PROTOCOL FOR DEFERENCE

Overview

This protocol is one of three foundation protocols that will help ensure that **any** dog—even one ***without*** behavioral concerns—has a better, less confusing, and less anxious relationship with people. This protocol will also help cats, even though they should not be viewed as small, fuzzy dogs, as discussed below.

This protocol is a set of instructions that allows dogs to:

- Begin to learn to be calm
- Learn that they can ask questions of people
- Learn that they can get guidance about what is expected or whether they need worry if they just sit calmly

Together, these three points teach the dog that they learn better, feel safer and have more control in creating favorable interaction if they are calm.

These three points make this program completely different from "leadership," "earn to learn," "nothing in life is free," and other similar programs. Unlike these other programs, the **Protocol for Deference** is based on understanding and using innate dog social and cognition systems, and it uses the dog's ability to ask questions.

All dogs should be raised with this protocol beginning in early puppyhood. Using this protocol as part of the dog's daily life from early puppyhood will prepare the dog's brain to learn, and to learn in a manner that will minimize behavioral problems.

The Very Short Version of This Program

This basic program asks dogs to do one thing: sit calmly and look at the human whenever anything is desired or needed. That's it! Sitting is a deferential behavior for dogs, and if the dog is quiet, calm, relaxed, and looking at the human, the dog is receptive to any information that the human can share with the dog. That's it.

To learn why being receptive to information is important and why it works so well, read further. If you are content to just know that sitting calmly for all interactions will help your dog, you can stop reading here!

Longer Version of the Program

Canine Social Systems

Dogs have social systems that are very similar to those of humans:

- Dogs live in extended family groups.
- Dogs have extensive and extended parental care.
- Dogs will work as a group or a family to help care for the offspring and nurse their young prior to feeding them semi-solid, then solid, food.
- Dogs use play as one form of developing social skills where they learn to make mistakes successfully.
- Dogs communicate extensively vocally and non-vocally.
- Most importantly, dogs have a social system that is based on deference to others and that governs different roles in different contexts.

This understanding of normal dog behavior is at odds with the myths about dog behavior, many of which focus on dogs "struggling" for "dominance." Please ignore those myths. They are not only proving to be wrong whenever data have been collected, but they often result in unkind behavior toward dogs and render situations dangerous for humans.

Fights for status or control are notoriously **rare** among wild canids, including wolves. The same is true for humans. Unless the situation involves abnormal or severely stressed social conditions (e.g., famine, war, too many individuals and too few resources, mental health crises, et cetera), most human social relations are structured by negotiation and deference to others, rather than by violence. The same pattern holds for dogs. In fact, in both dog and human interactions, violence is often regarded as a symptom that something has gone wrong.

What do we mean by "deference"? Deference occurs when social individuals assess an ongoing situation and wait calmly to get input from another member of the group before pursuing another set of behaviors or social interactions.

Deference-based systems mean that:

- "Hierarchies," or the repeatable pattern of relationships each individual has with others are fluid and flexible depending on context;
- The individual to whom others defer may differ depending on the social circumstances; and
- Status and circumstances are not absolute.

For example, a human child may defer to his parents' requests, but then be the individual on the playground to whom other children defer. Dogs are similar: a dog may always adhere to instructions given by one spouse but not the other. This is because the dog has different relationships with each spouse.

Much has been written about dogs viewing their human families as their packs. It's important to remember that "pack" is just a word to describe a social grouping of canines, like "pod" describes a group of whales, and "gaggle" describes a group of geese.

True canine "packs" are composed of animals born into the social group, making them more closely related to each other than they are to most animals in another pack. This **does not** describe the situation in anyone's household because no human gave birth to their dog. Furthermore, most multi-dog households are made up of unrelated dogs, many of whom come into the household as young adults, or adults, not newborn puppies. Quite simply, pet households do not meet the definition for a "pack." The way most dogs live in human households is almost the "anti-pack": relationships are imposed upon resident dogs every time a new animal is added. If we understand this difference, deferential relationships will help us understand how relationships between dogs in households can change with time.

