

*That's the Puppy for Me!*

*Sharon Bolt*

## That's the Puppy for Me!

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### About the Author

To date, Sharon Bolt has been interviewed on the Chris Evan's Show on BBC Radio 2, The Independent, The Guardian, The Sunday People, The Sunday Post, The Metro, GMTV, BBC South Today, BBC Southeast, BBC Look North and she was the dog expert in the BBC Documentary 'Britain's Most Embarrassing Pets.' Her incredible knowledge and remarkable skills have been called upon by over 30 different newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations and she has had a regular slot on BBC radio Sussex and Surrey for a number of years giving advice to numerous listeners' dog dilemmas. Sharon has helped an endless number of people including celebrities and has conducted training for the larger rescue centres.

Sharon has produced 4 Puppy and Dog Training DVD's, 3 CD's and 3 E-Books. She offers online dog training courses as well as online courses for people who want to become professional dog trainers. For more information please visit

[www.good-dogs.co.uk](http://www.good-dogs.co.uk)

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### Introduction

As I sit here looking at my two dogs curled up and resting peacefully together, I marvel at how calm, relaxed and happy they are. It is a very different picture to the one I was led to believe some years ago when they were puppies when I was told I had done the worst thing possible by getting two brothers from the same litter. Hearing another contented sigh from one of them brings me back to the present where I feel excitement as I imagine the value you are about to receive from the revelations within this book.

My personal story started when I was about five years old and my parents got our first dog. As a child, I had an instant love for dogs and looking back I can see that I developed a natural affinity with them too, however life changed dramatically and the real story began when my husband and I decided to get two puppies.

We had both grown up with dogs and it seemed natural for us to get dogs of our own and we chose two, eight week old Parson Terriers who were brothers from the same litter. Should you not be familiar with the breed, Parson Terriers are similar to Jack Russell's but with longer legs. We had both only ever had one dog and innocently believed that two dogs would mean double the joy!

We brought our puppies home, made them comfortable and attempted to enrol them into a puppy class. I had not realised how popular puppy socialisation classes were and I spoke to about seven different dog trainers because so many of the classes were full. The trainers all said the same thing to me which was;

*'You have taken on real trouble.'*

I was shocked and asked why?

They explained that because the puppies were blood related they would look to each other for direction before us and as they were males they would fight for the 'top dog' position. They concluded that aggression and nasty fights would result and we would very likely need to move one on. I was distraught and looked at the two bundles of fluff and said 'No way, I could not do that'.

Consequently, my mission began to find a natural way of communicating with my two dogs in a way they would really understand, preventing the predictions from coming true. I studied, went on courses, researched and most importantly watched the way my two dogs communicated with each other. I soon discovered that although they had some human similarities, they were not human, but pack animals. This for me was like a light turning on, it made sense they would communicate in a language different to our own and look for different methods of leadership. I realised the answer was to learn and demonstrate the qualities they would expect to find in a pack leader, or Alpha, the name given to the 'top dog'. I learnt their non-verbal language and how to meet their expectations and I am

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delighted to report that it has not been necessary to re-home either of them. They truly are great friends, they look to us for direction and leadership and are calm, happy dogs that are full of real character.

My aim during this book is to share with you my knowledge, experience and expertise so that you too can have happy and well balanced dogs. It is information that I have obtained not only through study but predominantly from 'hands on' experience working with my own dogs and with numerous other puppies, dogs and owners. What I am about to share with you is derived from the miracles I have witnessed where stressed dogs have been transformed into calm and balanced animals before my eyes.

The intention is to give you suggestions concerning;

- What to do before looking for a puppy
- What to look for when buying a puppy from a breeder
- What questions to ask the breeder
- What characteristics to look for in a puppy
- Preparation for when you bring your puppy home
- How to introduce your puppy to an existing dog
- What to do on your puppy's first night and subsequent few weeks in his new home
- Suggestions for toilet training
- How to redirect biting and chewing
- Socialising your puppy
- How to avoid separation anxiety developing
- Exercising your dog

When looking for a puppy I encourage you to use your intuition as well as the guidance in this book. It is important to relax and have fun with this. Sometimes it can become stressful trying to find the 'perfect' puppy and can tarnish this otherwise pleasurable experience. Had I known in advance that getting two brothers from the same litter was a cardinal sin it is very unlikely I would have the two bundles of joy I have today. Incidentally, the breeder did not tell me it was not a good idea to buy littermates or ask me any questions about how I would care for them, in fact he offered me a discount to take the two! There is sometimes truth in the saying 'ignorance is bliss' but I feel the best combination is to have some advance knowledge of what to look for and to trust your own intuition to choose the right puppy. In many cases the right puppy chooses you rather than the other way round!

For ease I will be using the noun 'he' in the book but of course the same applies to 'females' as well!

