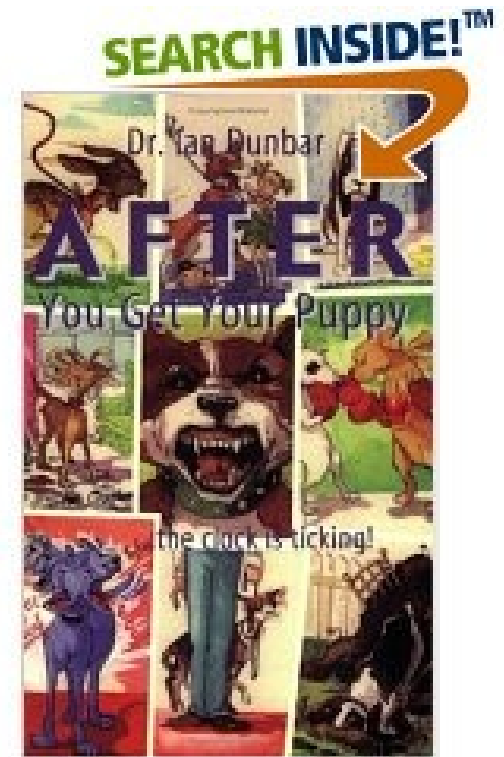
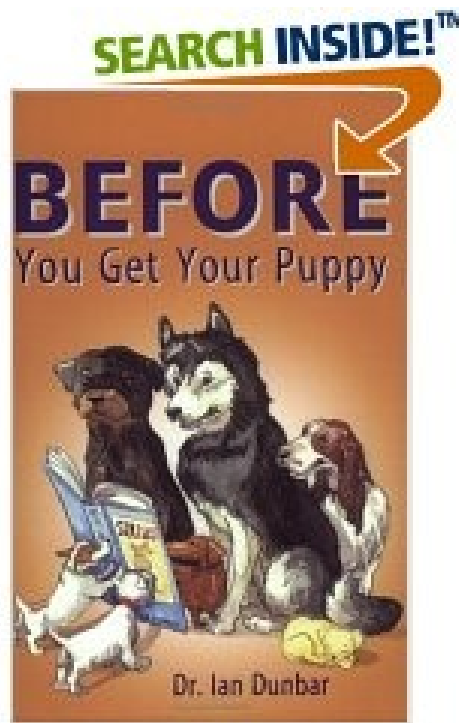
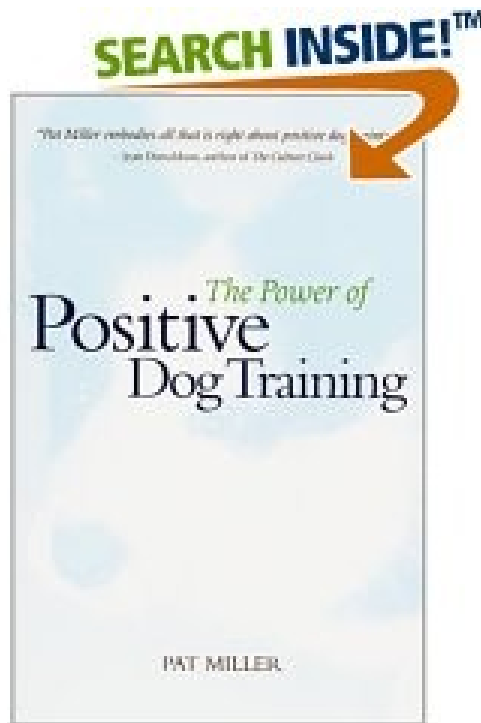
- Any person having knowledge of an animal bite **MUST** report the bite to Animal Control at the Olathe Police Department by calling 913-971-7455
- All dogs, cats and ferrets must be placed under 10 days rabies observation
- Owner must show proof of current rabies vaccination
- Animal will be confined to Olathe Animal Shelter, City of Olathe Veterinarian or the owner's property as mandated by an Animal Control Officer
- Animal is observed for 10 days to confirm the ongoing normal health and behavior of the animal

Avoid creating a dangerous dog of your own

- Socialize young puppies LOTS!!
 - 100 different people by the age of 3 months
- Enroll in training classes
- Train with positive reinforcement
- Practice “drop” and “leave it” daily
- Don't waste time in denial; ***seek help if you need it***



Books I recommend



1. *Power of Positive Dog Training* by Pat Miller
2. *Before You Get Your Puppy* by Ian Dunbar
3. *After You Get Your Puppy* by Ian Dunbar

Local trainers

- These trainers use positive reinforcement
 - Gloria Logan with Perfect Puppy
 - <http://www.perfectpuppyllc.com/>
 - Gentle Dog Training
 - <http://www.gentledogtraining.com/>
 - PetSmart
 - <http://www.petsmart.com/training/index.shtml>



Pause for questions



Part III: What to do if approached by a loose dog

Watch for warning signs

- Running towards you
- Hackles up/hair raised
- Aggressive freeze-up
- Tail wagging fast, high
- Tooth displays

Stand like a tree

- Avoid eye contact
- Don't run
- Don't turn your back on the dog
- Don't yell/shriek
- Stay calm and call for help
- If wearing a jacket or backpack, keep it between you and the dog



If knocked over, Lie Like a Log

- Lie face down
- Cover back of your neck with your hands
- Be as uninteresting as possible
- Call for help