The problem for our dogs with our careless usage is that there is a value judgment within the word "pack." Humans have misused the concept in two ways:

1. by saying that they and their dogs are part of the same social group or "pack" when, actually, dogs have different relationships with dogs than they do with humans and
2. by assuming that—because they and their dogs are a "pack"—the humans must be the "leaders of the pack" and that they must show behaviors that are meant to maintain the social rank of everyone in the household.

Both of these assumptions are wrong, and they have caused us to behave badly toward animals who share their

lives with us. Instead, it is important to know that while we care for dogs, they know that we are not dogs, and their relationships with dogs and humans will differ. We can better understand the complex interdependent relationship between dogs and humans by letting go of the "pack" concept.

Dogs are social and, like other social species, will communicate when they are uncertain or needy to other members of their group. This means that they are well adapted to look to their people for guidance. Dogs often become problems for their people when they cease to look to people for guidance, or if they never do this, or if they cannot do this.

To successfully understand and use this protocol you must understand that, although they do not have verbal speech, ***dogs ask questions.*** Sometimes they do this by offering a series of behaviors and wait for the change in human response, sometimes they do this by vocalization, sometimes they do this by pestering us by pawing, and sometimes they sit quietly and look at us. This protocol capitalizes on the last behavior because it is the one that gives us the time and space to exchange information with our dogs.

What's the Protocol for Deference?

The **Protocol for Deference** is the first step in both **preventing** problems associated with a lack of guidance and in **treating** all forms of behavioral problems. The keys to this program are simple:

- The dog must attend to the humans by quietly looking at or monitoring them for signals about which behaviors are accepted.
- The dog must relax when he does this.
- The humans must be clear in their signals.
- The humans must be reliable, reasonable, and humane.

All social animals create some form of rule structure for social interaction. Although cats have very different social systems than do dogs and people, the rule structure used to get information about varying situations from others is the same: Simply, you have to have the mental ability to pay attention and to send and receive information. This means that cats will also benefit from this program, although it is primarily written for dogs.

Clear communication is essential in social animals because it avoids an inefficient and potentially dangerous use of time (e.g., fighting). Every time there is uncertainty in a situation there is the potential for anxiety. Every time there is the potential for anxiety there is the chance to make a mistake in a behavioral response and to learn to reinforce that mistake. We want to avoid such uncertainty because by doing so we will minimize behavioral problems and maximize joyous, fun and loving relationships with our dogs.

Because dogs are so similar to us in so many ways, and so frequently look like they are hanging on our every word, we assume that they are complying with **our** rule structure and all its nuances. We need to understand that, while the ability to seek information from others is shared by all social species, we must learn how to do this with each new set of individuals. By using the tendency to defer—to seek information from others—we can ensure that we teach our dogs and cats how to exchange information with us in a nonviolent manner.

How Important Are Rule Structures?

All young animals need to learn the rule structures of their group, and they often do so by trial and error. Puppies need guidance in how to best communicate with humans to ensure their needs are met. Problem dogs need to have a consistent, benign, kind rule structure explicitly spelled out for them. If the dog knows a consistent rule or behavior that will get the attention of their people, they will then be receptive to guidance. Please note that "consistent" does not mean "rigid" or "unforgiving."

This pattern is a form of "discipline." People often confuse discipline, verbal or physical punishment, and violence or abuse. ***The Protocol for Deference and all other behavioral protocols MUST be executed without violence or physical abuse,*** or you will earn your pet's distrust. For most dogs, withdrawal of attention is a far more profound correction than is a physical "correction" or abuse. Abused dogs and those consistently mismanaged with physical punishment will either learn to override the punishment, or learn to seek it because punishment may be the only human contact they get.

What About Punishment?

Physical punishment can include some commonly recommended approaches to changing canine behavior:

- leash or collar "corrections" using a "choke" collar or a prong collar or any other tight, confining device,
- hitting the dog,
- walking the dog into a pole or tree to make him pay attention, and
- tying the dog so that he cannot move.

If these punishment techniques sound abusive, it's because most often they are.

The true definition of punishment doesn't require pain; it requires a stimulus sufficiently powerful that the undesirable behavior is abandoned by the dog **with the subsequent result** that the probability of the dog exhibiting the behavior **in the future** is lowered. The emphasized parts of the previous sentence are important because unless these conditions are met, the dog is not being "punished"—he is being injured mentally and, perhaps, physically.

