

"DOG PARENTING"

March 2018

If you are relatively inexperienced in dog ownership this article may be for you. Many things that work in raising your children also work with raising your dog. Imagine if you paid no attention in raising your children and felt that you only needed to provide for the child's most basic custodial needs (i.e. roof over head, food, water and clothing). What kind of child would you have at 12 years old? Your child would not be able to function, couldn't read or write, would have no social skills or any idea of how to get along with others: no character or integrity. You would most likely either have a child afraid of everything or a child who will get what (s)he wants by whatever means necessary. If your imagination is really rolling by now I would imagine this scenario is a little frightening.

It is your job as a parent to guide and lead your child into adulthood and to develop good character and integrity in what they do. You teach them manners and boundaries (appreciation for the rights of others) and they go to school where they learn the skills necessary to function in the world and learn to get along with others.

Most dogs are taken away from their dog mothers at 6 to 8 weeks old and are sent off to live with humans, mostly. Whatever does a puppy know at this age about either being a dog or living with humans? The most commonly seen dog at Sammie's Friends Animal Shelter is a 1-year-old, unneutered large breed male dog weighing about 60 pounds. The majority of these dogs

are found running loose by a member of the public and are brought to the shelter. About 85% of the time, no one ever shows up and claims ownership, leading us to believe that the animal was simply dumped out somewhere to fend for himself.

Here is the scenario that I imagine happens most of the time. The dog was gotten as a puppy and did all the things that puppies do: digging, chewing, whining, pooping, peeing and most of all being adorable. But now, after one year, the dog weighs 60 pounds is jumping on people, not getting along with other dogs, going potty (at least some of the time) in the house. Why is this happening? No one has taught the pup a darn thing, nor has anyone taken the time to get the dog neutered and vaccinated and whatever else it needs.

The dog isn't fun anymore and with it's out of control behavior certainly isn't adorable. It has simply become an annoyance and a nuisance and is more work than it's worth. So sad. The next thing you know, doggie goes for a ride and gets dumped somewhere and eventually ends up at Sammie's Friends.

Most of these dogs aren't bad dogs and haven't bitten or harmed anyone. They are just big and unruly. We work with them and improve their behavior and make them more adoptable. They are certainly not beyond repair and neither is your unruly dog. Any dog with manners is a better dog than one with no manners. Finding a dog trainer to help you would be an excellent idea. Dog trainers will help you teach your dog to walk nicely on a leash and to come when called and to sit before eating or entering or exiting a building. No matter what your dog's temperament, there is no dog that cannot be taught

manners. If you are short on funds you can find all kinds of resources on the internet and in books and articles and you can do the training yourself. It takes patience and consistency, just like it does with your children.

If your dog has behavior problems, like dog aggression or going potty in the house or separation anxiety you will need a Dog Behaviorist to help you fix these kinds of problems. They can be fixed. Trainers are to dogs as school teachers are to children. They teach how to do things. Dog Behaviorists are to dogs as Family Therapists are to children and families. They teach you how to alter your dogs' bad behavior and help them be a welcome member of your family. There is nothing you will receive more pleasure from than your well behaved joyous and fun dog.

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