

# Dog Training by PJ

5303 Louie Lane #19, Reno, Nevada 89511

[www.dogtrainingbybj.com](http://www.dogtrainingbybj.com)

775-828-0748

Reference Library Materials © 2008 Dog Training by PJ

## Change The Way Your Dog Behaves Ten behavior mistakes that dog lovers teach their dogs - and how to make the fix

Reprinted from Dog Watch, April 2003, written by Susan Lang

---

Dogs that misbehave aren't necessarily bad dogs. In fact, many of their misbehaviors are because their humans do the wrong thing.

"In many cases, the source of a dog's misbehavior problem is a client who has inadvertently caused or reinforced a dog's undesirable behavior," says Karen Overall, MA, VMD, PhD, a certified animal behaviorist, a research associate in psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, and the former director of its Behavior Clinic in the School of Veterinary Medicine. "The other major mistake that most clients make is that they ignore their dogs when they're being good. So what they end up doing is giving the dog attention for being bad and withholding attention when the dog is 'good.' That teaches the dog to repeat the attention-getting behaviors."

Here are some of the major ways that some dog lovers encourage their dogs to misbehave:

**MISTAKE #1:** When the dog is excited and barking, he gets fed, walked, or exercised. When the dog rubs, paws, or leans against its humans while they're reading or watching TV, he gets petted.

"In these cases, the dog controls the situation. Dogs should sit and be calm before they get food, walks and so on," says Overall. "Under no circumstances should the clients touch, love or otherwise interact with the dog unless the dog defers and awaits attention. The dog must sit and be quiet to earn anything and everything it wants for the rest of its life." Otherwise, dog



lovers reinforce the dog to bark, whine, paw, and push, demanding attention.

**MISTAKE #2:** When the dog barks too much, the dog lover screeches at the dog; when the dog jumps on someone, the dog lover might knee her in the chest or stop on her back toes. "If dogs don't know how to get attention by being calm, they'll find other ways," notes Overall, who believes that clients should never physically reprimand their dogs.

Instead, the dog should be taught to do something positive, like sit near the door when people enter. This behavior should be rewarded with praise and a treat. Using a loose head collar helps when company is expected; if the dog jumps or barks, guide her by pulling gently on the collar, then have her sit and reward her for doing so.

**MISTAKE#3:** Dog lover believes that a crate for a dog is akin to a prison, and therefore does not crate the dog.

Dogs that are introduced to their crates appropriately usually learn to love their crates as a safe sanctuary where the animal doesn't have to worry about being teased by children or tripped over. Crates can be an easy and painless way to aid in housetraining a new dog, as well as to keep puppies out of trouble when no one is home. "Crates, however, are overused and have created an epidemic of under-exercised, incarcerated dogs," says Overall, who stresses that crates should never substitute for meeting a dog's needs for play and exercise. And dogs that panic in crates should never be crated. *(If problems - ask your trainer)*

**MISTAKE #4:** Dog lover gives its puppy free rein of the house, both when family members are home or not at home.

If left unattended, puppies may soil the house or chew inappropriate items unnoticed. You can only correct a puppy when she's caught in the act - then you can swoop her up to go outside or direct her attention to appropriate items to chew. Puppies that can't be watched should be crated or put in a puppy-proofed space.

**MISTAKE #5:** Dog lover discovers a mess made by the dog; he pushes the dog's nose into the mess, smacks and yells at the dog and then puts the dog in a crate to punish him.

# Dog Training by PJ

5303 Louie Lane #19, Reno, Nevada 89511

[www.dogtrainingbybj.com](http://www.dogtrainingbybj.com)

775-828-0748

Reference Library Materials © 2008 Dog Training by PJ

Startling a dog to get them to stop a behavior and learning that startle accompanies inappropriate behavior is only effective within one second of the bad behavior, Overall says. Otherwise, bad behaviors must be ignored. Any harsh, physical punishment can foster fear, distrust, anxiety and submissive urination. If you catch

the dog in the act, startle him by swooping him up to take outside or with a loud shout. "If it's something that the dog does repeatedly, "Overall notes, "prevent the dog's access until you can directly supervise and redirect the dog. And never use crates for punishment."

**MISTAKE #6:** Dog lover plays chase with the dog and tug of war by swinging the dog around. Chasing a dog teaches it to run away from you. **Rough tug of war games** can hurt the dog and teach him to be rough. If the dog can sit quietly before tugging, can play gently, and **will stop on cue, tugging can be fun.** "Be sure to drop the toy and game the second teeth touch skin, and ask the dog to sit and wait to end the game," Overall advises.

**MISTAKE #7:** Dog lover wrestles with the dog and allows the dog to mouth his hands and arms. "People often believe that they can teach their dogs to be protective by wrestling with them. This is dangerous and can teach the dog to train the family roughly," says Overall. Use toys instead of body parts to play. If a pup uses its mouth, say "no" immediately, freeze, remove your hand or arm, and immediately offer the dog something else to mouth.

When your puppy can't be supervised, he should be in a crate or puppy-safe part of the house.



## TIPS FOR TRAINING:

- Try to "catch" your dog being good. Always reward him for being quiet and calm.
- Never punish a dog. You should ignore bad behavior, distract with a loud noise, or turn his attention to doing something appropriate.
- Keep commands simple and consistent among all family members.
- Never scold a dog for coming to you, even if he's been naughty before coming. ALWAYS praise because now he's doing the right thing, and you don't want to discourage him from coming to you in the future.

**MISTAKE #8:** When a dog doesn't obey a command, dog lover pushes the dog into a sit or down position. "People who have to use physical contact are already in an adversarial situation," says Overall. "Many dogs don't know what you want because it's all background noise." One easy way to teach the command "down" is to wait until the dog begins to lie down. Then verbalize the command, "down," and immediately reward him with a favorite treat.

**MISTAKE #9:** The family gives the dog a food scrap when it leans, paws, or whines at the dinner table. By giving the demanding dog food on request, the family is encouraging the dog to be demanding and beg. "If you want to feed a dog from the table, only do it when the dog is lying down and deadly quiet. That way, you are rewarding relaxed behaviors in a context-specific manner," Overall says.

**MISTAKE # 10:** When the dog pulls on the leash, the walker pulls back, yells at the dog, and keeps walking. Dog push against the pressure and when a person yells but keeps walking, the dog will continue pulling as he is getting his walk and attention. Instead, use a head collar. "Head collars transfer the pressure to the back of the neck as a stop signal. If everyone just used a head collar from the beginning, most pets would never learn to walk inappropriately on a regular leash," says Overall.

**# # # # #**