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■ Dog Training  
■ Behavior Consults  
■ Specializing in Separation Anxiety

### **GREETING PEOPLE POLITELY: JUMPING FOR ATTENTION**

Jumping for attention is a common concern of many dog parents. Dogs jump to greet humans because it works to get attention. Even if the attention your dog earns is unpleasant, your dog still succeeded in getting attention and the unwanted behavior was reinforced. Helping your dog learn to greet humans politely and calmly involves good management techniques, training, patience, and consistency.

#### **Manage the Problem**

It is important to prevent your dog from practicing the behavior of jumping on people. The more your dog jumps on people and is rewarded with attention, the more difficult it will be to change the behavior. Behaviors that have worked well for a long time at getting what your dog wants will take longer to change. The following suggestions will help you manage the problem and prevent your dog from jumping on people when greeting. If circumstances prevent you from doing either of the following suggestions, it is best to put your dog in another room, in a crate, or safely outside in the yard while guests enter your home. It is very important to prevent your dog from jumping on people during the training process.

#### **Management Suggestion 1**

- Keep a leash by the front door.
- Before you let visitors in the house, put your dog on leash so you can control her behavior.
- Put your foot on the leash giving only enough room to sit, stand, or lay down.
- Ask her to sit. Visitors are only allowed to greet your dog if she is sitting.
- Reward her with a treat for remaining in a sitting position while being greeted.

#### **Management Suggestion 2**

Another management technique is to engage your dog in an alternate behavior that is incompatible with jumping so your dog isn't jumping on house guests as they arrive.

- Practice this exercise at the door (with the doorbell ringing) without actual guests at the door first. When your dog makes the association, doorbell ringing equals treats on the floor, you are ready to start practicing this with actual guests arriving at your house.
- When the doorbell rings, put your dog on leash.
- Just before you open the door, toss some treats on the floor.
- Your dog will be searching for the treats on the floor while you open the door and the guests enter.
- The moment your dog finishes with the treats on the floor, ask her to sit and stay while the guests greet her. Reward her with a treat for sitting calmly while greeting guests. You can also have your guests offer your dog a treat for sitting calmly while greeting.

Jumping should never get your dog any kind of attention. Even negative attention is still rewarding. Jumping for attention should do just the opposite of getting your attention; it should remove your attention by ignoring your dog or walking away.

## **TRAINING**

Training involves teaching your dog what she needs to do to fulfill her need to greet people. She needs to understand that jumping for greeting does not get her what she wants. She also needs to understand that sitting politely for greeting is what works to get attention from people. It is not fair to ask your dog to stop jumping to greet people unless you take the time to teach your dog what she needs to do to greet people in a polite manner.

### **Teach your dog to sit for attention instead of jump for attention.**

- Set your dog up for success by putting her on leash while you practice this exercise.
- With your dog on leash, put your foot on the leash, giving her only enough of the leash to sit, stand, or lay down.
- Ask your helper human to approach.
- Ask your dog to sit. Keeping your foot on the leash will prevent your dog from jumping.
- If your dog stays sitting, allow the person to greet her.
- Reward her with a tasty treat.
- If your dog stands up during the exercise, ask her to sit and begin the exercise again.
- Practice with many different people in many different locations.
- Repeat until your dog understands.

**Teach your dog to use her nose to touch the hand of the person she greets and return to you for a treat.** This is a form of target training, a method that teaches your dog to target a part of her body, usually a nose or paw, to an object.

First teach your dog to target your hand with her nose.

- Place three treats between the fingers of your right hand. Place one treat between the index finger and third finger; one between the third and fourth fingers; and one between the fourth and fifth fingers. The treats should be protruding from the palm side of your hand.
- With the fingers of your hand pointing towards the floor, present the palm side of your hand with the protruding treats to your dog.
- As she touches the palm of your hand with her nose, click as she takes one treat.
- Take your hand up as soon as she takes the first treat.
- Present your hand to your dog again. Make sure your fingers are pointing towards the floor. Click as she touches your hand to take the second treat.
- Repeat the exercise again as your dog takes the last treat.
- Now present your empty right hand to your dog, fingers pointing towards the floor and palm facing your dog.
- Your dog will touch your hand searching for a treat.
- The instant your dog touches the palm of your hand with her nose, click and give her a treat from your left hand.
- Repeat until your dog is touching the palm of your hand every time you present it to her.
- Name the behavior “touch” by saying the word just before you present your hand to your dog.
- After your dog understands the verbal cue “touch,” only reward your dog for touching your hand when you ask her to.
- Practice in many different locations.
- Repeat until your dog understands.

Next teach your dog to target the hand of another person.

- Have your helper human place three treats between the fingers of his right hand. Place one treat between the index and third finger; one between the third and fourth fingers; and one between the fourth and fifth fingers. The treats should be protruding from the palm side of his hand.
- Instruct your helper to extend his hand away from his body on his right side, fingers pointing away from his body and slightly down towards the floor, palm side of the hand facing the dog. This will keep your dog away from the core of your helper's body and help prevent jumping.
- Send your dog to your helper. You may have to ask your helper call your dog to him.
- As your dog touches the palm of your helper's hand with her nose, click as she takes one treat from your helper's hand.
- Immediately call her back to you for a treat.
- Repeat until your dog has taken all three treats from your helper's hand, each time calling your dog back to you and rewarding her with a tasty treat.
- Repeat the steps above, this time instructing your helper to not have treats in his hand.
- Send your dog to your helper. He may have to call your dog to him.
- As your dog touches your helper's empty hand, click and call your dog back to you.
- Reward your dog with a tasty treat.
- Name the behavior something different than "touch." Touching the hand of someone else is different than touching your hand. You can call it something like, "Go say hi," or "Go greet," or simply "Greet."
- When your dog understands the verbal cue, only reward your dog for touching the hand of another person with her nose when you ask for it.
- Practice with many different people in many different locations.
- Repeat until your dog understands.

Using the methods above consistently will help your dog to learn to greet people politely. It is very important during the training process that you manage your dog to prevent any possible reinforcement of jumping until your dog understands how to greet people properly.