

DOG/PEOPLE COMMUNICATION...

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

In our world of the domesticated dog, the dogs do learn our commands and language terms. They are very adept at this. In fact, occasionally we even think there are certain words we have to SPELL around our dogs. And often, we are certain they have even learned to spell certain words. For example, sometimes when I am talking to someone here or on the phone...if I say the SIT or DOWN word in conversation, three dogs' butts or bellies hit the ground. I have had this happen when they were elsewhere in the house and I didn't realize it until I walked to that area and there is one of my dogs 'sitting or downing'... pretty as you please. They don't release until they get a release command. It has been quite comical at times.

The dogs know words and they do understand when we just 'talk to them'. However, they are even more attuned to our emotions. Consequently, the 'universal' people/dog language is love, caring, and understanding. Even dogs that have never been exposed to verbal language, never had a chance to learn that communication...will respond (tentatively at first) to love, caring, and understanding. Are they understanding the WORDS...NO! They are 'sensing'...connecting to this universal language.

Even a dog with a very developed vocabulary will respond to nonsensical words...apples, oranges, bananas. Initially, they 'sense/learn' your intent. Then, gradually they attach the word (whatever it may be) to the intent and action. It is much like teaching a pup to sit, come, down, no mouth, no chew, or heel. You get them to do the action and then, you attach a word to it. However, it is quite a while before the dog connects the specific word to the action and your resultant pleasure.

The universal language comes from WITHIN. It transcends all communication lines. It is said, 'the eyes are the windows to the soul'. Well, let me tell you, the dogs read our eyes better and more true than people ever could. We often comment that someone has a 'sixth' sense. I believe the dogs have a seventh, eighth, ninth sense...far beyond our conception. How often have you or someone you know said, 'If my dog acts funny or doesn't like someone...that is a better barometer of that person than I have'. I tell people when choosing a puppy, to let the puppy choose you. We often are wrong in 'choosing'. The pups are NEVER wrong!! They somehow KNOW who they are suppose to go home with.

Our body language also speaks volumes to the dogs. If we could only read each other's body language or the dogs' body language half as well... Voice intonation communicates so much to a dog. They hear/read nuances that we cannot. They know when someone is being real and true...when someone is truly kind, caring, and loving. Your dog knows/senses your REAL emotions, even when you are fooling yourself!!!!

In dog training, the golden rule is: If you are displeased by your dog's performance (even if you say GOOD DOG...BUT, you are feeling the opposite)... your dog instinctually deciphers your 'words' into your TRUE 'emotions'. No matter how UP you try to sound,

your dog hears/ knows your true sentiments.... 'You little sh**!' The old saying...'It isn't what you say..it is the way you say it'...well, the dogs take this to a higher level.

Additionally, the dogs can sense what you are feeling through your touch. I have tested this with my own dogs. When our rough housing really reaches a fever pitch, I can suddenly adjust the tension in my hand (emotions flowing through my hands) or relax my body. My dogs instantly 'shift' accordingly. There are times we pet, stroke them out of love/habit...and, it is like second nature. We don't even realize we are doing it. However, there are times we are really communicating deeply with our dogs. At these times, when we stroke or pet them...WE can feel the love 'flowing' from us to our dogs. Believe me, your dog is feeling everything you are feeling and more!!!!

So, bottom line...no matter what verbal, physical, mental, or emotional 'language' a dog has learned initially...be it English, German, Spanish, kindness, caring, harshness, abuse, mistrust, or the language of neglect....they are blessed with an innate understanding and grasp of the universal language. And, the universal language is always there. Sometimes in severe abuse/neglect situations, it is buried deep...but, it is ALWAYS there!!!!

Dogs are so resilient in so many ways....and, that resiliency 'to respond' to the universal language is the strongest. In the most extreme situations...when a dog hears that language, even if it is far in the distance or very faint to them (from abuse or neglect)...they will from deep inside themselves manage that ever meaningful tail wag or lifted paw or raised head or a lick. It might only be for a split of a second...BUT, they are speaking volumes, they are saying....'I am here and I do HEAR you...I am trying to find my way to you'.

So, no matter what situation you are faced with... use the universal language and be ever vigilant for that 'glimmer' of understanding/connection in the dog. All you need is a glimmer, no matter how faint or fleeting....you can build on it. And, once the communication avenue between you and your dog is there...the flood gates will open wide!!!! You cannot imagine what wonders await you and your dog when you TRULY communicate with each other.

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