



# Enhancing Human-Canine Interaction

## Understanding Body Language

Presented by Aubrey Whitten CBCC-KA

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*January 2025*



# Importance of Understanding Body Language

## 1. Enhanced Communication and Bonding

- **Clear Communication:** Recognizing and interpreting your dog's body language helps you understand what they are trying to convey... whether it's excitement, fear, anxiety, or contentment.
- **Stronger Bond:** Responding appropriately to your dog's signals fosters trust and deepens the bond between you and your dog, leading to a more fulfilling relationship.

## 2. Improved Safety and Welfare

- **Preventing Aggression:** Misunderstandings can lead to fear or aggression. By accurately reading your dog's body language, you can avoid situations that might escalate into aggression, ensuring the safety of both dogs and humans.
- **Reducing Stress:** Recognizing signs of stress or discomfort allows you to take action to alleviate these feelings, promoting your dog's overall well-being.

## 3. Effective Training and Behavior Management

- **Tailored Training:** Understanding your dog's body language enables you to tailor your training methods to their current emotional state, making training more effective and less stressful for your dog.
- **Behavioral Insight:** Insight into your dog's body language can help you identify the root causes of certain behaviors, allowing for more targeted and successful behavior modification strategies.

## 4. Enhanced Social Interactions

- **Better Dog-Dog Interactions:** By understanding body language, you can better manage your dog's interactions with other dogs, preventing conflicts and fostering positive social experiences.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Whether introducing your dog to new environments, people, or animals, reading their body language helps you make informed decisions that ensure positive outcomes.





## Dogs Communicate Differently from Humans...

Remember, they can't understand our language unless we teach them by association.

So, how do dogs communicate?...

Each dog has different body signals, postures, and behaviors that all show us their feelings. In other words, we can observe their behaviors and better determine how they might feel.

- ❖ Visual Signals, which involve body postures, facial expressions, and movements, are a primary communication method dogs use.
- ❖ Vocalizations are also meaningful and include barks, growls, whines, and other sounds that convey emotions and intentions.
- ❖ Scents and olfactory signals are vital to dogs; their noses are their best senses. Olfactory signals include scent marking, hormones, pheromones, and sniffing, urinating, and sniffing genitals—all of which are crucial in dog-to-dog communication.





Remember the  
number one rule of  
reading body  
language... take in the  
whole picture!



## Reading the Whole Body

- ❖ **Avoid Focusing on a Single Signal:** Dogs communicate using their entire bodies, so it's important not to interpret a single signal in isolation. For example, a wagging tail doesn't always mean a happy dog; depending on other body language cues, it could indicate excitement, nervousness, or even aggression.
  - ❖ Example: A dog with a wagging tail but a stiff body and bared teeth is likely displaying aggression or defensiveness, not friendliness.
- ❖ **Consider the Dog's Entire Posture and Context:** Observing the dog's overall body posture and the context of the situation provides a clearer understanding of its emotional state.
- ❖ **Combine Signals for Accurate Interpretation:** To accurately interpret a dog's emotional state and intentions, always look at the combination of signals—facial expressions, body posture, vocalizations, and the environment.



Which dog would you not approach any further?





