

Lesson Plan: “asking permission to interact in the environment”

I often advocate for the development of a communication system with your dog. Part of the communication system is giving the dog the ability to check in with you before your dog interacts in the environment. I bring this premise to loose leash walking.

Loose Leash Walking is the ability for your dog to walk on a leash with the ability to sniff, send out pee mail, go to the bathroom while walking in a calm behavior in front. We know through training when we say your dog’s name your dog will look at you. This is the beginning when shaping “asking permission to interact in the environment”. We reward your dog every time you are loose leash walking and your dog looks at you, on cue and when offered.

We can reinforce this behavior when we walk in the At-Ease cue. At-Ease cue asks the dog to walk in canine position, with the ability to survey the environment. As your dog is surveying he will also look at you. Your dog should look at you on cue while walking in At-Ease. To look at you asking to be released to loose leash walking or if to hold At-Ease .

When your dog does not ask permission we redirect to the canine position. First this manipulates the dog close to you so you can hold the dog to behaviors asked. It also puts a bit of distance between the dog and distraction. Continue the redirect till the dog offers behavior asked. Often I use the sit-down-focus to achieve a calm behavior. When behavior offered release and back to previous behavior (loose leash walking).

The process of directing and redirecting your dog while Loose Leash Walking will develop a behavior of your dog looking for your permission to interact in the environment and your dog knowing that if behavior isn’t offered I will be redirected.

Aggression In Dogs- Practical Management, Prevention & Behavior Modification;
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