## CHAPTER 1: Deciding to Purchase a Puppy

It can be so much fun getting a puppy, they bring such excitement and laughter into the home. Even non-animal lovers find it difficult to resist such cute and adorable creatures. We can be governed very much by our emotions at this time so I suggest the first thing to do is to sit down with the people who will be involved with the dog so you can make a 'wish list' of what your ideal puppy will be like.

Picking an appropriate breed for your lifestyle is important when getting a dog. Some things to consider are;

- Would a big or small dog be more suitable to the size of your home?
- Would a big or small dog be more suitable for the amount of time you will have to exercise him?
- Does your fitness and energy levels match the dog you are considering?
- Would you like a long or short haired dog?
- What sort of temperament would you like your dog to have?
- Is the dog going to spend most of his time inside or outside?
- What role will your dog have? For example, do you want a dog to go running with or do agility training?
- What dog would fit into your food budget?
- Are you able to budget for veterinary fees or pet insurance?
- Do you have children? If so, what breeds would be more suitable?
- Do you have other pets in the house?

You may like to investigate different breeds, it can be fascinating learning the history of different breeds and may help you choose the best one for you. Local libraries and the internet are a good resource to do this.

Different dogs have different personalities, paint the picture as clearly as you can, seeing his traits and how much he will add value to your life. Think about him, day dream how wonderful it will be.

## What to Look for When Choosing a Breeder and Selecting a Puppy

All puppies are cute and cuddly so how do you distinguish what puppy is right for you?

Finding a good breeder is important, not necessarily one who is making a good living from reproducing, but one who strives for breeding stronger and healthier dogs each generation.

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Normally a good breeder wants the best for their dogs and will ask the prospective buyer many questions to see if they are suitable to take one of their puppies. They may ask you questions such as:

- What will the living arrangements be for the dog?
- How long will the dog be left during the day?
- Have you owned a dog before?
- Do you already have any dogs?
- Where will the dog sleep?
- Do you have room for the dog to run?
- How often will you be able to take him out?

This questioning may cause offence particularly if we are told we are not suitable. However some breeders only allow their litter to go to people who meet their criteria. A breeder who does not ask many questions is probably breeding for profit rather than the welfare of their dogs.

It is likely that the breeder will be assessing you, however it is important that you assess them too. Here are some tips of what to do.

### **When talking to the breeder over the phone ensure they do not;**

- Change their story or appear vague.
- Arrange to meet you somewhere other than the kennel or the place the puppies live.

### **Ask**

- How long have you been a breeder? What made you chose to do this?
- What age will the puppies be ready to collect? Seven to seven and a half weeks is the earliest, preferably eight weeks. Earlier than that causes the puppy to miss out on invaluable education with their siblings and mother. The only time it would be advisable to take a puppy from six weeks would be if the breeder was not committed to socializing their puppies and you have the time to do this.

Puppy's are usually most valuable to breeders when they are between 8 to 10 weeks old and then tend to fall in monetary value as most people do not want to buy an older puppy. However, puppy's from breeders of 'show dogs' can achieve more profit once their litter's features are more pronounced. Dogs that have features which match the required Kennel Club standards are sold for much higher prices than those that do not conform and/or are spayed or neutered.



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### When visiting the breeder

- Look at the way the breeder reacts with his/her own dogs
- See that the surroundings are clean and hygienic. (This is why it is important that you do not meet in a different location.)
- Ask where the puppies live during the day and sleep at night?
- Ensure the puppies have lots of room to run, opportunity to play with their siblings and have been frequently and gently handled by the breeder.
- Observe that the puppies are familiar with the breeder, do they respond to him/her? Does the breeder interact well with the puppies?
- Ask how many litters the mother has had? Good breeders will know the answer and will ensure that the mother is not a puppy making machine.
- See the puppies together, do they look healthy? Are they well fed, strong, clean and well groomed? Do they have bright eyes, clean ears and pink healthy gums?
- When the puppies are playing are they happy, bouncy, up to mischief and inquisitive or are they holding back looking fearful? Well raised puppies will show no fear as long as you talk in a calm and reassuring tone. Some will be more confident than others but all should still approach as long as you bend down with your arm stretched out. Stroke the puppies under the chin rather than over the head as this is a less threatening approach.
- Do the puppies have access to clean water?
- Is there history of hereditary diseases; hip scoring etc?

When visiting a breeder dress in casual attire and wear soft shoes such as trainers rather than high heels (if you are female!), as puppies can easily get under your feet. If you are taking children with you it is important that they do not shout or scream or run about as this can be overwhelming and frightening for a young puppy.

### What to Look for When Selecting a Puppy

All dogs have individual characters, some are naturally more subservient while others are more dominant. I believe, this is not due to the breed but rather the temperament of the dog. In the way that two children in a family have two different personalities, dogs are the same. So to help discover what characters the puppies have:

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- Ask the breeder who is dominant when feeding and playing. The more dominant dog will push the other dogs out of the way when being fed and will take toys away from less dominant siblings. Good breeders will know the different type of characters in the litter.

A dog who demonstrates this type of behaviour would be best suited to a family without children and those looking for a dog with dominant characteristics.