Using Deferential Behaviors to Prevent Problems

The best way to handle undesirable behaviors is to prevent them. If we cannot prevent problematic behaviors we should just ignore the behaviors. By doing so we do not accidentally reward the dog with any of our behaviors associated with our reaction to the problem.

For example, if we forgot to take the puppy out after he ate, and he urinated on the carpet, it's too late to "correct," "punish," or interrupt him. He is done urinating and emptying the bladder is a self-rewarding behavior. Instead, just clean up and pay better attention to the dog's needs the next time. Think about this carefully. If you reach for the dog, show him the urine and yell at him, he will learn that you become erratic and scary when you show him his urine. He will **not** learn **not** to urinate on the rug.

Finally, we should be clear to the dog and tell the dog what behaviors **will** get the dog attention. It's utterly unfair to the dog

to have him try to "guess" what it is that will get you to stop yelling at him and start loving him, yet these are the circumstances to which many dogs are reduced. We could tell someone a million times what ***not*** to do, but unless we tell them what we ***want*** them to do, they will still make mistakes. No one learns without knowing what is specifically expected as part of the successful task. So every time you use the word "no" you must try to couple it to offering the dog a replacement behavior. If the dog chews on the chair, you can say "no" only if you offer an alternative choice—a chew bone or the chance to come sit in front of you, look at you, and have a belly rub.

Core Steps for Deference

The three steps of (1) clear communication, (2) no punishment, and (3) ignoring undesirable behaviors are at the core of practicing deference.

How to Use This Protocol

The intent of this program is to:

- set a baseline of good behavioral interaction between the human and the dog and
- teach the dog that if he consistently is calm, quiet, attentive, and defers to his people, instruction, attention, and rewards will follow. In turn, the people learn to have realistic expectations for their pet and to signal clearly, calmly, and kindly to their pet.

This protocol also gives you permission to **not** be angry at your dog—instead, you can walk away. To have a great relationship with your pet you do **not** have to control his every move. The best dog–human relationships are the ones where clear signaling is involved—and good play almost guarantees this—and ones where both the dog's and human's needs are respected and met.

These goals must be accomplished in a safe, kind, passive manner, which is harder than most people realize.

If you are talking, reading, or watching TV and your dog comes to you and rubs, paws, or leans against you, you likely usually passively reach out and touch or pet the dog without asking the dog to sit and look at you first. The dog "controlled" the situation and got a response that rewarded him for pesky behaviors. The human was not aware of the association the dog made.

People have traditionally viewed such interactions as "contests": "dog, 1; human, 0." This is an adversarial translation of what really happened and it hides all the important information we need to have. Simply, if the dog is uncertain, anxious, concerned, or worried about the rules of the interaction, getting attention from people in a context of concern and anxiety makes that anxiety worse because it is passively reinforced (See Box 1 for a listing of behaviors that are associated with anxiety in dogs). By attending to the dog and asking him to defer to you by sitting when he requests attention, you have avoided accidentally rewarding problematic behaviors and ensured that you reward calm ones.

BOX 1

Nonspecific Signs of Anxiety

- Urination
- Defecation
- Anal sac expression
- Panting*
- Increased respiration and heart rates
- Trembling/shaking*
- Muscle rigidity (usually with tremors)
- Lip licking
- Nose licking
- Grimace (retraction of lips)
- Head shaking
- Smacking or popping lips/jaws together
- Salivation/hypersalivation
- Vocalization (excessive and/or out of context)
  - Frequently repetitive sounds, including high pitched whines,* like those associated with isolation
- Yawning
- Immobility/freezing or profoundly decreased activity*
- Pacing and profoundly increased activity*
- Hiding or hiding attempts
- Escaping or escape attempts
- Body language of social disengagement (turning head or body away from signaler)
- Lowering of head and neck
- Inability to meet a direct gaze
- Staring at some middle distance
- Body posture lower (in fear, the body is extremely lowered and tail tucked)
- Ears lowered and possibly droopy because of changes in facial muscle tone
- Mydriasis
- Scanning
- Hyper-vigilance/hyper-alertness (may only be noticed when touching or interrupting a dog or cat; they may hyper-react to stimuli that otherwise would not elicit this reaction)
- Shifting legs
- Lifting paw in an intention movement
- Increased closeness to preferred associates
- Decreased closeness to preferred associates
- Profound alterations in eating and drinking (acute stress is usually associated with decreases in appetite and thirst, chronic stress is often associated with increases)
- Increased grooming, possibly with self-mutilation
- Decreased grooming
- Possible appearance of ritualized or repetitive activities
- Changes in other behaviors including increased reactivity and increased aggressiveness (may be non-specific)*

