

# **DOG BITE PREVENTION MONTH**

**A COMPREHENSIVE DOG BITE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR  
CHILDREN AND ADULTS**



- ❗ A Comprehensive guide for parents, teachers, and students for safe dog practices in the community.
  - ❗ Presented by the Ontario Coalition Against BSL
- © 2023

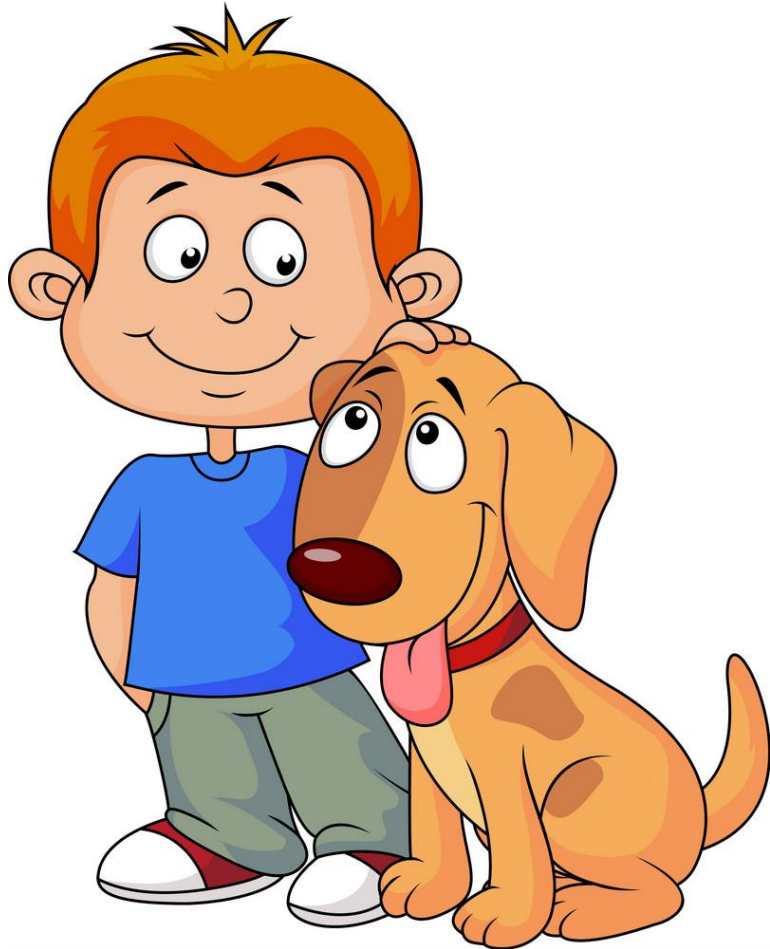




**PROGRAM NUMBER 1**  
**DOG BITE PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN**

# DOG BITE PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN

## TOP 10 WAYS TO STAY SAFE AROUND DOGS



1. Do NOT approach an unfamiliar or unattended dog
2. Never run away from a dog and scream
3. If you are approached by an unfamiliar dog, remain motionless: “be a tree”
4. If you are knocked over by a dog, roll tightly into a ball and lie still: “be a ball”
5. Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult
6. Never corner, crowd, or stand over a dog – this can scare them!
7. Avoid direct eye contact and NEVER put your face in a dog’s face
8. Do not disturb a dog who is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies
9. Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first
10. If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult

These simple steps will help keep you safe around dogs, and will also help prevent dog bites to you, your friends, your family, and your community!

**REMEMBER:** All dogs are unique and have different tolerance levels for many things, including play. Ask an adult you trust to help teach you safe dog behavior, and always remember to treat animals with respect and kindness!

*\*best if used in conjunction with video lesson 1\**



**PROGRAM NUMBER 2**  
**LEARNING A DOG'S BODY LANGUAGE**  
(GRAPHIC FOR CHILDREN AND NARRATIVE FOR TEACHERS/PARENTS)

# DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



© 2011 Lili Chin www.doggiedrawings.net *lili*

# DOG BODY LANGUAGE

## Dogs really can speak; all you need to do is learn their body language!

Teaching adults and children the subtle signs of stress or anxiety that can indicate a dog's discomfort can help prevent many dog related incidents, including dog bites. Since dogs can't tell us when they are uncomfortable, we must learn how to read their communications efforts through their body language. These signals can range from yawning to lip licking to a head turn, and are all warning signs prior to growls and bites.