- Ask the breeder who tends to hold back, but is ahead of some of his siblings, when feeding and playing.

This type of dog would tend to be more relaxed and easy going.

- Ask the breeder who is pushed to the back when eating and playing.

This type of dog is likely to have a nervous and shy character, or is naturally submissive.

Dogs that are more dominant will be more confident, they will look you longer in the eyes and will struggle and get up instantly if put on their back. The more submissive dog will not look you in the eye for very long and will happily stay on his back and have his tummy rubbed. The nervous or timid dog will lower his posture, cower if stroked and will hold back.

Clapping your hands or dropping some keys can give a good indication of how well socialised the puppies are and their level of fear. Ideally you are looking for a mild reaction with a quick recovery followed by a curious puppy who approaches the object to investigate.

Getting the right personality for you will depend on your requirements and living conditions. When we got our puppies only one other had been purchased - the most dominant of the litter. The key thing to remember is the more dominant the dog, the stronger and more consistent you will need to be in your leadership and the more challenges you are likely to receive.

When purchasing your puppy ask the breeder for a receipt stating names and addresses of buyer and seller, the name, breed, colour and sex of the puppy and the price paid. It needs to be signed by both parties. Most good breeders will

insure the puppy for the first six to sixteen weeks, starting the moment of purchase. You will likely get a cover note explaining what the insurance policy covers.

When taking your puppy home in the car ensure someone is there with you to hold the puppy so that his first car experience is as pleasurable as possible.

## CHAPTER 2: Things to Do before Bringing Your Puppy Home

- Ensure the garden is safe and secure and check garages and outbuildings for any poisonous liquids, slug pellets etc. Garden ponds and swimming pools can be dangerous, make sure they are covered or not accessible to your puppy.
- In the house, check that live cables are tucked under carpets or are hidden. Block any gaps for example between kitchen appliances so the puppy does not get lost or stuck.
- Ensure valuables are out of reach – act as if a mischievous toddler was coming to stay!

## What to Buy and Organize Before Bringing Your Puppy Home

- A bed that is warm and safe. This could initially be a medium sized box and later progress to a bigger bed or a crate. From a human perspective the crate or cage can seem cruel, however, many puppies and dogs love them because they symbolize a den. It is a personal choice. Should you decide to use a crate it is advisable to introduce him to it when he is still a young puppy, initially associating positively by encouraging with some treats or toys, but not forcing him into the area. We used a crate when our dogs were puppies and still use one in the back of the car when going on car journeys. The advantage of using a crate and closing its gate during the night is there is rarely any soiling during the night as dogs do not like to use their sleeping area as a toilet.
- Ask the breeder what food the puppy is currently eating and how often they are fed, so you can continue this routine until you decide what you would like to feed.
- Ask the breeder when was the last time the puppy was wormed and if he has received inoculations.
- Puppy treats
- Puppy toys
- A water and feeding bowl
- Collar and Lead

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- Basic grooming accessories such as:
  - Nail clippers
  - Dog shampoo
- Dog health insurance
- Dog toothpaste and toothbrush
- Dog brush or comb
- A veterinary practice you either have visited prior to bringing your puppy home or has been highly recommended. Dogs can become fearful of going to the vet's as they associate the smell with something unpleasant happening when they visit. To prevent this from happening take your puppy (and later, dog) for regular 'orientation visits'. This means you will visit the vet's when your dog is well and no treatment is required. Ask the nurses and staff to wait for your puppy to calm and then give him gentle fuss and some nice treats so that a good association is made. This will make your and the vet's life a lot easier when something does need to be administered.
- Socialisation classes. These are very popular and it is advisable to find a good class in advance. It is worth spending time finding a good group which is not too big and is well managed. If possible visit a class beforehand so you can see what takes place. We waited for a few weeks, after bringing our puppies home, to start making enquiries only to find that all the good classes were already full. After only the third week we decided to quit the class we were attending as it was bedlam. Socialisation classes are not just about mixing your puppy with other dogs, it is also an environment where he can develop good or in a badly managed class unwanted behaviours.

## CHAPTER 3: Bringing Your Puppy Home

How exciting! You have now arrived home with a cute, cuddly bundle of joy. It is advisable to take your puppy out for toileting straight away and you can train your dog to do so in a designated area if you wish. Associate a word such as 'tinkle' when your dog is toileting and reward him with a titbit and gentle praise. This will make a positive connection that it is a good place for your puppy to toilet and will be invaluable when you want your dog to toilet. You give the command 'tinkle' and your dog knows he needs to empty his bladder!

Allow your puppy to smell and get used to his surroundings. Reassure him with gentle smiles and calmness. Avoid over fussing and excitability around the puppy, he is trying to adjust to being away from his previous family and warm, gentle affection will help him integrate.

Introduce your puppy to his bed so he knows where he can go when he needs to sleep or have some 'quiet time.' The bed needs to offer an enclosed, safe and secure place.

