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# Becoming The “Pack Leader”



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Hello fellow dog lovers!

My name is Chloe and I am proud to say that I am the dog-mum of a beautiful 10 month old British Bulldog pup called Albert.

... FINALLY!!

For as long as I can remember I wanted to get a British Bulldog. As a kid I distinctly remember seeing a white bulldog down the road from my house. It's funny but I can still picture it now that beautiful boy now with his little nose, big face and wrinkled skin – from that day on I knew that this was the only dog for me.

But fast forward forty years to a life with three wonderful children and a dog-hating husband and that's where I was 10 months ago – dog-less.

Although I love my children more than anything in the world, they are older now and thinking of moving out of home plus my husband's work means he is away... alot. I needed something (or someone) in my life again. Someone to talk to and snuggle up to watch TV with... something to take care of.

That was when I got an idea... I would finally convince my husband to let me get a British Bulldog!

Now, believe me it wasn't easy but after months and months of convincing, he finally gave in. In January 2020, we drove 2 hours down south from our house to go get my new baby boy. This is a picture of the day I first saw him.



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Needless to say, it was love at first sight.

BUT... as soon as we took him home everything changed.

Albert refused to listen to a word I said. He dictated everything from when he was fed, to how much he ate – I am embarrassed to admit this but I used to have to hand feed him in order for him to eat so much as one bite of his dinner!

It was a nightmare!

That wasn't the worst part though. Every night, I would wake up in the morning to wee all over the floor, carpet and even my lounge! No amount of puppy training classes or 'obedience training' seemed to help.

That is the thing they don't tell you when you get a new puppy. It's pretty much like having a baby. They cry all night, need constant attention and you can never leave them alone...not even for a second.

I have never admitted this (not even to my husband) but honestly I was having regrets. My life had been completely turned upside down – and I had no-one to turn to. Although my family loved him to pieces, I could tell that the constant attention he demanded was having a toll on my already time-poor children.

Something had to change... and fast.

That was when I was taught how to become the 'pack leader'. At first it was difficult as I was so used of giving Albert whatever he wanted, when he wanted it. Looking back on it now, I can understand why people thought he owned me instead of the other way around!

Below is a recent picture of Albert at 6 months. A happy, healthy and obedient dog. Before becoming my family established ourselves as pack leaders, even the smallest task such as putting a hat on Albert would have been OUT OF THE QUESTION – now I can do it with ease.

In the next chapter, I'll explain how ...

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## So... What is the “Pack Leader”

What most owners fail to understand is that their actions unintentionally are the root of ALL of the problems they are experiencing with their dog.

Let me explain...

When I first got Albert, people told me I had to take him to puppy school – that was the ‘*way you do it*’. Well, whilst puppy training classes are great for socialisation between your dog and others, unfortunately it does not help you with the one fundamental aspect of successfully eliminating disobedience in your dog.

The thing is, dogs are direct descendants of wolves – so whilst we see them as the domesticated and loving pets we all know and treasure, in actuality dogs are still 99.8% wolf.

So... what does this mean?

Well, I’m here to tell you that your dog is just that... a *dog*.

Now I know what you must be thinking – well DUH!

I know, I know... it sounds obvious. However, what most dog owners fail to realise is that there is NO point in reasoning and thinking like a human when it comes to dog training because dog’s have an ENTIRELY different mentality when it comes to social hierarchy, power and dominance. Although it sounds silly, the perfect example of this kind of logic would be trying to teach a gold fish how to sit – it’s just not going to happen!

Therefore, if you want to become the pack leader, you have to start *thinking like a dog*.

In a pack, there are the ‘leaders’ and then there are the ‘followers’. In the wild there is the ‘breeding pair’ who are responsible for the pack. They make all the decisions and are

considered the 'rulers'. Below this, the rest of the pack stand on similar ground. It is only the breeding pair (the pack leaders) who command respect and attention.

If you want to want your dog to truly follow your every command, then you need to make sure YOU are the leader of the pack, not the other way around.

When your dog understands that you are the pack leader, they can relax and take a back seat. What this means is that any signs of aggression, frustration or anxiety within your dog will be significantly reduced. If you establish that you will 'take care' of the pack and that your word is the law, the chances of your dog disobeying you (in any situations) are very slim. For example, when your dog is barking at a person walking past the gate or window of your house, they aren't trying to be 'naughty' or entertain themselves but rather it is because of two things.