Ensuring your child knows how to respect a dog's space and body language will help to ensure everyone's safety – children and dogs included. Just because one dog tolerates being crawled on or grabbed doesn't make it appropriate, safe, or fair for that dog, or any other animal for that matter.

Never allow your child to treat a dog like one of their toys. Children must be taught gentle touch, soft petting on the areas of the dog's body that the dog enjoys, and to always be respectful of the dog, no matter how familiar they are with the dog in question. Allow the dog to have a choice to end the interaction, and a space to retreat when they feel they need a break from interactions – one the child can not access.

# DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



© 2011 Lili Chin www.doggiedrawings.net *lili*


# DOG BODY LANGUAGE

**Children must learn to respect dogs and all other animals. This is one way to help achieve safer, kinder communities for everyone!**

Whether or not you own your own family dog, children must be taught how to behave around them. Even a friendly dog may bite if threatened, angry, afraid, or hurt. Dogs protect things they care about, including their food, their puppies, their toys, or their owners. They also protect spaces – their space as well as their family’s space.

Children need to understand that dogs are protective by nature – which is not a bad thing! However they still need to be taught to recognize situations that might frighten or anger a dog, and how to protect themselves in situations if one arises.

It is important for parents to never leave young children alone with a dog. While all families think they have the best dog (and let’s face it - we all DO have the best dog), unattended children is one of the leading causes of dog bites in Canada. It is essential for parents to teach young children not to fight with, tease, yell at, or chase their dogs. Kids and their parents should incorporate these lessons into daily life routines for safer, kinder communities for all.