Play with your puppy, ensuring that you win any 'tug of war' games, as this demonstrates your dominance from the beginning and avoid games that encourage aggressive behaviour.

Do not let your puppy gorge himself with food when you first bring him home, he has been used to competing for food with his siblings and will very likely continue this urgency at meal times. Let your puppy explore, play with him, leave water down and wait for him to show signs of wanting something to eat, such as looking for something rather than just investigating. This will avoid the tummy upsets commonly seen in young puppies and frequent trips to the vet.

### How to Introduce Your Puppy to an Existing Dog

If you already have a dog in your home it is likely he has already adopted a high ranking position within his pack which includes you, the people who live in your home and any other animals. Even normally placid dogs can become territorial and aggressive when another dog enters their domain.

For this reason I would like to suggest some guidelines which can help a smooth integration:

- Prior to bringing your puppy home take a small soft towel to the breeders and gently rub it over the puppy so his scent is strong on the towel. Take the towel home to your dog and allow him to sniff and get used to the puppy's smell. You can also take a towel with your older dog's scent on it to the puppy so he can get used to his smell too and it is particularly

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beneficial to use a towel with your older dog's scent on to bring your new puppy home in.

- The best way to introduce your puppy to an existing dog is to arrange the first meeting on neutral ground. This will help avoid your older dog from becoming territorial when your new puppy arrives. If your puppy has had all his vaccinations before you bring him home, it would be good to arrange their first meeting in a park. If the inoculation course is not complete, I suggest arranging the initial meeting at a friend or family member's house where your dog does not visit very often and is therefore unlikely to demonstrate territorial behaviour. Should that not be possible organizing the first meeting in your secured back garden would be your best option.
- Whether inside or outside of the home I recommend you place your older dog on a loose lead which he walks around without anyone holding it. Should you at any time need to correct your dog this is easier with him on the lead and if you are unsure of how your older dog will react you may choose to put a muzzle on him. It is important that you introduce your older dog to your puppy ensuring that he is gentle rather than bounding over with over excitable or dominant behaviour, both of which can be traumatic for a young puppy.
- When your puppy has had time to settle, put both your older dog and puppy on a lead and walk them together inside the house and in the garden. This is good to start straight away as this connects all of you as a pack, with you leading the way and choosing the direction, demonstrating your pack leader status. Do not worry if your puppy is not walking well on the lead, you will address this separately, for now your main aim is to connect as a pack.
- When it is feeding time, feed your older dog first with your puppy watching, ensuring your puppy does not approach your older dog. When your older dog is almost finished feed your puppy too ensuring your older dog does not try to dominate your puppy's food or bowl and that both show respect for one another.
- It is natural you will fuss your puppy and will lift him up giving lots of attention and affection. It is important to note that dogs automatically view puppies as lower-ranking members and may not take kindly to an elevated puppy who has been unintentionally placed in a more dominant height and affection position. I suggest not to over fuss your puppy in front of the other as it can be overwhelming for him as well as potentially creating unease with your older dog.

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- Be aware of the animals your puppy interacts with before having his vaccinations. Should you be concerned that your older dog has mixed with sick dogs or show signs of sickness himself which could be passed on to your puppy, keep them separate and allow them to sniff each other under a door, until the vaccinations are complete.

Your older dog will teach your puppy manners and what is OK to do, this is normal unless the corrections become dominant or aggressive. Not all dogs like the excitable energy of a puppy in the same way not all people like children. Remember that YOU are the in charge and it is essential that YOU put down acceptable boundaries and it is not your older dog's job. The same rules apply to your puppy, some puppies detect a weaker energy in an older dog and start to bully and take advantage. As cute as this may be, it is important this behaviour is stopped as the puppy can develop dominant and aggressive traits. It is well worth taking time integrating the dogs as it will pay dividends in the long term.

## Toilet Training

Toilet training does take dedication and perseverance and the time you devote will greatly determine how quickly your puppy learns where he needs to toilet. The time it takes varies from dog to dog but is usually achieved by the time the puppy is five to six months old.

Repetition and consistency is the key to success plus some other tips I will discuss which will make this transition easier for you.

Puppies have a strong urge to eliminate after:

- Sleeping
- Playing
- Feeding
- Drinking
- Excitement
- Exploring

Puppies do not have strong bladder control and will need to toilet very soon after doing any of these activities. I suggest to call and coax him outside in a calm manner straight after any of these activities so he learns where he needs to eliminate. Generally speaking, puppies will need to urinate every one to two hours.

**Some signals that your puppy may want to toilet are:**

- Circling
- Squatting
- Sniffing the floor

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- Sneaking off under furniture
- Whimpering
- Going towards the door

It is important that when you notice these signals you do not panic but calmly encourage him to the door or pick him up and take him outside. Should you be too late, please remain calm and clean it up without any fuss. Some dogs become fearful around toileting as owners have unintentionally associated panic and wrong doing around it and can later find themselves with a dog that has issues around this subject. Also, puppies can become fearful of you should you shout or scold and will try to avoid eliminating in your presence.

