

HOW TO BE THE LEADER YOUR DOG IS LOOKING FOR ... NATURALLY

Why dogs bark and what they are really saying ...

Hello, my name is Sharon Bolt and I am the founder of "Good Dogs!"

Welcome to this video today.

During this video I am going to talk about how to stop incessant barking and territorial behaviour.

This includes how to work with dogs who bark at the front door or window, why the postman makes this behaviour ten times worse and how to work with dogs who bark in the back garden.

Let me talk about territorial barking first.

Dogs that bark at the front door, window or in the back garden are demonstrating territorial behaviour, which is a warning for the intruder to keep away. It is an important area that dogs look for leadership and I find that most dogs do look for leadership here.

If you have a dog that does any of these behaviours, then it is going to make a difference for you to put in place what I am about to cover. A pack leader's role is to protect the pack at all cost and dogs who have assumed the top dog position take their job very seriously.

Let us talk about the front door barking first. It is important to point out here that a dog who goes to the door and is involved in allowing people in to the den, is given the role of a 'decision maker' which is one of the responsibilities of the pack leader.

Also, height is seen as a superior position, so please do not pick up your dog and answer the door, particularly with small dogs. I totally understand you do not want them to run out into the road, but by elevating your dog to a high-ranking position and allowing them into the decision making process of who comes into the den, gives them the information that they have an authoritative role in the pack.

It is about keeping your dog back and you stepping forwards, I am going to explain how you can do that. The important thing to know is that you, as the owner, play an important role in this.

If someone comes to the door and you become agitated, you may shout or scream or get frustrated, the information that you communicate to your dog is that there really is something to worry about. When you get upset they become distressed, so it is important that you stay calm, that you give them the right information and that you act as if it is the most natural thing in the world to have someone come to your door.

Now, it is not easy to do when you have got someone at the front door, it could be a delivery man or someone else, and you need to answer the door. The idea is not to leave this for when somebody comes but to create a 'mock-up' training session where you have a friend or a family member knock on the door, allowing you to put some good information in place.

When you create a controlled environment, that is when you are going to be able to stay calm; not when you are trying to get to the front door, embarrassed because your dog is going mad and there is somebody at the door wanting a delivery to be signed for. Creating a controlled situation is the answer.

The point to remember is; the more relaxed you are, the quicker the results that you will get; and the more repetitions that you do, the quicker the results too.

As I said, you are going to set this up as a training session, as a mock-up situation, not just leaving it to when somebody randomly comes. When somebody rings the bell you are going to claim the door or the window as yours and by doing so you are putting down an imaginary boundary of where your dog is allowed to go.

Have the type of relationship you have always dreamed of having with your dog

HOW TO BE THE LEADER YOUR DOG IS LOOKING FOR ... NATURALLY

Why dogs bark and what they are really saying ... (cont'd)

What I tend to do is to put my hands on my hips, because it broadens my body presence and I energetically block the dog with my body language with a firm "No" or "Back". It is great to practice this, as I said earlier, when a friend or family member comes round and not a good time when you have got someone that you do not know at the front door, so do set this up in advance.

I have uploaded a couple of videos where you can see exactly how I do this, exactly how I am creating a boundary energetically and backing a dog back. I demonstrate how to answer the door giving the right information to the dog. The other thing that you can do, and you will see this also in the video that I put together, is the desensitizing technique.

This requires two people in the home and a third person to knock on the door. In this method you put your dog on the lead and have somebody knock at the front door. The moment your dog starts to lunge or bark, you calmly but assertively walk in the other direction. When their head is facing forwards with you, you turn and show them where the trigger is, which is in this instance is the bell.

The minute your dog goes to lunge or bark again, you turn and walk in the other direction. Now, wait for them to calm and then set this up again with your friend at the front ringing the bell. The moment your dog pulls forward, lunges or barks, you turn around calmly and walk in the other direction.

Remember as always, the part you play in this is essential to the outcome. It is really important that you stay calm and you act as if it is the most natural thing that is happening. Setting this up as a mock-up situation really is the key to success.

The more relaxed you are, the quicker the results.

Let me talk about what happens when the postman comes.

The postman knocks on the door the dog goes mad and the owner often shouts at them feeling embarrassed and frustrated. The dog's behaviour gets worse because, as I have explained earlier, they pick up on the owner's tension which adds fuel to the fire. The dog is now convinced that there really is something to worry about.

What often happens with the postman is that he comes to the door, he posts the mail through the letter box, the dog goes mad and the postman walks away. For a dog that is a triumph - their behaviour has worked! Of course, they are going to continue to do that, they are now empowered. The postman never comes in and we rarely answer the door anyway. The dog sees the postman as a potential intruder so that is why they are going mad.

The answer is to create mock-up situations where you have people you know at the front do so you can teach you dog another way to respond. As I said earlier, I have uploaded some videos for you where I demonstrate exactly what to do.

Let us go on now to barking in the back garden. It is quite similar to what you are doing at the front door with a few little additions which I will talk about.