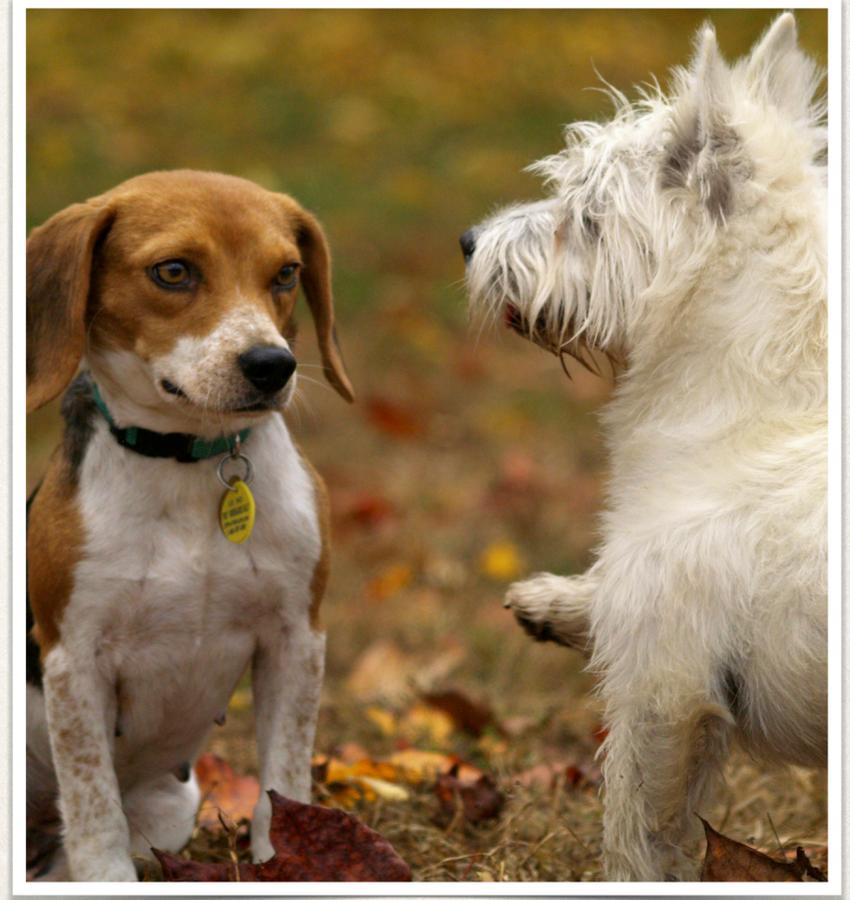
## Other Factors Influencing Canine Communication

- ❖ **Breed-Specific Traits:** Certain breeds have distinct body language due to physical characteristics and breed-specific behaviors. Physically, think of Bulldogs and their flat faces or Jindos and curly tails. Understanding these breed-specific traits can make you more knowledgeable and prepared to read body language. Differences are especially apparent if the dog has a cropped tail or ears.
- ❖ **Individual Personality:** Each dog has a unique personality that affects communication. Some people would describe this as “play style.” Humans would call it Astrology or Meyers Briggs. We all have different communication styles, and our social dogs are no different.
- ❖ **Environmental Context:** The dog’s surroundings and experiences powerfully influence its communication style. Being mindful of these factors can help you better understand your dog's behavior and respond in a way that strengthens your bond. Positive reinforcement and encouragement go a long way.

Flat faces, docked tails, cropped ears, and other variations in breed lead to communication challenges.



Each dog is a bit unique...  
What does it look like when your animal is comfortable? What does it look like when your animal is uncomfortable? Stressed? Scared? Aggressive? Tired? Sick?



## A few definitions...

**Submission** is when a dog yields or gives in to another individual by rolling over, pawing, or moving away from a resource. Dogs sometimes exhibit a “submissive grin,” in which their lips pull back into what resembles a smile.

**Dominance** typically means controlling another individual's behavior, which does not have to involve physical contact. Dominant animals may enjoy more freedom to move about in their group, and some studies have shown that they are the focus of the attention of lower-ranking individuals.

Some people claim that dogs do not display dominance, but that isn't true. However, just because dogs can dominate one another does not mean we should dominate them in training. Nor do dogs necessarily try to dominate us. A human-dog relationship is not a contest for dominance, and it's OK to let dogs go out the door first, eat first, and win when they play tug-of-war.

**Hierarchy of Social Relationships:** A hierarchy delineates social relationships (or social dominance) from high-ranking to low-ranking. There are different ways of measuring and describing these relationships, and dogs have been observed to demonstrate them all. This is often called the “pecking order” due to a researcher who studied hens. Hierarchies are considered linear or non-linear, linear being 1 dominates 2, 2 dominates 3... and non-linear being 3 dominates 2, 1 dominates 3, and 2 dominates 1. When there are nonlinear hierarchies, social interactions can become more complex and less predictable, making studying them more complicated and interesting.