When outside give your puppy a few flavoursome treats when he eliminates in the right place, this gives a good association and encourages correct behaviour. Remember that this is a good time to add words like 'tinkle' and 'poo poos' while the puppy is urinating or defecating as it will be invaluable later on when you want him to eliminate. However, I suggest you avoid saying 'good boy' or 'good girl' when your puppy is toileting as those words may be associated as a command to eliminate!

Always go outside with your puppy so you can take the opportunity to gently praise, reward and associate the chosen command words. Puppies and dogs live in the present moment which is why any association must happen instantly. Waiting for your puppy to come back into the house to praise is too late!

Puppy pads can be helpful for some people, particularly if they live in an apartment, but wherever possible I encourage owners to train their puppies to go outside instead of training on the pad and then progressing to training outside. As always, this is an individual preference.

To reiterate, some puppies toilet train very quickly, others take longer. Keep going, 'it takes as long as it takes' to register with your puppy where he needs to eliminate and many owners say it happens all of a sudden. When your puppy understands where to toilet, he may occasionally forget and mess in the house. Do not worry this is natural in the same way that potty trained children sometimes have a little accident, the same happens with puppies. Go back to teaching him where to toilet and very quickly he will remember what he needs to do. Consistency and repetition with a calm approach is the key to success.

## The First Night

The first night can be an understandably difficult time for both you and your puppy. It is likely the first time your puppy has been separated from his mother and littermates and you are not sure what to do for the best to support him. In order to help you with this I would first like to explain why the crying occurs.



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Pack animals call out for help when separated from their pack and they do this by whining and howling. Pups in the wild would be in great danger without this device as it quickly alerts other pack members of their whereabouts. What your puppy is demonstrating is instinctive behaviour.

I would like to suggest three different ways you could approach this and I would encourage you to use whatever you instinctively feel is right for you;

1. You could take your puppy up to your bedroom with you for the first few weeks placing him in a high-sided box or crate so he cannot get out. He is still able to be with you, but not on your bed. When the puppy is more used to his surroundings and being separated from his mother and littermates you can gradually put him further away from you such as the landing and eventually to where you would like him to sleep, such as the kitchen.

This can be a less traumatic method for your puppy and as long as you do not allow him to get too close to you during the night you will be able to integrate him to his designated sleeping place fairly quickly.

2. You could sleep the first night on the sofa with your puppy in his high-sided box or crate in the room with you, speaking some reassuring words if necessary. You may choose to do this again the next night or go to bed leaving your puppy downstairs. Should there be any crying you could ignore this or choose to go downstairs and reassure at a distance when the whining has eased.

It is important that you do not react to the cries as your response will cause an association that when he cries you come, this is why you should wait for the noise to subside before going downstairs. Naturally, shouting or scolding a frightened puppy is not advisable even if he has kept you awake all night!

3. You could go to bed and ignore any crying throughout the night.

This can be the 'cruel to be kind' approach which has been effective for many dog owners.

All of these options have proven successful. Using the one that is suitable for you will be the right choice. We placed our puppies downstairs in a crate and had no crying at all, which is one of the many benefits we have had by getting two dogs from the same litter. Also, we gave our puppies the homeopathic remedy 'ignatia' for the first few weeks which effectively works at calming 'noisy grief' such as howling and crying from both mother and puppies after separation.

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Placing a hot water bottle filled with warm water wrapped in a soft towel in your puppy's bed can be comforting to him during this initial integrating stage as it mimics the warmth of his mother and/or siblings.

It is likely you will need to get up at least once or twice during the night to let your puppy out to eliminate and when you do so take your puppy outside to his soiling area. Carry him, do not coax him as he is likely to go before he gets outside. Allow him time to completely empty out, reward and repeat 'tinkle' or 'poo poos' immediately.

As with a new baby, you may not get much sleep the first few nights with your new puppy, but with patience and understanding he will soon learn what you expect of him and after a few nights you should wake up rested and ready for the day ahead.

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### CHAPTER 4: Biting

In order to stop a puppy from biting it is helpful to understand why the puppy is doing so.

Puppies first start to play with their siblings when they are around four weeks old. This is part of their education and how they determine who is more dominant and submissive within the litter. They challenge each other through rough and tumble games where they push each other around and bite one another. The more resilient members bite harder than the submissive ones which helps establish rank within the pack.

It usually takes about a week for puppies to realize their human family is now their pack. When this happens many pups will start biting and chasing family members in the same way they did with their littermates. You have taken the place of their original pack and they will act in the same way they did with their siblings, hence biting hands, socks, ankles and swinging off clothes.

As the one in charge it is your job to communicate what behaviours are acceptable and that biting is not welcome and usually the easiest way to convey this message is to act like a littermate. I will explain further.

