



# THE PAWS PACK

***"He steals food from the table."***

***"She won't come back when she's called."***

***"He destroyed the sofa."***

***"She barked and barked until the neighbors complained."***

***"He's a sweetheart, but I wish he wouldn't . . ."***

Lots of dogs have a lack of manners, and their owners are at a loss as to how to teach them manners. So these hapless folks frequently end up screaming at poor Bruno or smacking Tyson on the butt. Even worse, when Max doesn't behave, he's sent to the garden or terrace to live his days in solitude, or finally he's taken to the pound because "we just can't handle him anymore."

Obedience training would have prevented many of these problems and can help solve the bad behaviors that exist. Many people think that obedience training is something that is done to a dog to make it perform circus tricks! But if we turn the words around, we'll be closer to a real definition: Obedience training is to train dogs to be obedient, to understand the rules and lifestyle of the house. It covers a wide range of lessons a dog can learn, including tricks, family manners and demonstration of their skills. Sniffing dogs, service dogs for handicapped owners, search and rescue dogs, etc-- all basically carry their obedience training to the highest degree.

Training would be very easy if dogs spoke the same language as we do. But, that's not how it is! Dogs have their own attitude, voice, body language and mindset. They can be alert, intelligent, stubborn, dominant, submissive, or fearful. Some of these characteristics help and some make life quite difficult! That's why training helps to balance things out.

Most dogs present some kind of training problem through their life. Some do not respond to tenderness and coaxing, and others melt at a firm tone of voice. Some are dominant and require strength of muscle as well as strength of will, and others are eager to please. Some are bright and quick, and others are, slow learners. Like children, dogs are eager to learn. They may not want to learn what you prefer to teach, but they will learn something from every lesson you give — even when you are not trying to teach them anything.

Along with differences in learning style, dog owners have to also consider breed and individual differences. Dogs from herding and sporting groups are famous for their obedience. Over years they have been bred to work in sync with us and obey us. Whereas the most difficult dogs to train are independent breeds of hounds and working dogs, for they were bred to think on their own and are easily bored by repetitive instruction. However, besides breed differences, every dog presents an individual challenge as well. So training can get tricky.

Training basically provides a tool to help build the best relationship possible between your family and your dog. The investment is modest, supplies are minimal but the rewards are infinite!