

TEACHING YOUR PUPPY TO SHARE

Preventing resource guarding.

What is resource guarding?

Resource guarding is the technical term for a dog's possessiveness about anything she likes. We humans learn early in life that sharing is the polite thing to do. We often expect dogs to understand this and think we should be able to handle a dog's toys or food as a matter of course. But protecting favorite things is completely natural for a dog. If your dog growls when you reach for her chewie, she is not being bad. She is just being a dog.

Why teach your puppy to share?

For everyone's safety. Possessiveness may be normal in dogs, but it is safer if you can take your dog's Kong or food bowl when you need to.

How to work on it.

Exercise 1 This teaches your puppy that your hands make more food appear.

For a few days, hand-feed your puppy. Sit with your puppy while she eats. Put a handful of kibble in the bowl. When the bowl is empty, put in another handful until she has eaten her entire meal.

Exercise 2 This teaches your puppy that your approach = 's bonus yummys!

While your puppy is eating, approach her bowl and toss a small super high value reward into the bowl or on the floor next to it. Repeat until your puppy wags her tail and/or looks up at you expectantly as you approach her food bowl, then move on to exercise 2b.



Exercise 3 This teaches your puppy that your approach AND taking away of her bowl = 's an even better dinner!!

Approach your puppy's bowl, take it away, give her something even better than what she was eating, and then give her the bowl back.

Troubleshooting: If your puppy grabs something you don't want her to have or it is dangerous, do a bait and switch. Grab a handful of yummy treats, place them near your pup's nose so they have a good whiff, then toss them on the ground away from the item. This will entice them to drop it and move away towards the goodies.

Never scold your puppy for growling. It is their way of telling you they are uncomfortable and that they want you to back away. If you take away the growl, you are only left with a bite and no warning!