

As We See It... Our Pets Are Animals?

As last we spoke, we talked about the celebrities' pets with all their couture clothing, designer bags, diamond collars, and crystal dishes. We also found that in this humanization of our pets, we have created new lists of ailments and challenges that the pharmaceutical and processed food industries are happy to exploit.

Let's take a quick look at what it is to be a pet. I mean, do we put the true nature of the pet into the equation and see it from the pets' perspective?

Our fluffy little Maltese and our Great Dane are direct cousins to the Grey Wolf. As such, they have a predisposition to very specific traits and behaviors which we must accommodate. While it may be hard to imagine your Pug as a pack member on a hunt for food, that is exactly what they are programmed for. You see, you and your family and friends are all funny looking pack members, doing exactly what the pack does. It's a simple, but diverse social group doing some exact, programmed actions.

Usually you are the pack leader and have been trained for this special position. All the other pack members look to you for direction. You are responsible for organizing the basic needs for the pack,

when and what to eat, shelter or den to keep them warm and safe, supervising their activities, and protecting them against danger.

Let's look now at what WE do. We take our puppy to training class to teach both them and us our role in the pack. It's not about learning tricks, but developing a social order with predictable responses. If you watch the walk to the dog park you can see the dynamics. The terrier is literally pulling his caregiver down the street. Who do you think is the leader in that pack? Now think of the screaming kid in the supermarket, dragging mom down the cookie aisle. Sounds a lot alike to me.

Then there's the hunt for dinner! You already filled this feisty little carnivores' dish with an unappetizing, nondescript, overcooked kibble. But alas, we head off on a stalk to the kitchen, the pack carefully behind us. We open the refrigerator door quickly and grab our prey, that last piece of baked chicken. The pack, those that followed us, are jumping and barking in celebration of your "kill" and are waiting for their turn at the meal. However, we take that natural, preprogrammed response as bad behavior and act accordingly. As a pack member, your



puppy doesn't understand this unnatural behavior by you and decides to challenge your leadership. A combination of the wrong food and our bad behavior make for a bad dog?

You can see that simply put, we can humanize our pets with the glitz and glamour as long as we understand and respect that we MUST accommodate their natural instincts in the proper perspective.

As always, giving you a new perspective on your pets' care!

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