Consider carrying for safety:



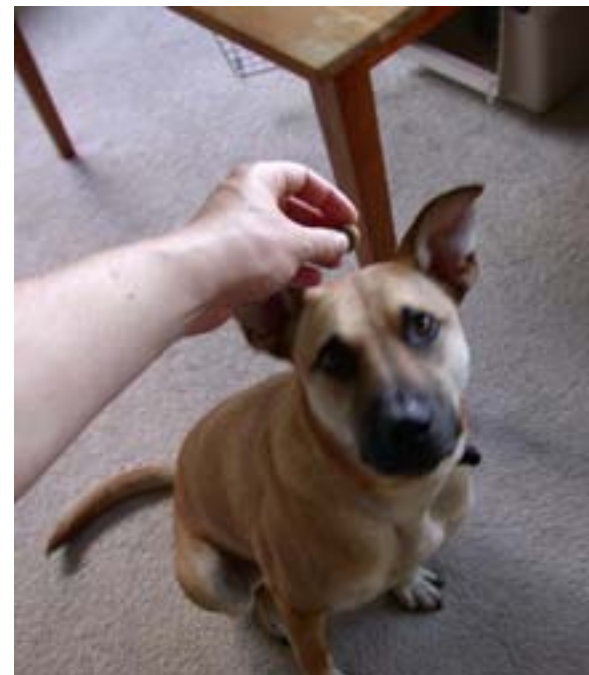
If YOUR dog is aggressive

- Seek help from a qualified trainer—don't waste time in denial!
- Use a muzzle when out in public

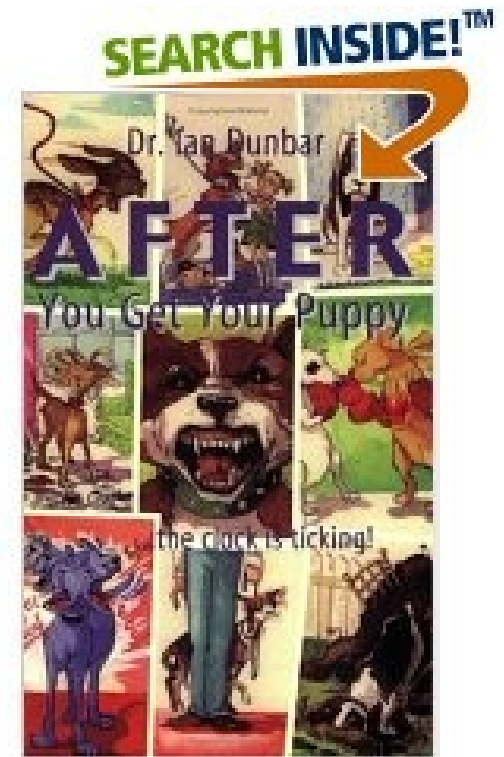
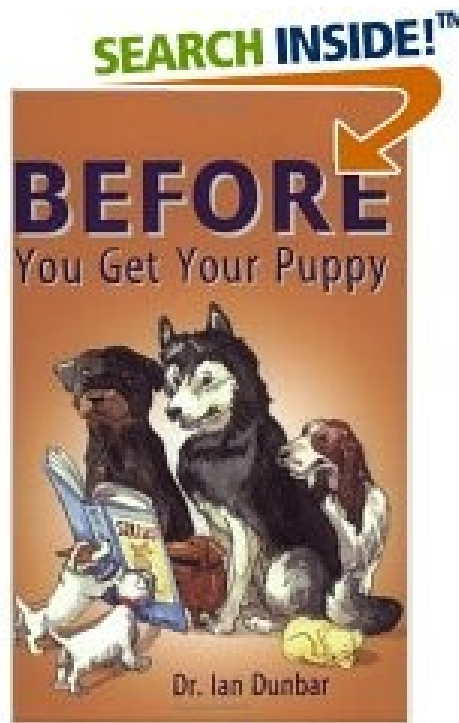
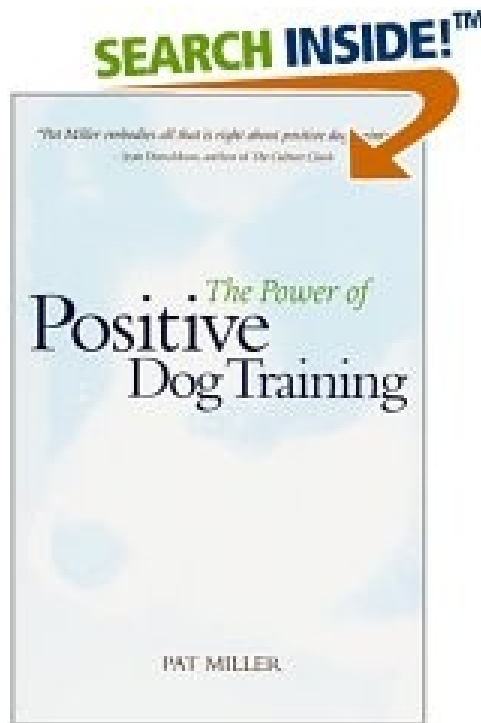


Training should be life-long!

- Set ground rules in your home and abide by them every day
- “No Free Lunch” or “Say Please by Sitting”
- Don’t be afraid to use treats!!
- Gentle Leaders—no, it’s not a muzzle



Recommended Reading



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THANK YOU!



Questions?