**The most commonly recognized signs of anxiety identified via questionnaire by clients.*

This exercise is simple but the mindfulness involved is not.

Humans need to understand that they are **always** signaling to the dog whether they intend to or not and that dogs read nonverbal signaling better than people do. Given this, you must assess if your response is rewarding the particular behavior that you think it is. Here's a hint: if the dog is getting peskier or more worried, you are not reading the signaling situation correctly. You can re-set the social situation and ensure that you are correctly understanding it and providing helpful information, if you ask the dog to sit for just a second and look at you. The dog will understand that you are clarifying the signals for him. In fact, dogs do this, themselves, when among other dogs.

In this program, under no circumstance can you touch, love, or otherwise interact with your dog unless your dog is attending to you, sits, and deferentially awaits attention. *This is not about "control," "leadership," or "mastery" of the dog—it's about increasing the chance that you can signal clearly to the dog, that you have the dog's undivided attention while signaling, and that you are actually rewarding the behaviors that you desire.* Because dogs naturally defer to other dogs by sitting or lying down and looking at them, we can have them defer to us and be ready to take their cues from our signals by having the dog sit. Both dogs and humans may need to learn how to do all of this. Once everyone knows the rules, dogs will come to a human, sit quietly and receive love or instructions and all of this will take place within seconds. Dogs and humans who comply with this protocol generally interact more, have more fun and have a better relationship than those who do not use the protocol. In fact, you will find that your dog initiates more interactions and seeks to interact with you in more contexts.

Some simple guidance:

- The *sit* does not have to be and should not be prolonged. It can be as short as seconds as long as the dog's bottom is on the ground and the dog is looking quietly at the person. Even a wiggling 5-week-old puppy can sit—butt flush to the ground for a few seconds—and look at you. Puppies can even learn to sit and attend to you (look at you for cues, make eye contact, look happy and attentive while being quiet) in exchange for a food treat. As soon as the puppy sits, say "Good girl (boy)!" and give a tiny treat of something special.
- "Special" means that the treat is not something they get every day. "Treat-only" dog biscuits, tiny pieces of cheese, dried chicken, a tiny dab of cream cheese, et cetera will interest most dogs and signal that something special and good is coming up. The currency for dogs is access to you and your love. Treats can be a physical manifestation of love. As soon as the puppy's bottom is on the ground, praise and pet the pup, tell him he is brilliant, and give the treat.

For a dog who already knows how to sit the only problem is going to be reinforcing sitting while being calm for **everything** that the dog wants.

The Rule

The dog must sit and be quiet and—this is the essential part—look to you and attend to you for cues about whether her behavior is appropriate, in order to have access to **anything** and **everything** she wants for the rest of her life! This includes sitting for:

- food and feeding,
- treats,
- love,
- grooming,
- being able to go out—and come in,
- having the leash, halter, or harness put on,
- having her feet toweled,
- being **invited** onto the bed or sofa (if desired),
- playing games,
- playing with toys,
- having a tick removed,
- having a wound checked,
- being petted or loved,
- attention, and
- anything!

Remember, the dog must sit long enough to obtain the information she needs or to accomplish the task. Sitting by the door may be short; sitting to remove a tick will be longer.

If the dog is older or arthritic, she might be more comfortable lying down. The point is to cease being in motion and to calmly attend to the human for information.

Remember that you minimize the chance of miscommunication if each side is attending to the other. Sitting calmly allows the dog to do this.

The **Protocol for Deference** provides dogs with a rule that allows them to seek, and then take, guidance and help. *All* dogs should learn this and *no* dog is too old to learn this.

