

What They Don't Teach You in Training Class: *Waiting At Doors*

There are a lot of behaviors that they don't teach you in an obedience class. These include basic rules, boundaries and limitations (as Cesar Milan would say.) It's very important for dogs to learn behave calmly and respectfully inside the house. When your dog sees you as the pack leader, it is *your* house, *your* door, *your* food, *your* car, *your* children, *your* couch, *your* bed, I think you get the picture. It's not a cruel thing to establish yourself as the boss, in fact, your dog is genetically engineered to NEED a pack leader. Problems arise when dogs feel that no leader exists and they must rise up and take the leadership role. These are not my original ideas, but based on the dog psychology of Cesar Milan. I highly suggest that you read his material!

Waiting at doors is a very important skill for dogs to master. First of all, dogs bolting through doors can run into the street and be hit by a car, run outside and encounter an aggressive dog, or run into the house and knock down children and people who are not physically strong.

It is always easier to teach this skill to a puppy that is learning how to navigate the human world, rather than an adult who has already established bad habits. The first thing you want to do is teach your dog to wait to come IN the house from the backyard. The precursor to this is teaching your puppy to be happy and relaxed in the yard alone. Of course this is going to be easier when the weather is nice.

Exercise your puppy, play with her and get her good and tired. Put her in the backyard and you may also give her a bone or toy to distract her. She probably will cry at the door. The more tired she is from exercise and fun, the shorter the crying period will last. If you are worried about your door being scratched, think ahead and possibly tape card board on it, or somehow block access to it. Before you do this important exercise, make those arrangements. Resist the urge to let your puppy in while she's crying, **DO NOT DO THIS**, or you will create a dog who thinks, "I cry and they'll let me in." If you have a well trained adult dog, you can leave the adult dog outside with the puppy and this will make the puppy more comfortable outside without you. If your adult dog cannot do this exercise totally on his own, work with the puppy without the bad influence of the adult dog. Remember, do NOT let any dog in the house while they're crying or barking. Wait until the puppy is totally relaxed. Wait until the puppy has forgotten all about getting back inside. If the puppy is staring at the door anxiously waiting, do NOT let her in. Her energy must be completely relaxed.

Once the puppy is relaxed, walk to the door and calmly open it. **DO NOT TALK**. Do not be excited, do not say, "Oh!!! Puppy!!!! Good girl!!!" When you talk you are contributing to an excited energy. Humans talk too much. Dogs don't talk, and they don't need you to talk to them (with your voice). Dogs talk through body language.

Open the door about 8-10 inches, and when the puppy runs up and tries to bolt through the door, simply use your foot to block her. If need be, push her off. This is NOT a kick. Keep doing this over and over until the puppy eventually stops trying (because it's not working.) The puppy will stop and sit down and look at you. When she looks calm, say her name to call her in. If she won't come, bend down a little and call her by name again. You must do this every time you open the door until she gets it.

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Once you've mastered this from the back yard to inside the house, stops trying (because it's not working.) The puppy will stop and sit down and look at you. When she looks calm, say her name to call her in. If she won't come, bend down a little and call her by name again. You must do this every time you open the door until she gets it. It won't take long.

Once you've mastered this from the back yard to inside the house, you can do it from the house out to the front yard. Put a long leash on the puppy and let her drag it. You can even have a second person waiting in the front yard if you are at all worried about the dog running into the street. When you have a long leash on the puppy and she runs off, it's a lot easier to catch her if you can grab the leash. If you feel it necessary, you can even buy a 20 foot leash.

It works the same with the front door. Open the door a 6-8 inches, and if she tries to bolt through the door, block her with your foot. Do this over and over. Each time you can open the door a little wider and a little wider, until you're able to open it up all the way. Remember, baby steps. There is no reason to rush this.

Good luck with your new puppy! And remember to stay calm, quiet and consistent!