**PROGRAM NUMBER 3**  
**HOW TO SAFELY GREET A DOG**  
(GRAPHIC FOR CHILDREN AND NARRATIVE FOR TEACHERS/PARENTS)

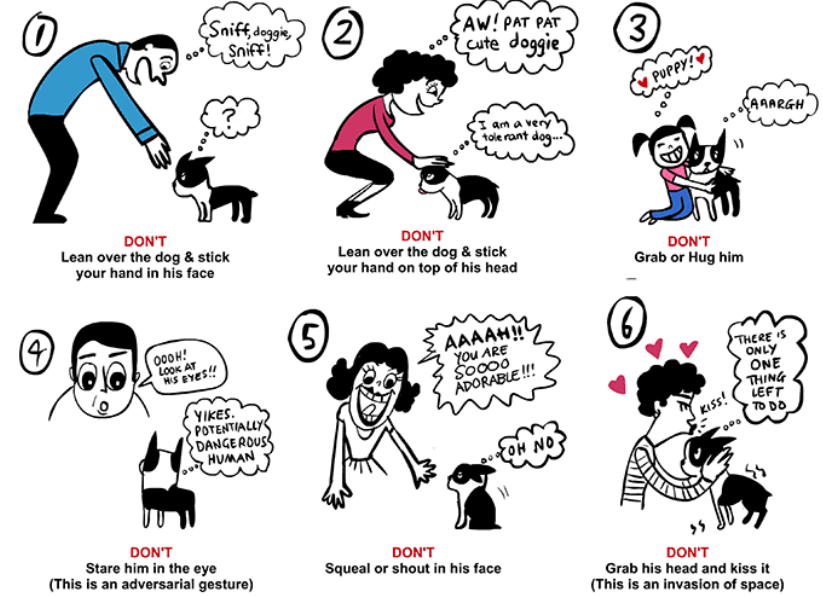


# THE TOP TEN DOG BITE PREVENTION TIPS FOR KIDS

- ❖ Ask permission before petting a strange dog
  - ❖ Always ask the dog owner AND the dog
- ❖ Set boundaries
  - ❖ Don't interact with dogs when they are eating, playing with a toy, caring for their puppies, or sleeping
- ❖ Be a tree
  - ❖ Dogs are excited by movement and noise. If you're approached by a strange dog stay still. Running around or making loud noises will likely excite the dog even more
- ❖ Be a ball
  - ❖ If you are knocked down by a dog, don't scream and run away. Instead curl into as small of a ball as possible, covering your face with your arms as best as you can
- ❖ Never climb into a dog's yard
- ❖ Don't squeeze, poke, or grab a dog
- ❖ Don't pull on a dog's ears, fur, or tail
- ❖ Don't climb on dogs
  - ❖ Dogs are not toys; respect their space and do not climb on them or step on them
- ❖ Don't pet dogs behind fences or in cars
- ❖ Don't approach loose dogs
- ❖ Don't escalate situations
  - ❖ You must never run away from, yell at, or jump at dogs

## HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE!  
I don't care how cute you (or your kid) think Boogie is. Please show him some respect.



Doing this to a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a great big hug and kiss in an elevator. Wouldn't that creep you out? And wouldn't you have the right to defend yourself?

### THE CORRECT WAY:



www.doggiedrawings.net *Lili*

# CANINE BODY LANGUAGE – SIGNS OF DISTRESS

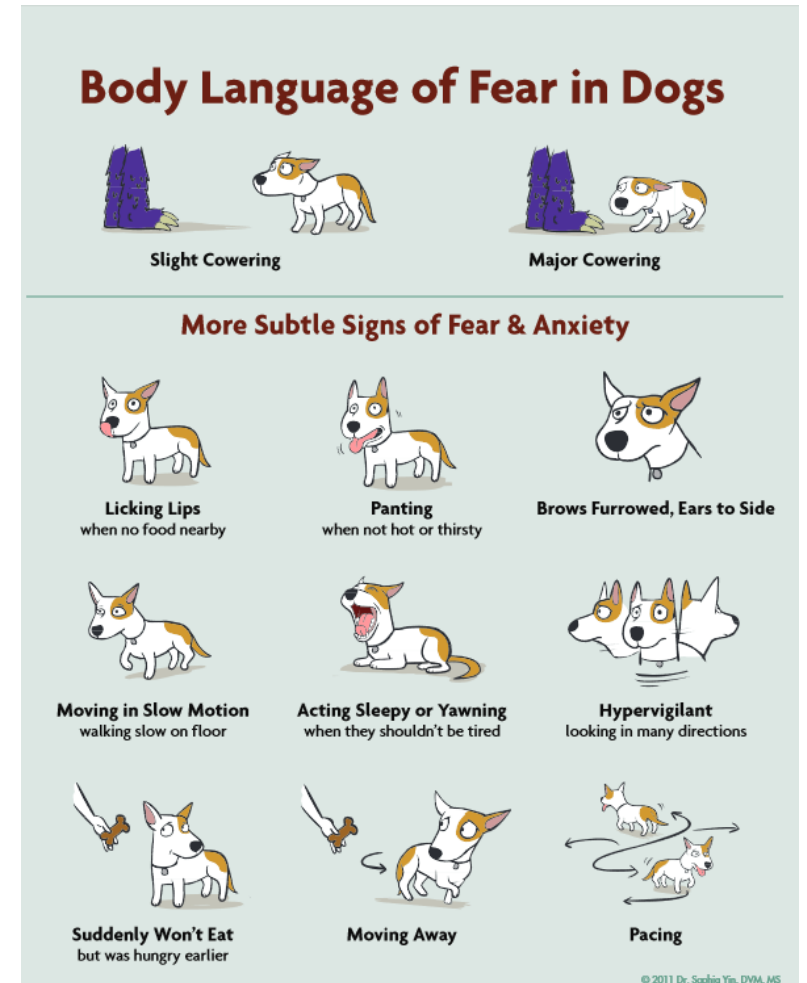
Knowing a dog's basic body language signals can help identify potential problems **BEFORE** they arise. Dogs can bite out of frustration or fear, but both usually come with a fair share of warning signs.