Using the **Protocol for Deference** *will not* take away a dog's spunk, fire, or individuality. It *will* allow you to have a far better relationship with the dog and to modulate any behaviors you view as problematic, while protecting the dog. This good relationship is critical if the dog is about to put himself in a potentially injurious position, like jumping out of the car in a parking lot. Also, people notice that when they don't have to struggle with the dog to get into or out of the house, when they don't get mauled while feeding the dog, and when they can regain their space on the sofa or bed just by asking the dog to come to them and sit, life with dogs is pleasurable, instead of a struggle.

What do deferential behaviors and the **Protocol for Deference** do to treat or prevent problem behaviors?

- Sitting and deferring for everything the dog wants, forever, reinforces the innate social structure of the dog and teaches him to look to his people for cues about the appropriateness of his or her behavior. You must respond by giving the dog your quiet, undivided attention and providing the information he needs or requests.
- Deferential behaviors can act as a form of mini "time out": they give the dog respite from a situation so that it does not have to get worse. The dog can learn that if he responds to a person's request to sit, that the person will help him or her decide what the next best behavior is. This is a great relief to dogs that are anxious about appropriate responses (i.e., many dogs with behavioral problems).
- Deferential behaviors allow the dog to calm down. A sitting dog is less reactive than one that is tearing around, so these behaviors allow the dog to couple a verbal cue, a behavior, and the physiological response to that behavior. All of this will have a calming effect.
- Deferential behaviors minimize the chance that any individual in the interaction is misunderstanding it, and allow the interaction to move forward in a clear and kind way.
- Deferential behaviors, when consistently reinforced, will allow the dog to anticipate what is expected. This is a very humane rule structure.

Points to Remember

- Starting immediately, the dog must ask for everything that he wants for the rest of his life, if you do not automatically anticipate the dog's wishes and needs. The dog does this by quietly sitting and staying for a few moments while looking to you for information (deferring to you). The important part here is the quiet, receptive attention to you. Sitting is helpful because it acts as a "stop" signal.
- The dog is requested to sit by using his name and then saying "Sit." The dog's name and a request to sit can be repeated every 3 to 5 seconds as needed. This is not an obedience class exercise—by using the dog's name and repeating your request if the dog is paying attention to you, you will reassure and refocus an anxious dog. Please do not think that if the dog does not comply with your every wish instantaneously that he is being "defiant"—*your relationship with your pet does not have to and shouldn't be an adversarial one*—the dog may just need time to become calm enough to sit, or the dog may be confused about what you really want because of past interactions. Some dogs are so shocked that they can actually be praised for just sitting and being calm that the idea takes a little getting used to. *Give the dog the mental space he needs to attend to and respond to you.*
- If the dog resists or refuses to comply or acts confused or anxious—***walk away from the dog.*** The dog will eventually follow you. When the dog appears or demands attention, ask him to sit as prescribed above. If the dog resists—***walk away from the dog.*** Sooner or later this dog will try sitting—a natural canine information-gathering behavior—as a way to learn if this is what you want. You just have to outlast the dog. Do not use the dog's lack of compliance as an excuse to get angry: the dog's intent is not to make you angry—the dog may not be able to perform the request yet because of anxiety or fear. If you persist in calm, clear instructions the dog's behavior will change. Talk to concerned dogs in a calm tone that lets them know that they can sit for attention at any time.
- As soon as the dog sits, reward him with praise. A food reward will hasten the process for a dog that doesn't know how to sit. The next step is to teach the dog "stay" (see **Protocol for Teaching "Sit," "Stay," and "Come"**). Please remember that the dog must stay until released. Because the point of this protocol is to enforce deference in a way that will allow the dog to generalize being calm now to being calm in other situations, quick releases are desired. Later, if you wish, you can practice long stays and downs as part of an overall relaxation and behavior modification program (see **Protocol for Relaxation: Behavior Modification Tier 1**). The **Protocol for Relaxation** is a necessary part of the treatment program for dogs with true behavior problems.
- Watch for subtle, pushy, defiant, anxious, distressed, uncertain behaviors that the dog may exhibit. Expect that you and the dog will occasionally make mistakes—don't fight with the rest of the family about it. This will not help the dog. Remember that dogs read body language far better than you do and they are watching you all the time. They could be watching for an opportunity to escape or for a signal from you that tells them if they have to worry. Use that watchful behavior, and shape it into using more deferential behaviors. As soon as your dog can sit and look at you, you will want to add the second of the three foundation programs: **Protocol for Teaching Your Dog to Take a Deep Breath and Use Other Biofeedback Methods as Part of Relaxation.**
- Please remember that everyone in the household must be consistent and work with the dog. Children need to be monitored to ensure their safety and to help them to avoid teaching the dog the wrong behavior. Children must understand the difference between a food salary and a bribe, and **must be taught not to tease the dog.** Dangling food out in front of a dog at a distance is an invitation to get up and lunge, and very young children may not realize that they are doing this. Open, flat hands are the best way to offer food to dogs.
- Reward the dog. This should be fun for everyone.