In the litter when play biting becomes too hard, the hurt puppy will 'yelp' which is their way of saying that the bite was too forceful. You can mimic this response by saying a hurt 'ouch' when the pup bites which will very often stop him instantly. Also, you could walk away which would further communicate that play and affection stops when they bite. Should the puppy follow you and continue to bite, you could do what his mother would do and pick him up by the loose skin on the back of his neck and place him in another area. Another option his mother or siblings may choose would be to place him gently on his side into a submissive posture until he is calmer.

In the litter, the puppies learn to respect their mother early on in life which teaches them about pack rules and ranking order. When the puppies are as young as four weeks the mother may growl or nip if they come too close to her food or do something she does not want.

If your puppy bites your hand you can clench your fist so it becomes difficult for him to chew once your fingers are not available. You can also redirect the chewing by replacing your hand with a toy giving gentle praise when your puppy starts chewing this instead.

### Chewing

The main reason puppies chew objects is to help sooth and loosen the gums around their teeth which allows the 'baby' teeth to fall out and the new teeth to come through. Different textures offer interesting sensations which makes it even

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more appealing and of course dogs have no sense of how much an object costs, they are only interested in how it feels in their mouths! Puppies can also chew when they are curious, excited, bored or anxious.

The key thing to remember is you are not wanting to stop your puppy from chewing, as this is natural and healthy for him, you are looking to redirect him to something that you want him to chew. Puppies learn through their mouths which is why most things go in there! I will explain further how you can 'manage' his chewing.

### Toys

One of the ways to redirect your puppy's chewing is through toys. It is good to have about three different toys that are different shapes, sizes and textures. One could include a 'Kong' that you can fill with food and treats, which will keep your puppy busy while mentally stimulating him at the same time. It is a good idea to take control of the toy box from the beginning as this will communicate that the toys are yours and will help confirm your higher ranking status in the pack. Playing with your puppy often will give a further good association with the toys.

If you give your puppy an old pair of shoes or slippers to chew and play with they will not know the difference between an old and new pair. I suggest having toys that are not similar to items you do not want your puppy to chew and there are many safe, long-lasting chew toys especially for teething puppies, such as a knotted rawhide bone, which will keep your puppy happy for hours.

Puppies need to be supervised in the same way as toddlers. Should you leave him unattended it would be advisable to put him in a dog play pen or in his crate, if you have chosen one as his bed, which will give you peace of mind and avoid undesirable situations from occurring.

Should you catch your puppy chewing something 'forbidden', say a calm but firm 'no' and replace with something of your choice. You can buy natural sprays which have a bitter flavour or a scent he does not like and can be put on furniture and doors to deter your puppy from chewing.

## CHAPTER 5: Socialisation

Socialising your puppy at an early age is vital for a well balanced dog. Many 'fear related' behaviours in dogs today stem from the lack of proper socialisation when they were puppies. Some puppies are naturally more nervous than others. However, all types and personalities are likely to develop problems if they are not introduced at an early age to the many possible situations they are likely to encounter in their lives.

This is where the breeder plays a crucial part and has ideally exposed the litter to lots of different situations. Essentially it is vital they have;

- Been handled and around both men and women
- Played and interacted with children
- Played and interacted with their siblings

If the breeder is a woman, who lives alone and rarely has people to visit and mix with the puppies, they can potentially become uncertain around men and children. There are some dogs who are frightened of men, which can be due to a past upsetting experience but can also be due to insufficient socialisation with men as a puppy.

Naturally the breeder will be limited to the amount of outside exposure he/she can give the litter however, puppies that have been in the vicinity of televisions, vacuum cleaners, washing machines etc. will be much better adjusted than puppies that have been shut away in a kennel or one room.

When you bring your puppy home, socialisation is vital for your puppy's integration with the different sounds and experiences he is likely to encounter. It is essential to expose your puppy in a way that the experiences are pleasing and not frightening to him. It is better to go slowly rather than to rush which could create fear rather than balance.

### Home Socialisation

**Suggested situations to expose your puppy to in the home are:**

- Invite friends with calm, submissive dogs and cats to your home to play with your puppy. Take your puppy to their homes too.
- Ask friends with babies, toddlers and children that cry, run around and act excitably to come and visit.

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- Have friends and family come to your house to meet your puppy, include men (clean shaven and with beards), women and if possible different ethnic backgrounds too.
- Introduce your puppy to noisy objects in your house such as washing machines, tumble dryers, fridges, televisions etc. Do this first at a distance and gradually move closer when your puppy appears curious rather than afraid.
- Initiate your puppy to umbrellas, bags, boxes and the ironing board. Create your own unusual objects such as a dustbin on its side and a pushed over chair.
- Familiarize your puppy with grooming. Give him a bath, clip his nails, look in his ears, check his gums and teeth, inspect his paws and under his tail. Ask friends and family to do this too which will be invaluable should he need to be examined by a vet or go to a groomer.
- Put his collar and lead on and walk him around for short periods in the house and/or garden.
- Introduce your puppy to garden noises such as lawn mowers, hedge trimmers etc.
- Accustom your puppy to loud noises such as thunder and fireworks by purchasing a CD containing these sounds. Start by having the noise on quietly in the distance and gradually increase the level as your puppy becomes more familiar.