Some of the most common signs of a stressed dog are:

- ❖ Raised fur on the back
- ❖ Covering head or body
- ❖ Showing teeth
- ❖ Growling
- ❖ Lip licking
- ❖ Tail tucked between the legs
- ❖ Pacing
- ❖ Looking all around in different directions
- ❖ Ears lowering to the back of their head
- ❖ Moving away from the human

As responsible dog guardians, we must model appropriate behavior around dogs. Even dog savvy adults can throw good judgement out the window, especially around cute puppies. Remember that children are always watching and cuing off our behavior in every situation. It is very important that adults always follow safe and appropriate behaviors around dogs. This includes limiting kissing or hugging a dog, which is a very difficult task for adults, let alone children. We love to hug and feel close to those we care about, but dogs don't show affection in the same ways. It is important to teach our children that there are other safer ways to show dogs how much they love them!

*\*include video lesson 2 and 3 here\**





**PROGRAM NUMBER 4**  
**INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

---

# DOG SAFETY AND AWARENESS FOR CHILDREN

Use in conjunction with the interactive guide on how to prevent dog bites and keep children in the community safe around their dogs, and dogs they don't know.



# SAFETY AND AWARENESS AROUND YOUR DOG

## OR AROUND A DOG YOU DON'T KNOW

Dog Safety Tip #1 – What **SHOULD** you do around a dog you don't know?

- Always ask the owner AND the dog permission to pet him
- Always keep your face away from a strange dog
- Always report anyone you see being cruel towards any animal
- Always be gentle and treat the dog with kindness so he knows you are a friend
- Always listen to signals from the dog – remember they can't speak to you any other way!



Dog Safety Tip #2 – What should you **NOT** do around a dog you don't know?

- Never hug or pet a dog you don't know
- Never approach a dog when he is playing with a bone
- Never disturb a dog when he is sleeping or eating
- Never approach a dog with her puppies, alone in a car, from the other side of the fence, or tied up outside
- Never squeeze or grab a dog
- Never try to pick up a strange dog

# SAFETY AND AWARENESS AROUND YOUR DOG

## OR AROUND A DOG YOU DON'T KNOW

### There is NEVER an Excuse for Animal Cruelty!


- Dogs have feelings too! You must never hit, kick, or shout at your dog. You must also never pull their ears or tail – remember that they LOVE YOU!
- If you ever see someone being cruel to their dog, go to an adult you trust and tell them right away!!!



### REMEMBER!

- Your dog is part of the family. He is happiest when he is with you!! Make sure to include him in your big events and make him feel special!
- Always be kind to your pets, and they will love you forever!

*\*include interactive activity booklet and video lesson 3 and 4 here\**



**PROGRAM NUMBER 5**  
**RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP**



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEST WAYS TO HELP PREVENT DOG BITES?

Understanding why dogs bite in the first place is one of the best and easiest ways to prevent dogs from biting at all! While there are many reasons, it is almost always a defensive reaction to a situation that is making them uncomfortable. Some of the most common reasons for dogs to bite are:

- ❖ The dog finds itself in a stressful situation and seeks to defend itself or its property
- ❖ They are scared or startled by something
- ❖ They feel threatened
- ❖ They want to protect something of value to them (e.g., their puppies, their food, their toys, etc.)
- ❖ They aren't feeling well or have been injured (e.g., illness or recent surgery)



# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP PREVENT DOG BITES?

## ❖ Socialize Your Dog:

- ❖ This is one of the best ways to help prevent your dog from biting and feel at ease in different situations outside your home. It is always best to start socialization from puppyhood where possible, and ensure that your dog is comfortable in public

## ❖ Be a Responsible Dog Owner:

- ❖ Responsible dog ownership helps to build a solid foundation between you and your pet. Careful selection of breed (e.g. researching energy levels, size, etc.), proper dog training, regular exercise, regular vet care, owner education, and regular socialization with other people and animals are important things to consider prior to adopting/buying your new furry family member!

## ❖ Educate Your Children on How to Safely Approach Dogs:

- ❖ Teach your child the basics at a young age:
  - ❖ Never tease or torment a dog, especially one who is confined or tied up
  - ❖ **Never put your face in the face of a strange dog**
  - ❖ Never stare a dog down
  - ❖ If you are approached by a strange dog, “be a tree”
  - ❖ If you are knocked down by a strange dog, “be a ball”



# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP PREVENT DOG BITES?