Note the Following

- You can and should use the dog's name—this will get her to attend to you. You can use the name frequently, unlike in obedience, *as long as she is paying attention to you*. In fact, her name should be her cue to orient toward you. If she doesn't look at you immediately, put the treat near your eye. You need her to focus. If you have unintentionally taught the dog to ignore her name, you will have to start with a new verbal cue and couple it with putting the treat to your eye to get the dog to look at you for the verbal cue.
- Repeat your request after a few seconds if the dog is not paying attention to you. Again, this is not obedience—the dog needs your reassurance and may need help focusing on you. If you have taught the dog to ignore her name, the new verbal cue you have chosen may take a few repetitions for the dog to learn. As the dog improves or learns more, you will repeat their request signals less frequently and at greater intervals. This is what those who study learning call a "shaping behavior": We can learn something by gradually approximating it and being rewarded for progressively closer approximations.
- Reward the dog appropriately. Eventually, the food treats will appear less predictably. At the outset the dog needs everything you can do to help her.
- Remember to use one or two words consistently as a releaser ("All done!," "That's it!," "Bellissimo!," et cetera). Then remember that if you use those words while talking to the dog, the dog will get up, so choose words the dog is not going to hear all the time. If the dog gets up before release, ask the dog to stay and stay again, and wait 3 to 5 seconds before release. This will prevent Jack-in-the-box behavior.
- Don't expect even the best-behaved dog to be able to pay attention to you, be calm, and respond to your request if pandemonium surrounds the dog. You cannot expect dogs to be fully responsive in stressful, noisy, confusing environments unless they are specifically taught to do so, as are service dogs.

As the dog becomes more experienced and masters staying at a short distance, *gradually* increase the distance between you and the dog. ***Do not*** go from getting the dog to stay within 1 meter of you to walking across the room. The temptation for the dog to get up and follow you will be great and all you have done is to provoke conflict and anxiety in the dog. This will defeat your goal. A more detailed approach that reinforces stay is found in the **Protocol for Relaxation: Behavior Modification Tier 1.**

If you would like, you can do this on a lead, using a head collar, which may help some dogs to sit. See the handout on

head collars (**Protocol for Choosing Collars, Head Collars, and Harnesses**) before deciding to do this.

A Cautionary Word on Food Treats

Remember, the treats are to be used as a salary or reward—***not as a bribe.*** If you bribe a dog or cat you are sunk before you start. *Bribes* come *before* the dog executes the desired behavior to lure him away from an undesirable behavior; *rewards* come *in exchange* for a desirable behavior. It is often difficult to work with a problem dog that had learned to manipulate bribes, but there are creative ways around this, often involving head collars.