-Mark Bekoff



# Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

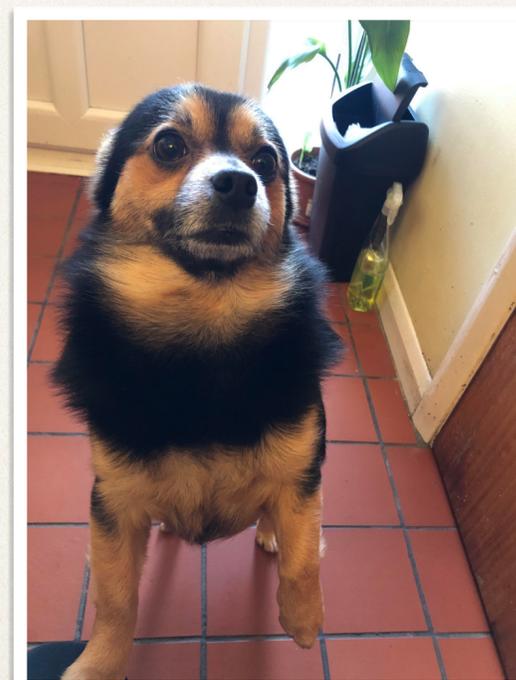
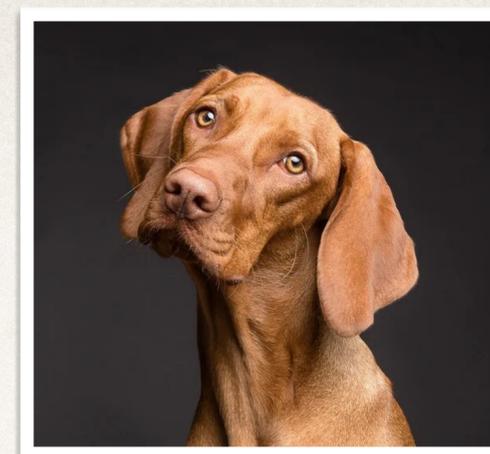
## Ear Expression

### Ears Forward: Interest or Alertness

- Ears are perked up, facing forward.
  - When a dog's ears are forward, it is typically focused on something in its environment. This could be a sound, sight, or scent that has caught its attention.
  - Example: A dog with its ears forward might be looking at someone approaching, listening to an unusual noise, or observing another animal. This position indicates curiosity or readiness to engage.

### Ears Back: Fear, Submission, or Aggression

- Ears are flattened against the head, sometimes pulled back.
  - **Fear:** When a dog is frightened, their ears return to a submissive posture. This helps protect the ears during a potential threat and indicates that the dog is not looking to confront the situation aggressively.
    - Example: A dog encountering a loud noise or an intimidating person may pin its ears back out of fear.
  - **Submission:** In a social context, ears back can signal submission, showing deference to a more dominant individual.
    - Example: A dog meeting a more dominant dog might flatten its ears to show it does not pose a threat.
  - **Aggression:** In some cases, ears back can also accompany aggressive behaviors. This is often paired with other signs such as growling, showing teeth, and a stiff body.
    - Example: A dog guarding a resource might flatten its ears while growling to warn others to stay away.





# Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

## Facial Expressions

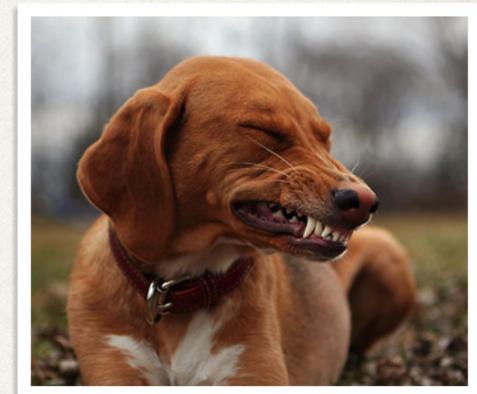
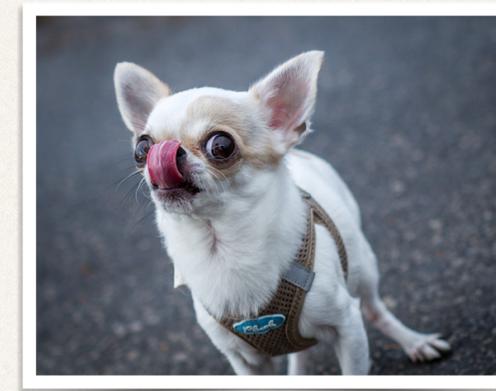
### Mouth Open, Tongue Out: Stress or Heat?

- If the dog has its mouth open, tongue out, and rapid breathing... it may be stressed, anxious, or hot.
  - Stress or Anxiety: Dogs pant when they are stressed or anxious. This can occur during vet visits, thunderstorms, or unfamiliar environments. A dog may start panting heavily in a crowded or noisy environment, indicating it feels overwhelmed.
  - Heat: Panting is a primary way dogs regulate their body temperature. If a dog is hot, it will pant to cool down.
    - Example: A dog will pant to cool itself after a vigorous play session or on a hot day.



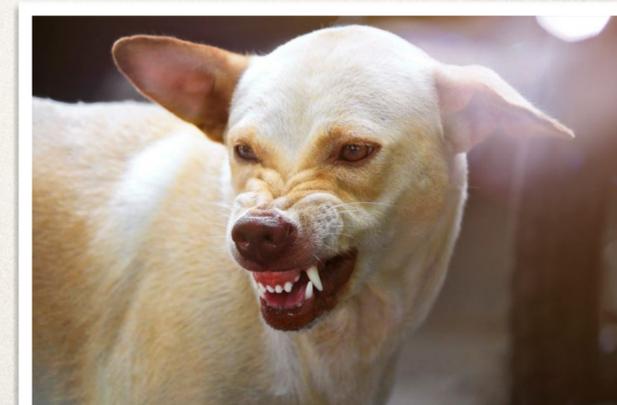
### Lip Licking: Discomfort or Appeasement?

- Physical Appearance: Quick licking of the lips or nose.
- Discomfort: Lip licking can be a sign of nervousness or discomfort. Dogs use this as a calming signal to show they are uneasy.
  - Example: During a training session, the dog might lick its lips if it feels confused or pressured.
- Appeasement: It can also be a submissive gesture to appease another dog or person, indicating peaceful intentions.
  - Example: A dog might lick its lips when approached by a more dominant dog or an unfamiliar human.



### Teeth Baring: Warning or Aggression?

- Lips pulled back, showing teeth. It can be accompanied by growling.
- Warning: Baring teeth is often a warning signal, indicating the dog feels threatened and is prepared to defend itself if necessary. It's a way to communicate "back off" without resorting to physical aggression immediately.
  - Example: A dog might show its teeth if someone tries to remove its food or toy.
- Aggression: In more severe cases, bared teeth can signal impending aggression. This is typically combined with other aggressive signals, such as a stiff body, direct stare, and growling.
  - Example: A dog guarding its territory might bare its teeth at an intruder.
- More on Submissive Grins later...

