

THE GOLDEN RULE FOR TRAINING YOUR DOG OR PUPPY (TO AVOID OR ELIMINATE UNWANTED BEHAVIORS)

First of all it is important to understand that what your dog or puppy craves most of all is attention. **Even negative attention can be rewarding to your dog!**

So what do you do if your dog is doing something you don't want them to do??? **IGNORE THEM!!** Stand like a tree with your arms folded and don't even look at them. **THIS IS SURPRISINGLY HARD TO DO since all your instincts are telling you to “correct” your dog in a more active way.** But in correcting your dog actively you are giving them attention which is the reward they crave the most.

A classic example is a puppy or dog that is jumping up on you or your friends. Instinctively, people tend to say “No” and push the dog down. From the dog's point of view this is an invitation to play....He or she jumps up and you push them down....Which is a super fun game from the dog's point of view!!

Another classic example is the dog who is fearful at the Vet's office and starts growling. **You correctly perceive that your dog is afraid and you want to reassure him or her, but if you pet them or tell them it's OK while they are growling, you are inadvertently rewarding the growling.** From the dogs point of view, he or she growled and their owner petted them so they must have done something good! Do not react if your dog growls, but after a few minutes have passed without any growling, pet them and reassure them, because if they are fearful they definitely need re-assurance....It's just the timing that is critical.

NOTE: If you are dealing with an ongoing problem with behavior, it may get worse at first. From the dog's point of view they used to get attention for this behavior so they may think they just have to try harder!! Don't be discouraged if this happens just continue to ignore the behavior, most dogs will eventually understand they are not going to get the attention they used to get for behaving this way.