First, find a food that the dog likes, and that he does not usually experience. Suggestions include boiled, slivered chicken or tiny pieces of cheese. Boiled, shredded chicken can be frozen in small portions and defrosted as needed. Individually wrapped slices of cheese can be divided into tiny pieces (0.5 × 0.5 cm) suitable for behavior modification through the plastic, minimizing waste and mess. Whatever you choose, the following are guidelines:

- Foods that are high in protein *may* help induce changes in brain chemistry that help the dog to relax, so choose a protein treat over a carbohydrate one.
- Dogs should not have chocolate because it can be toxic to dogs.
- Some dogs do not do well with treats that contain artificial colors or preservatives.
- Dogs with food allergies or those taking medications that are monoamine oxidase inhibitors may have food restrictions (some cheeses, for dogs taking MAOIs = Anipryl, PrevenTics collars).
- Dog biscuits and kibble generally are not sufficiently interesting for learning new behaviors but some foods are so desirable that the dog is too stimulated by them to relax—you want something in between these two extremes.
- Treats should be tiny (less than half of a thumbnail) so that the dog or cat does not get full, fat, or bored with them.
- If the dog or cat stops responding for one kind of treat, try another.
- Do not let treats make up the bulk of the dog's diet—they need their normal, well-balanced ration.

The Reward Process

There is an art to rewarding dogs and cats with food treats. Learning to do so correctly will help the dog or cat to focus on the exercises and will keep everyone safe. If you keep prepared treats in a cup or bag behind your back, or in a treat bag at your waist, you always have easily available treats. By keeping only one or a few treats in your hand at a time you will be able to prevent dogs and cats from lunging for treats. The hand that you will use to reward your pet can then be kept behind your back so that the dog or cat doesn't stare at the food, or you can move your hand to your eye so that you can teach your pet to look at you. The food treat must be small—the focus of the pet's attention must be you, not the food. Bring your hand, with lightly closed fingers, to the dog, just under his mouth, and open your hand flat. You want to move quickly enough to ensure that your pet gets the reward a second or two after successfully completing the task, but not so fast or forcefully that you scare or threaten your pet. Animals who have been hit or beaten may need to have the food treats gently dropped in front of them at first. Otherwise, they may shy from the hand with the treat.

When first starting the **Protocol for Deference** let the cat or dog smell and taste the reward so that he knows what the currency is. If your cat or dog is too terrified to approach, you can place a small amount of the treat on the floor.

If the dog or cat is too fearful or too aggressive to look at you for any extended period of time without fleeing or lunging, you can still ask him to "look," but you have to modify how this is done. In such cases, ask them to very briefly look at you and then reward them low and off to the side so that they are not confronted by directly facing you. There are a lot of myths about whether you should look at dogs. Ultimately, you need to be able to look at your dog or cat directly—it's how all mammals best gauge trust—but "looking" is not the same as "staring." Most of us would perceive a stare as a threat.

Quick Dos and Don'ts

- **Don't** "stare down" dogs. Normal dogs will look away, anyway, if you look scary enough, troubled dogs will think you are a threat—because you are—and their anxiety or aggression will worsen.
- **Do** look at the dog or cat. Looking someone directly in the eye is the best way to ensure that you are communicating well. Looking at a dog is different than staring. When you stare you don't move your eyes, you stiffen the muscles in your face, and your pupils likely dilate. This is a threat. Looking is much more relaxed and is important for clear communication in all mammals with decent eyesight.
- If the dog or cat begins to be aggressive when you casually look at him—**do** divert or move your gaze so that you can keep him in view with your peripheral vision, while not making direct eye contact. This will often lessen any aggression. It is *always* a bad idea to try to "out stare" or "stare down" any aggressive animal.
- If you have an animal who is too worried or aggressive to look at you, raise your hand, with the treat concealed, to your forehead while saying "look" then quickly, but fluidly so that you don't startle or threaten the animal, move your hand down and to the side so that the animal has to turn their head to have the now-exposed treat.
- If the dog is really a concern or if you don't feel comfortable, after they look at you, drop the treat to their side but in front of their face so that they can still sit and see you while being rewarded. This trick requires that you have good aim. In any case, as you are rewarding the dog or cat say, "good sit" so that the praise and treat are coupled. This way the praise will later act on its own to reinforce the behavior.
- **Do not** hold treats in fingertips: this is an invitation for an accidental bite. Please don't make your dog or cat responsible for that.

All of these steps are shown on the video **Humane Behavioral Care for Dogs: Problem Prevention and Treatment**. Please watch this video.

If kittens and puppies are raised with this program most will be delights. For those who will still have problems, the problems will be readily identifiable early on, and recognized because of the change in the pet's otherwise impeccable behavior. Good luck, and enjoy your charmingly behaved companion!