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## Who's The Boss? The Leadership Program

Do you see yourself in any of the following situations?

- Your dog drops his toy in your lap when it is time to play.
- Your dog goes to the treat jar and stares at it wanting a biscuit.
- Your dog puts his muzzle into your hand when he wants to be petted.
- Your dog does not move off the couch or bed when asked.
- Your dog does not come when called.
- Your dog defends valuable items and will not let you have them.

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your dog has given you a command!

### Background on Dog Behavior

Dogs are pack animals. This means that they are used to living in a social climate. In the wild, these packs developed a social structure called a hierarchy that determined who was in charge. Your family is now your dog's pack and it is up to you (and all the humans in the pack) to determine who is in charge.

### How Can I Do This?

You (and your family) can determine your own social hierarchy by starting a Leadership Program with your dog. The key to a good leadership program is making your dog work for his resources. As the human in the relationship you (and your family) naturally control all of your dog's resources; food, treats, water, toys, affection, games, access to potty area, play time, etc. A leadership program is a natural, non-confrontational way of letting your dog know who is in charge.

### Getting Started

You only need four things to get started: your dog, you, a sit command, and a reward! When your dog works for a resource the resource becomes a reward for their hard work. Here are a few examples to get you started.

- When your dog brings you his ball for a game of fetch, make him sit before you throw the ball. Make him sit before each toss.
- When your dog wants outside ask him to sit while you open the door. Assuming your dog is housebroken, he can wait for five seconds to sit nicely while you open the door. This will also help to eliminate your dog trampling you to get outside.
- When you feed your dog, require him to sit before his meal is given to him.

Once your dog learns more commands, you can change things up so that your dog doesn't know what 'work' he will have to do to earn his reward. Sometimes he might have to sit, other times lie down, and sometimes he has to shake. In any event, he will have to work for his resources.

By using this simple, non-threatening technique, you can easily establish yourself as the pack leader in your home. All family members should follow this same methodology to ensure that your dog knows that all the human pack members are ahead of him in the hierarchy. The vast majority of dogs are happy to know that you are in charge and have things under control. By showing your dog you are the leader, you give him the consistency he craves.