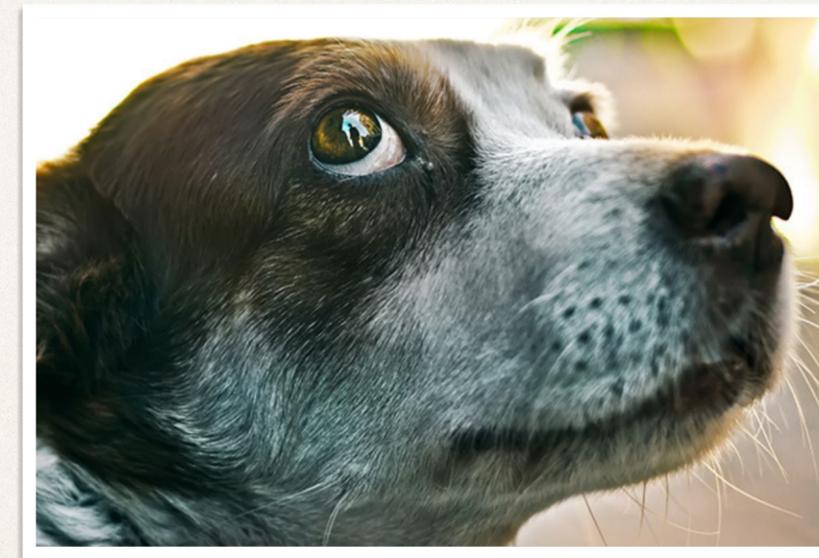
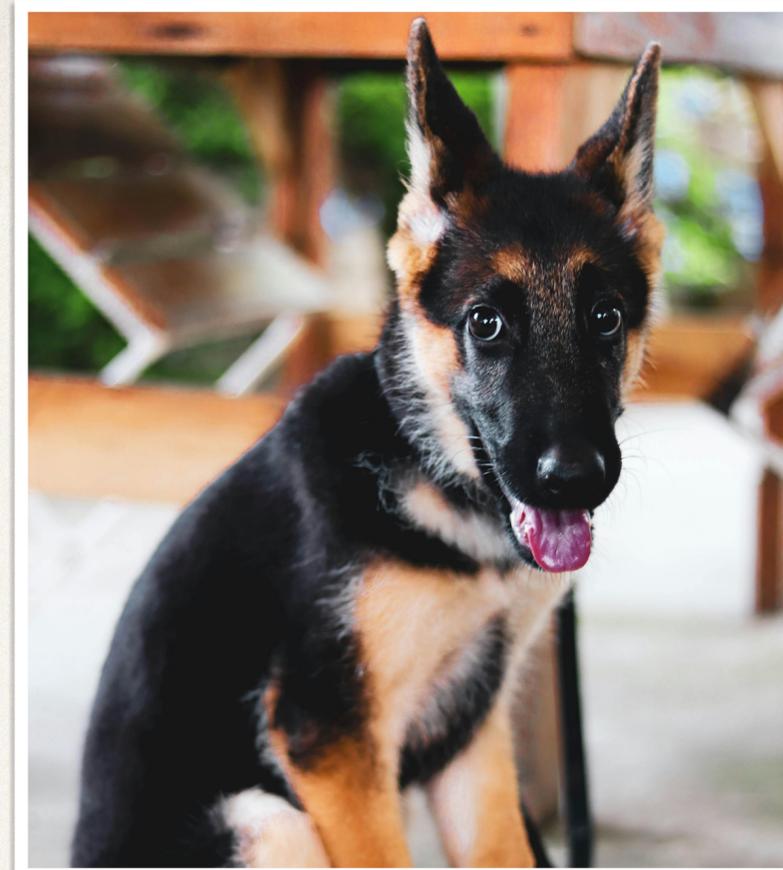




# Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

## Eyebrow and Eye Expressions

- ❖ **Eyebrows** can be positioned relaxed, neutral, or tense.
- ❖ **Soft Eyes:** They are relaxed, partially closed, or squinty—not wide. They are usually seen with relaxed facial features and no tension around the eyes. Soft eyes signify a comfortable dog in a non-threatening state or appeasement. Blinking can signify submission or relaxation. The mouth may be slightly open.
- ❖ **Hard Eyes:** Can signify a challenge or a threat. A threatening, frozen eye. Fixating.
- ❖ It is usually seen with tension in the facial muscles around the eyes and the appearance of a wrinkled or furrowed brow. (Think about what a “glare” looks like in humans.)
- ❖ Eyes may look “dialed in,” with eyebrows lowered and lower eyelids puffed. They can look like a frozen, lifeless stare. It’s hard to pinpoint what is happening in the eyes, but trainers agree they “feel it” when they “go cold.” This is always accompanied by tension in the body, and the dog is often “frozen” or moving very deliberately and slowly. It signifies stress or the threat of conflict and is a distance-increasing behavior—essentially, “Back off!”
- ❖ **Dilating Pupils:** The dark circles inside the eyes (pupils) are open wide. This indicates low light, stress, or excitement (there is a wide range here). If you notice a flash of green color in the dog's eyes, the dog is aroused. Beware of a bite! This may also happen during play.
- ❖ **White in Eye:** Also called crescent moon eye because the white in the eyes can look like a crescent. It's also called whale eye. When you see more “white” in the eye than usual, it often signifies stress or a threat, but it can appear for any or all of the following reasons:
  - ❖ The facial muscles and skin are tense, pulling the eyelids open more than normal
  - ❖ The dog may be holding its head firmly in one position (such as over a food resource it was chewing) while orienting only its eyes toward a competitive threat from an angle not directly in front of it. This white in the eye is often called “**whale eye**,” when the head is held firm but the eye follows a threat.
  - ❖ White may also appear in a dog’s eye during excitement, such as high-arousal play or when stretching to grab a treat or toy. It’s important to note the context before interpreting.





## Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

### Body Postures

- ❖ Overall Body Tension: A tense body indicates stress or aggression; a relaxed body shows calmness.
- ❖ Tail Position and Movement:
  - ❖ High Tail: Confidence or alertness
  - ❖ Low Tail: Fear or submission
  - ❖ Wagging: This is context-dependent. A wagging tail indicates arousal. It can indicate happiness, excitement, nervousness, or aggression.
- ❖ Weight Distribution and Stance:
  - ❖ Leaning Forward: Interest or aggression
  - ❖ Leaning Back: Fear or submission





## Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

### Greeting Behaviors

- ❖ Dogs have certain rituals that are “pre-programmed,” such as greetings. Most dogs know how to appropriately greet another dog if nurtured in a litter with a mother and socialized adequately with others.
- ❖ Mutual sniffing is the most commonly seen greeting behavior. This includes dogs sniffing each other’s muzzles, butts, and genital areas.
- ❖ Generally, dogs like to meander towards each other, collecting information all along the way - and begin with a light butt sniff before moving on to other areas. A dog approaching fast and to the face can be considered threatening, rude, and unwanted. Let’s look at several different behaviors that are common to greetings.

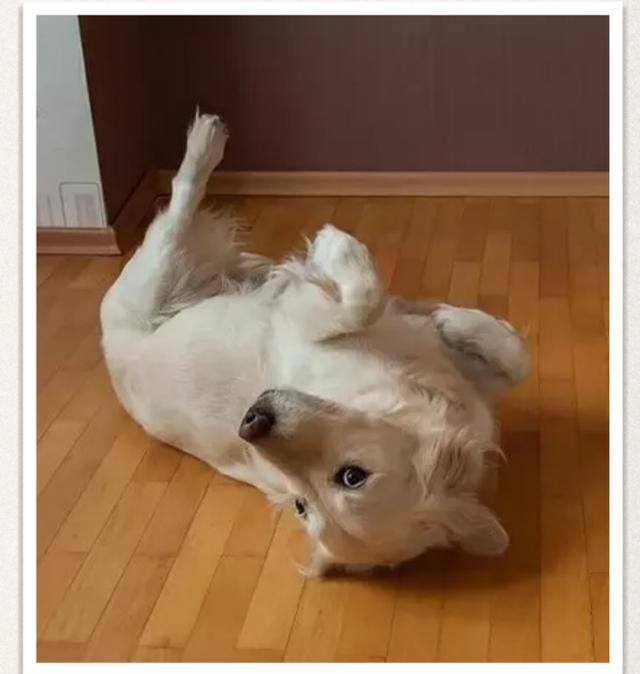
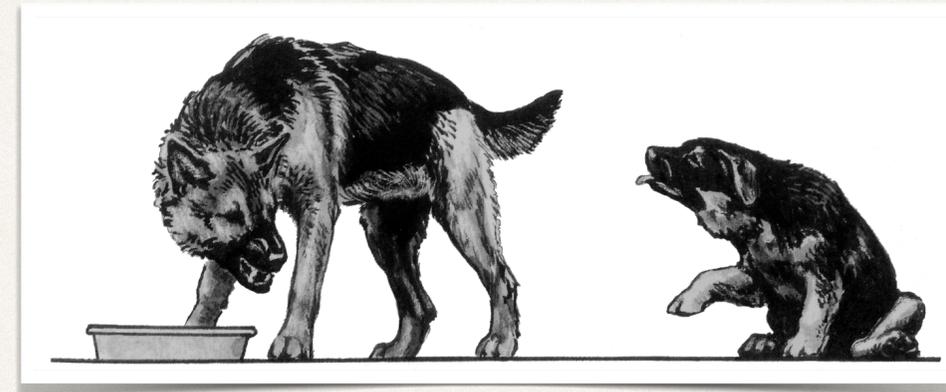




# Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

## Appeasement and Submission

- ❖ Appeasement behaviors are similar to calming signals, such as telling the other dog, “Don’t be aggressive; I mean no harm; let’s be peaceful.”
- ❖ Appeasement signals help dogs stay out of conflict.
- ❖ Upon greeting, a dog that gives an appeasement signal defers status or control to the other dog they are meeting.
- ❖ Appeasement behaviors are also known as pacifying behaviors.
- ❖ Submissive behavior is very similar to appeasement behavior. Technically, the difference is that appeasement is designed to *prevent* an aggressive act before it starts. In contrast, submission is shown to a dog acting aggressively to “turn off” the aggression. If one dog threatens and the other presents a submissive behavior (such as lowering its head or rolling on its back), the threatening dog will likely be calmed, and the situation will be defused.
- ❖ Examples of common appeasement behaviors:
  - ❖ Lowering head or body
  - ❖ Averting gaze
  - ❖ Ears back
  - ❖ Tongue flick
  - ❖ Wagging tail
  - ❖ Rolling on back



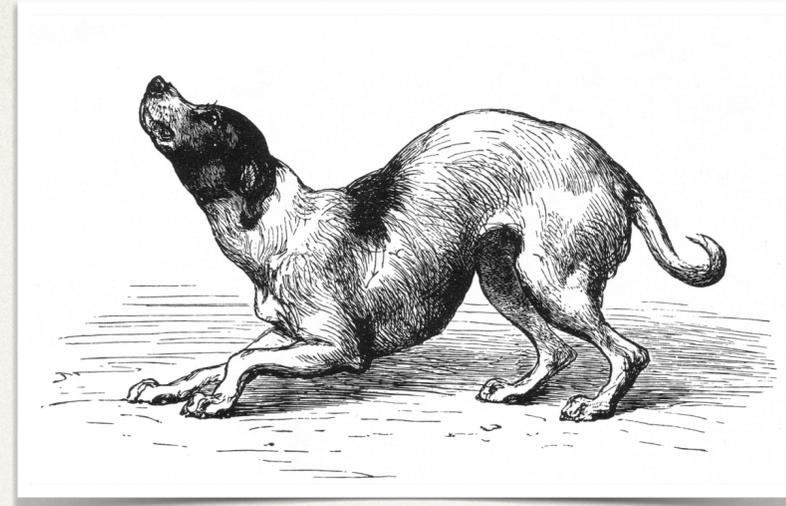


# Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

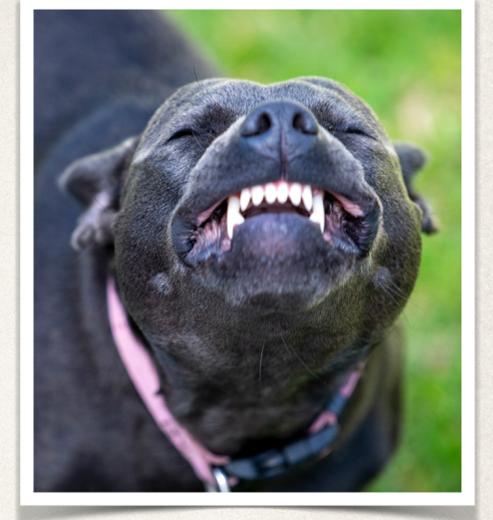
## A Note on “Fear” and “Submissive” Behaviors

