



DOG WISDOM: HOW TO THINK LIKE A DOG



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Although my colleagues know of me as a neuropsychologist and psychotherapist, most of my friends know of me as a dog trainer. Although I no longer perform hospital consultations as a clinical psychologist, I still make hospital rounds each week with my canine companion who is a certified pet therapy dog. In other words, my life has literally gone to the dogs, and it couldn't be better. Seeing life from a dog's point of view has helped change my perspective of people. Most of these communication tips are from the public domain and the conventional wisdom of other dog trainers.

For business managers, consider the canine principles of management: If you think you're a person with some influence, trying ordering someone else's dog around. It doesn't work. A dog will work if he likes you, but he will work even harder if he also respects you.

For romantic partners, consider the canine principles of relationship: Simply stay in the present. When someone is having a bad day, simply be silent and sit close by. When you don't know what to say, say nothing. When you do know what to say, say nothing. Consider a gentle nudge now and then.

For students, consider the canine principles of research: If you can't find what you are looking for, honor your nose and start sniffing around. If you still can't find what you are looking for, dig deeper until you do. If you're in too deep, stop digging. Sometimes we find what we are looking for when we stop looking.

On boundaries: Know your turf, and know the territories of others. Let others know when they've invaded your space. Don't bite when a simple growl will do. Don't growl when a simple snarl will do. Don't snarl when a simple stare will do. Don't stare when a simple head-check will do.

On leadership: Be loyal to your group. Never pretend to be something that you're not. If you're running ahead of the pack, do a head check now and then to make sure the pack is still with you.

On assertiveness: Say what you mean, and mean what you say, but don't say it mean. Smile in the presence of the top dog. Smile when there is something you want. When in doubt, simply smile.

On communication: Good communication is 99% listening---1% barking. How it is said is usually more important than what is said.

On family and friends: When loved ones come around, run up to greet them. Accept praise and let others touch you now and then.

On leisure time: Delight in the simple joys of walking in the woods. Enjoy the simple pleasures of sitting by the lake. Be still, and hear the silence. Have you walked your dog today?

Reference

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