The earlier you can socialise your puppy, the better for his integration. Young puppies are curious about new experiences and objects. As they get older this curiosity can turn to fear, which is why I encourage you to start the socialisation immediately. If your puppy has not completed his vaccinations you can still start outdoor socialisation, simply carry your puppy rather than let him walk, ensuring he does not come into contact with anything that could be harmful to him.

## Outdoor Socialisation

### **Suggested situations to expose your puppy to outdoors are:**

- Go to places such as parks where there are children playing. Visit quiet roads, gradually increasing to busier roads. Go to shopping centres and places where there are lots of people and plenty of activity.

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- Let your puppy see men and women with walking sticks, people in wheelchairs and mothers with pushchairs. Let your puppy observe men with moustaches and beards, men and women with hats on, and motorcyclists with helmets on. Let your puppy be in the vicinity where cars, motorbikes, vans and lorries go by as well as bicycles and joggers.
- Introduce your dog to other vaccinated puppies, dogs and cats and if possible farmyard animals too.
- Take your puppy on short car journeys. Park the car and allow your puppy to watch through the window as people, dogs, children etc. go by.

Please remember if your puppy has not had all of his vaccinations it is vital that you carry him at all times.

It is only natural that if your puppy becomes frightened your automatic reaction will be to reassure, pick him up and fuss him. The key to remember with a puppy or dog is whatever state of mind he is in you nurture this further by giving affection at that time. The best time to praise and encourage your dog is when he is in a positive state of mind and offer gentle matter-of-fact responses when he is fearful. By adopting this approach your puppy will realise there is nothing to worry about which will allow him to move forward building his confidence as he does so. Also, a well meaning attempt to comfort your puppy when he is frightened can unintentionally reward his unwanted response, giving him an association that fear gets attention and affection.

Should there be something that your puppy is unsure of, give him repeated exposure to this. Aim to praise or reward with treats when your puppy is integrating so you associate the situation as a good encounter.

Puppies are like young children, they have short attention spans and tire very quickly. Short frequent exposures create the best results, not too much at one time and take it at the pace that is right for your puppy, ensuring that all experiences are pleasurable.

As I said earlier please start NOW! This is the best time for you to begin putting down foundations for a happy and well balanced dog, you will not get the same opportunity again.

## Puppies and Transportation

Like all puppy integration it is crucial to start his socialisation with vehicles and car journeys before he has had his vaccinations. These early days are vital as puppies are inquisitive rather than fearful during this time and an early introduction to the car on a consistent basis can make a big difference. Naturally you will not put him in an environment that may be harmful to him, but aim to make it a pleasant and happy event without your puppy becoming over excited or

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distressed. Even if you plan to always walk your puppy to the park or elsewhere, it is still a good idea to do this as it will be much easier in the long term if you need to take a trip to the vets etc.

### **How to Create Good Associations with the Car and Car Journey's**

The methods you can use to associate your puppy positively to the car are as follows;

- Reward with food treats, favourite toys and gentle praise when he gets into and out of the car. You can, if you wish, further reinforce this good association by feeding some of your puppy's meals in the car when the car is stationary.
- Make the car into a game by opening the rear two doors, get in one side with your puppy behind you, then slide along the seat and go out the other door. Playfully go round to the original door and repeat this, so that you associate the car with fun. If you have an Estate car or similar and would like your puppy to travel in the boot area, you can do this by putting the back seats down and climbing into the boot area from the back passenger seats or start by getting in the boot and climb over and out through the back passenger door. This is better than any gym workout! Always ensure your car is in a safe enclosed area away from the roadway.

You have now established a good connection with the car. Now we need to work with getting your puppy to enjoy the journey opposed to panting, pacing and vomiting.

Vomiting can be a stress reaction as well as motion sickness. It is advisable not to feed your puppy a meal for a few hours prior to going out so that his tummy is not full, which can otherwise create car sickness if he becomes too excited or stressed. Should your puppy suffer from car sickness you can try Skullcap and Valerian tablet mix available from Dorwest Herbs, and/or rescue remedy, or speak to your vet regarding conventional medication. This is usually a temporary measure as most puppies grow out of car sickness, as they get used to the car journey.

The winning formula in associating favourably with car journeys and overcoming car sickness is to have frequent, short car trips rewarding with something he likes to do at the other end, such as playtime in the garden or after his inoculations, the park. It is always a good idea to ensure your puppy has done his toileting before you commence your car journey.

Once your puppy has had his vaccinations you could drive half way to the park, walk the second half, play for a short while and walk back to the car and drive home. It is also a good idea to walk for a while after playing to prevent your



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puppy from associating the car with the end of playtime. A small tasty treat and his favourite toy would be good to give to your puppy when he is back in the car.