- ❖ Avoid Risky Situations At All Times! You must never pet a dog if:
  - ❖ The dog is not with its owner
  - ❖ The owner, or the dog, says no
  - ❖ The dog is on the other side of a fence
  - ❖ The dog is sleeping or eating
  - ❖ The dog is resting with her puppies or appears protective of them, anxious you are around
  - ❖ The dog is sick or injured
  - ❖ The dog is playing with a bone or another toy
  - ❖ The dog is growling or barking
  - ❖ The dog seems to be hiding or seeking alone time

**REMEMBER:** Learning to read a dog's body language can be very helpful in preventing dog bite related incidents. Dogs depend on your ability to understand their body gestures, postures, and vocalizations to express themselves and communicate. While we can't always read a dog's body language perfectly, we can learn to identify and listen to the signs that a dog does not want to be bothered.

Learning to listen to a dog will go a long way in keeping you and your family safe from possible dog bites!

*\*include video lesson 5 here\**





**PROGRAM NUMBER 6**  
**HOW TO SET DOG OWNERS UP FOR SUCCESS**

## TIPS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR DOGS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN YOU ADOPT A DOG FROM A SHELTER...

Ask questions! Where did my dog come from? What was their situation prior to coming to the shelter? What sort of family did they have? Have they been tested with children and other pets? What is their energy level like? Do they have any health issues, and have they been vet checked?

Some of the questions will be impossible to answer but it's good to ask as much as you can, especially for dogs who are not puppies. These questions will help to determine if this is the right dog for your family, as well as your lifestyle. Be sure to research your rescue and ensure they are reputable and caring – not all shelters and rescues are ethical! These simple steps will help set you AND your new dog up for success in both your home and in public/social settings.





## TIPS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR DOGS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN YOU ADOPT A DOG FROM A BREEDER...

Similar to adopting a dog from a shelter, ask questions! You can ask about the temperament and genetics of the parents (ask to see them too!), if the parents and puppies are health checked, if they come with paperwork from a recognized kennel club, if the puppies are registered and microchipped... You can also ask about their tolerance of other dogs so far, if they have been exposed to children, or how they behave around other small animals such as cats.

Also, do some research on your breeder – while many breeders are extremely ethical and reputable, there are others who are NOT. These breeders, commonly known as “back yard breeders”, do not do reference checks, background checks, nothing. If your breeder only cares about being paid – STEER CLEAR!

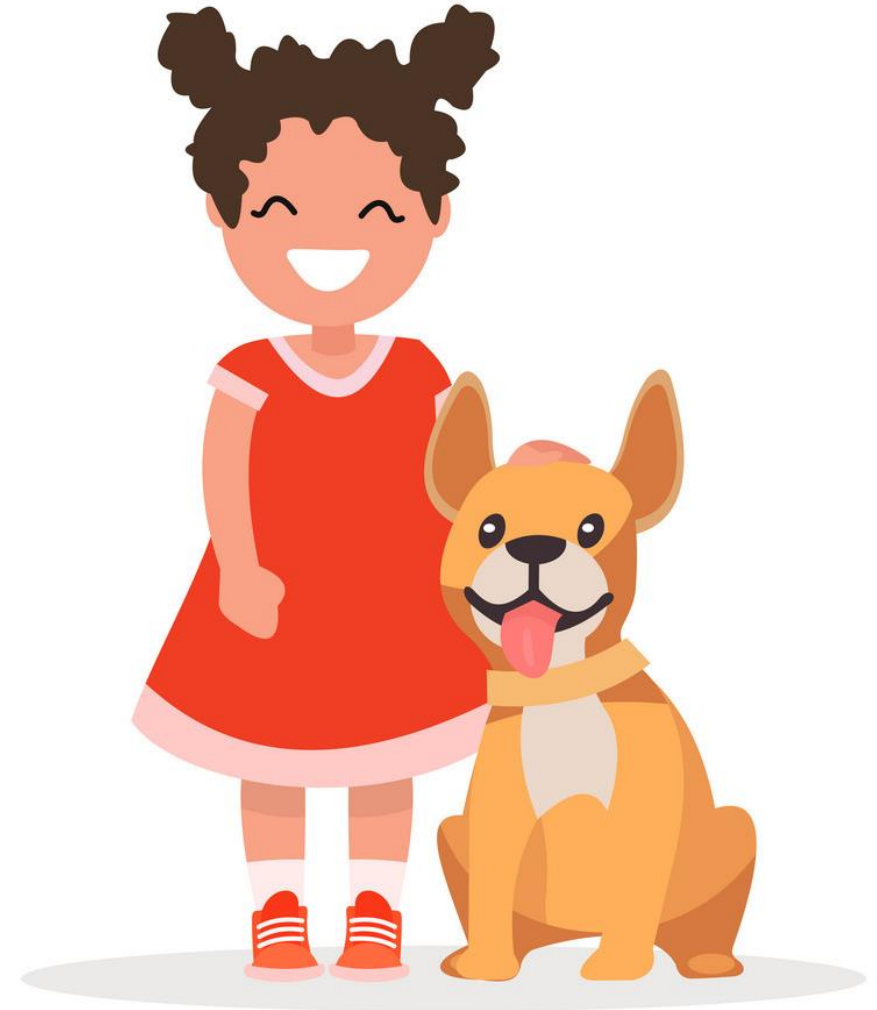
## TIPS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR DOGS

