

Preventing Guarding

Resource guarding is the guarding of anything that the dog finds valuable.

It is important to know that it is not a 'dominance trait' usually just an instinctive reaction. Guarding can be caused by genetics, by learnt history or underlying health or anxiety issues. It is not uncommon, and a lot of the time easy to modify, however be aware that the worst thing you can do is punish any signs of guarding. This may suppress the behaviour in the short term but will teach the dog that you are something to be wary of when they have something they value.

A 'punished dog' may also learn to not show the behaviour in front of the punisher but the behaviour then often worsens around others.

Some pups will also only guard from certain member of the family. Again this is not a hierarchy behaviour, it tends to be that dogs will tolerate people they trust more than others or that some members of the family may be more 'scary'. This is not good for your relationship with your dog.

Things To Prevent Guarding:

1. Don't touch your dog when they are eating or have something they value. At these times, your touch is probably more of an irritant than adding value. Likewise don't take the pup's food if she's eating, that's just annoying
2. Create a safe place that your puppy can take things to if they want to be left alone. This is especially important if you have children. Your pup NEEDS her own space



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3. Bank trust. If your pup is chewing something suitable, walk by and drop even better treats then leave her alone with her item. This will lead to your pup thinking being approached when she has something of value is good 4. If you pup picks up random items, don't give access to anything you don't want touched. You wouldn't walk past a \$50 note left on the footpath would you? Well toys, shoes, TV remotes are all currency to our puppies.

What If Your Puppy Steals Something

1. Whenever possible trade up. If your puppy has something you want, and it's not dangerous, take your time to find something delicious to swap it with
2. Play plenty of fetch and put the fetch on cue so you can ask them to bring you things. If the item isn't something you are too worried about them having, maybe play a little then let them take it off and explore (do be careful to play on appropriate flooring and be aware that long term, repetitive fetch can cause joint issues)
3. Don't chase the puppy! I know this is hard, but chasing or cornering may make the puppy feel threatened and the situation may escalate quickly. Try to never reach under a table, couch or bed at your puppy. This gives the puppy no opportunity to avoid conflict.

If you are already seeing signs of guarding please let me, or another qualified, force free trainer know. It can become dangerous quickly.