Should you find that your puppy gets upset during the drive home, I suggest you stop after a short period and have some outside play time before completing your journey.

Over a period of time you can gradually increase the distance. It does take time and dedication but the more you do the quicker your puppy will become adjusted and travelling in the car will be a natural occurrence.

### **Your Puppy and Safety in the Car**

Safety of your puppy in the car is paramount to you, him and other road users. It can be dangerous to allow your puppy to run free on the back seat, pacing backwards and forwards trying to get into the front with you. Dogs that have their head out of the window can also be at risk to themselves and others as well as developing potential eye and ear problems.

You can purchase dog harnesses which clip on to the seatbelt, rear car seat covers to protect your upholstery and stop puppies falling down into the foot-well, and grilles or crates which all help to keep your puppy secure.

Most puppies adjust quickly to car journeys particularly when you have associated positively with things they like to do and/or food association.

Should you wish to socialise your puppy on public transport such as buses or trains, you would use the same methods as discussed with a car.

## CHAPTER 6: Leaving Your Puppy on His Own

Teaching your puppy to feel secure when he is on his own is very important and will help avoid separation anxiety as he gets older.

### How to Prevent Separation Anxiety

To help prevent your puppy from developing anxiety when he is left I would suggest to create a 'mock up' situation where you will non-verbally communicate that you are in charge, which means you come and go as you please. You will also be reassuring your puppy that when you leave you always return.

Every day leave your puppy on his own for short periods. During this time I recommend placing him in his crate or play pen so you are not concerned he will chew or harm himself while you are not there. You do not need to actually go out, you could just go to another room whilst leaving your puppy alone. You could leave a dividing door open to help accustom your puppy to your separation to begin with.

#### What to do

Do not fuss your puppy for about 10 minutes before you are going to practice this method. You do not need to give any explanations, leave any treats down or feel guilty!

- When your puppy is calm, with a strong upright body posture you walk out of the door.
- If your puppy quickly becomes stressed when you go out, you need to return before this starts, which could be as little as five to ten seconds. Should the time period be longer before he starts to bark, howl or whine then go back into the room after approximately one minute.

#### There are two key points to remember here.

1) Walk back in when your puppy is not barking, scratching, jumping or doing any undesirable behaviour. The reason this is vital is your puppy will associate that behaviour with you coming back in, which encourages him to do it more. This is why you should walk back in before he has started to demonstrate anxiety and if he has began before you were able to return then ensure there is a gap or a pause before you open the door or re-enter. This will associate good behaviour with you returning.

2) In order to demonstrate that you are in charge when you walk back in you need to have an upright body language and be aloof, which means:

- Do not look

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- Touch or
- Talk to him

Stay with your puppy without acknowledging him until he has relaxed and then calmly walk out of the room again with upright body posture, without looking at him when you close the door behind you.

Leave for a slightly longer period this time and re-enter when your puppy is not demonstrating anxious behaviours. Remember:

- Do not look
- Touch or
- Talk to him

Stay in the room until your puppy relaxes and then calmly walk out again, closing the door behind you.

Continue to do this, building up the time between leaving and returning. Repetition and consistency is the key to success.

I recommend doing this at least two or three times a day when you are not going out as well as before you do leave your home. When it is time for you to go out for a longer period your puppy will have become accepting to your coming and going.

To reiterate, by doing this you have communicated two clear messages to your puppy:

1. You come and go as you please because you are in charge.
2. When you go out you always return.

## Puppies and Exercise

To conclude, I would like to talk about puppies and exercise.

It is important to exercise a puppy and help him to burn off his excitable energy, however I do not suggest taking a young puppy on long walks as it can cause health problems such as hip dysplasia. I recommend taking your puppy for short walks and playing with him in the garden if possible. The benefit of being in the garden is that when your puppy has run about excitedly and becomes tired he can set himself down and rest or go to sleep.

This may seem obvious but when taking your puppy out for a walk please remember that whatever the time and distance it took to get to your destination, it

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will be the same on the way back. Should it take ten minutes to walk to the park it will be a twenty minutes round trip. The idea of the walk is not to wear your puppy out but to install your leadership and create good associations and pleasure for you both.

Having a puppy is so much fun. Do not worry if the breeder has not met the suggestions I have recommended or if you have not yet started the socialisation. Puppies and dogs live in the present moment which is great because you can start now regardless of their history or prior socialisation. If you have not already purchased my book or CD 'Leadership first, then affection' I would strongly recommend you do so, as I believe it is vital to have this knowledge in order to have a continually well balanced dog. You may recall that I was told by many dog trainers that I had taken on big trouble by getting two dogs from the same litter. I agree, this could have been potentially disastrous without learning 'dog language'. Meeting your dog's needs is essential regardless if you have one or a pack of dogs.

I wish you lots of fun and enjoyment with your puppy. I encourage you to use your own intuition when working with him. Get to know his wonderful character and you will discover your own methods that will also prove to be successful. You will be continuously rewarded as you-observe the amazing character of your best friend shine through.