### WHAT AN OWNER SHOULD KNOW WHEN YOU PICK UP A DOG WHO HAS BEEN DETAINED IN A SHELTER...

It is extraordinarily important that owners understand that ALL DOGS who have been in a shelter require **DECOMPRESSION TIME** when released. Depending on how long a dog has been detained, the individual circumstance, and what shape they are in when released, all dogs will have different requirements for this decompression period.

No matter how awesome you think your dog is (and of course they are that awesome), shelter life is not easy on a pet, especially a pet who is pampered and spoiled in your home with your family. Unlike humans, we are unable to explain to dogs why they are suddenly not at home in their fluffy beds and find themselves instead in a cold cage surrounded by weird smells, scary sounds, and strange people. The fact is that no matter how amazing and caring the staff at the shelter are with your dog, it is not the same care as they receive with you – a responsible and loving owner.

While every situation is different, it is important to listen to your dog and have the ability to read your dogs body language. They will tell you if they are uncomfortable or if they are good to go. Ask for some tips from your local shelter, a local rescue, a dog trainer, or another animal professional who can guide you on ways to ensure your dog transitions back to their normal life safely and quickly.



## TIPS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR DOGS

### WHAT AN OWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE BREED OF THEIR DOG...

Does your area have Breed Specific Legislation, or BSL? What do your local animal control bylaws say about dog ownership of certain types of dogs?

Preparing for questions about your dogs' breed will help to save you from guaranteed heartache and will help to keep your dog safe as well. BE WARNED – even getting insurance for your home with certain types of dogs is very difficult in some circumstances!

Always ensure your dog is registered with the city, up to date at the vet, that the breed is correctly and clearly identified on your vet paperwork, that you have registration (CKC, AKC, ABKC, UKC, etc.) whenever possible, and DMV confirmation of the breed of your dog. This is especially important in Ontario for any dog in the Bully family of dogs, or anywhere else that BSL is in place.

**Responsible ownership is ALWAYS the key to success, and ensuring safer, kinder communities!**



# Our program works best when used in conjunction with the interactive videos on our website, starring our ambassadog, Kira!

For access to the interactive video lessons, please visit our website at [www.ontariocoalitionagainstbsl.com/dog-bite-prevention-month](http://www.ontariocoalitionagainstbsl.com/dog-bite-prevention-month) or click the links below.

## Topics Covered:

- [Lesson 1](#) – Best Practices Around a Dog – “be a tree” & “be a ball”
- [Lesson 2](#) – Staying Safe Around an Unfamiliar or Unattended Dog
- [Lesson 3](#) – Dog Safety and Dog Bite Prevention – Safety Zones!
- [Lesson 4](#) – Keeping Your Family Dog Safe
- [Lesson 5](#) – Embracing the Growl