1. They do not believe the NEED to listen to you
2. They are being the 'guard' of the pack and protecting their property (and you!) from any danger that may come

You have to lay the foundation of being the pack leader – without this NO other training will work. Period. Don't get me wrong, that doesn't mean that you need to become angry with your dog to show your dominance or yell, shout and scream every command until they become scared of you. This approach is dangerous, will jeopardise the building of a long, lasting and loving relationship between you and your dog and may even cause serious trust issues later down the line.

In the next chapter, I'll explain 3 easy, cruelty free steps to becoming the pack leader that you can start to use as early as today!

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## 3 Easy Steps...

### 1. Controlling Feeding Time

In the wild, feeding time for dogs is certainly not as civil as it is between humans. When it comes to dinner, the pack leaders eat their food first until they are satisfied and then leave what is left for the rest of the pack. The pack leaders have total control over when, where and what the pack will eat – 100% control.

This is SO important.

Now I am definitely NOT saying that you should eat half of your dog's food and then leave the scraps for them to eat – that would be ridiculous. But it is important that you position yourself as the top of the feeding hierarchy.

The way you can do this is to make sure you eat your breakfast or dinner before your dog. This doesn't have to be a strict rule of thumb that has to be carried out every day, but try to make it a rule to:

1. Eat 15 minutes before your dog
2. Make your dog aware that you are eating before them
3. Never give your dog scraps from your plate or food from the dinner table

By doing this, you are reinforcing the idea that you come first. You eat before your dog and therefore they must obey your orders if they in turn want to eat.

A BONUS tip: Try holding up your dogs food bowl above their head and eating a cracker (or something small) whilst doing so. In doing this, you are sending a clear message that YOU as the PACK LEADER eat first and they get the scraps.

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## 2. Everything Is On YOUR terms

I think we can all agree that there is nothing worse than inviting guests over for dinner and for your dog to not stop jumping up or barking for attention. The reason why your dog will not stop fighting for attention from this new person, or anyone who walks through your front door for that matter, is because you have not trained them to 'come' on your terms.

Giving your dog kisses and pats is one of the most special and wonderful aspects of having a pet dog. However, if you allow your dog to dictate when they receive this praise, you are promoting the action of invading a human's 'personal space' whenever they feel like it.

This is not a behaviour that will just go away over time or with age, if anything it may get WORSE if you leave it for too long...

Look at it this way. You wouldn't just go up to your boss and throw your arm around them to say 'hello' now would you? Through training, you want to show your dog that it is not acceptable behaviour to run up to, jump on or bark at anybody who walks in the door.

To accomplish this I suggest you do the following:

1. Do NOT pat your dog when they come up to you – only give your dog attention when you have initiated the encounter.
2. Only give your dog a pat ONCE an hour (one pat per person)

NOTE: Although it might sound mean, your kisses and cuddles become worthless to your dog if they feel they are not working for it.

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### 3. Defending Against Danger

As the pack leader, it is your responsibility to decide what is dangerous.

In order to keep your dog from barking at cats, birds or people walking past your property, you need to show them that you can always take care of the danger around them. Think of it like a scared child who needs their parent to check the closet for 'monsters' before they can go to sleep.

Here's how to do it:

1. When your dog begins to bark, the first thing you want to do is stay calm. It is so, important that in that moment, you maintain low energy and a steady, calm demeanor. With this energy, you can simply say 'thank you' to your dog. This will show them that you have acknowledged the bark and appreciate the warning. At this stage there is no need for you to move from your position or investigate the issue further.
2. If your dog barks for a second time, then you may now go and look at what they are concerned about. Stand up and walk over to where your dog is. Have a small but clearly visible look around the area that has captured your dog's attention. After this, turn to your dog and simply say 'thank you' and walk away once more.
3. Now – this step is crucial to your dog's training. If there is one more bark from your

dog, they must be put into isolation immediately. Isolation will be different for everyone depending on your 'time-out' zone, but a room such as the laundry usually works well. Once your dog has completely calmed down and there is no sign of barking or scratching – they may be let out.

4. Repeat the three steps as required

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