If your dog barks at the fence or at the bottom of the garden you need to go down there and claim the fence as yours. You put your hands on your hips and walk forwards so that you are energetically putting down those boundaries with your dog. They will step backwards and you will say a firm "No" or "Back".

You need to set this up again as a training session. If you can get somebody to knock on the fence or if there is a particular time when people go pass, it is going to be a great training opportunity. Where you would normally dread that time or keep your dog away, these are really good training opportunities for you to work with your dog in a different way. The more that you can set it up where

have the type of relationship you have always dreamed of having with your dog

HOW TO BE THE LEADER YOUR DOG IS LOOKING FOR ... NATURALLY

Why dogs bark and what they are really saying ... (cont'd)

you are controlling the knocks on the fence or controlling what is going on down the end of the garden the quicker this is going to work for you.

The other thing that you can do, and you will see me demonstrate this in the video as well, is that you put your dog on the lead. I will explain more about this shortly. Some dog owners say that their dogs run out first thing in the morning or late at night and bark incessantly whilst going round all the boundaries. If you have a dog like that, then this is going to be a really good technique for you to use.

First of all, as I mentioned earlier, you put your dog on the lead ensuring that you go out the back door first. You have got to go out first because you must lead the way; it is no good going out after your dog. If that is difficult to do, first do some repetitions where the minute you go out the back door and your dog pulls you walk back in and close the door behind you, then repeat. You might need to do some of these repetitions first as it is important that you go out the back door first.

You then walk your dog on the lead around the boundary of the garden, you are next to the boundary and your dog is on the other side of you. During this time you are communicating to your dog that you are taking control. Bear in mind, this is now a controlled situation so you are calm and relaxed.

The information you are giving to your dog is that you are in charge in this area, that most dogs look for leadership, and if you do not have a problem with what is in the back garden then they do not need to either. It is really good non-verbal communication.

Bear in mind that dogs talk through non-verbal communication, so I recommend that you talk in a non-verbal way, using very clear and concise commands and not to keep saying "Get back, get back, get back"! If you find yourself doing that then you need to try a different method such as putting your dog on a lead as this gives you very good control.

Another method that you can try I will explain by telling you what happens with my two dogs.

If they bark, bearing in mind we want dogs to bark, we do not want them to stop barking, it is great that people know that we have got dogs. It is great for keeping away intruders, so I never want to say to stop dogs barking. What we want is for them to alert us as the pack leader of potential danger, rather than trying to solve everything themselves, that is the difference.

When my two are out in the garden if there is something they are not quite sure about, they bark, so I put my head outside the back door and I say to them, "Good job" or "Thank you". It does not matter what you say as long as you say something in a calm voice. At that stage they usually just look at me, they are checking me out. They are looking at my body language, is it upright? Am I stressed out? Am I anxious? They are looking at me to see what I feel about the situation.

Of course, I am very relaxed, I am telling them that they are doing a good job, I am not telling them off for barking. They are alerting me and playing their part in the pack. Normally speaking about 90% of the time they stop barking at that stage. Then I will say to them what good little helpers they are, their tails are wagging and the whole situation has now eased. There is no further tension, they are having fun, they have done their job, I am happy and everyone is a winner!

On the occasions that they are really not happy about something, I put my shoes on and I walk out to the area where they are having a problem with something. I have got my hands on my hips, my body is upright as that is important. My head is held high, my chest is forward and I am walking down to where they are with them watching me. They are checking me out to see how upset I am about what they are upset about.

Of course, I am giving them non-verbally all the information that I am not upset at all. I am calm, I am confident, I am decisive, I am taking charge, so with that I might tell them to go back or I might say, "Good job" again. Just my presence out there will often be enough. Sometimes I will walk up to the

Have the type of relationship you have always dreamed of having with your dog

HOW TO BE THE LEADER YOUR DOG IS LOOKING FOR ... NATURALLY

Why dogs bark and what they are really saying ... (cont'd)

fence itself where they are looking and I will just go backwards and forwards where they had a problem, so they can see that I have no issue with that whatsoever. That is a really good thing to do.

As I said earlier, you just need to act as if it is the most natural thing in the world. You act as if everything is in order and that you have got it all taken care of, so they look at you for direction in an area that they are looking for leadership in.

So give that a go, do lots of training, lots of repetitions.

I will clarify what I mean by a repetition; you many spend five, maybe ten minutes, two or three times a day doing the training. I am not saying throughout the day, but in order to get the outcome you would like the more repetitions you do and the more consistently you do it, the quicker the results you will get.

Do look at the videos that I have uploaded, because I demonstrate exactly what to do with the methods that I have told you about.

Plus, I have also uploaded a video where I work with a lady who has a dog that is really frightened of men and barks incessantly in the back garden when the gardener comes round. If you have a dog that barks because they are fearful, then please go and have a look at that because that is really going to help you.

Thank you very much for joining me on this video today. I look forward to seeing you again very soon.

Goodbye

Have the type of relationship you have always dreamed of having with your dog