- ❖ A submissive grin is when a dog pulls up their front lips to reveal their front teeth. This is often misinterpreted as a threatening snarl. However, a submissive grin is the opposite of a snarl. It is usually accompanied by other body language, such as being on its back, squinty eyes, ears back, lowered head or body, and a dropped tail.
- ❖ Sometimes, a dog may show a submissive grin but still have hard eyes or some other sign of stress, making it hard to tell whether they are snarling. They are attempting to prevent further escalation! As always, use the overall picture of the body and the context of the situation to determine whether it makes sense for the dog to be submissive or snarly.
- ❖ **Submissive urination** is often confused with a house-training mistake. It is not. Submissive urination is a *communication signal* where the dog is actually “being polite” or is afraid... they are saying, “I mean no harm; let’s be peaceful.”
- ❖ Unfortunately, many owners make the problems worse by being loud or physically threatening, which makes the dog even more fearful and more sensitive to having the behavior triggered again in the future. Sensitive dogs may submissively urinate at the slightest trigger, such as a hand approaching their head to pet them. You must be incredibly gentle.
- ❖ The words “submissive” or “submission” are commonly misused and confused with FEAR. If a dog is cowering, lowering themselves, ducking away, etc... they are likely AFRAID.

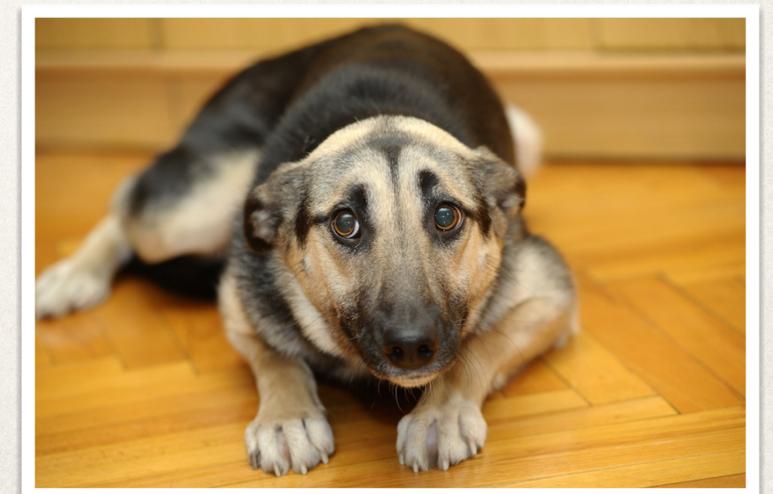
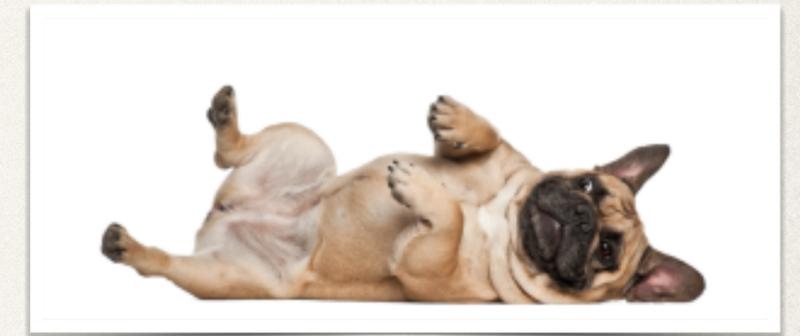
Fear



Submissive Grin



Fear



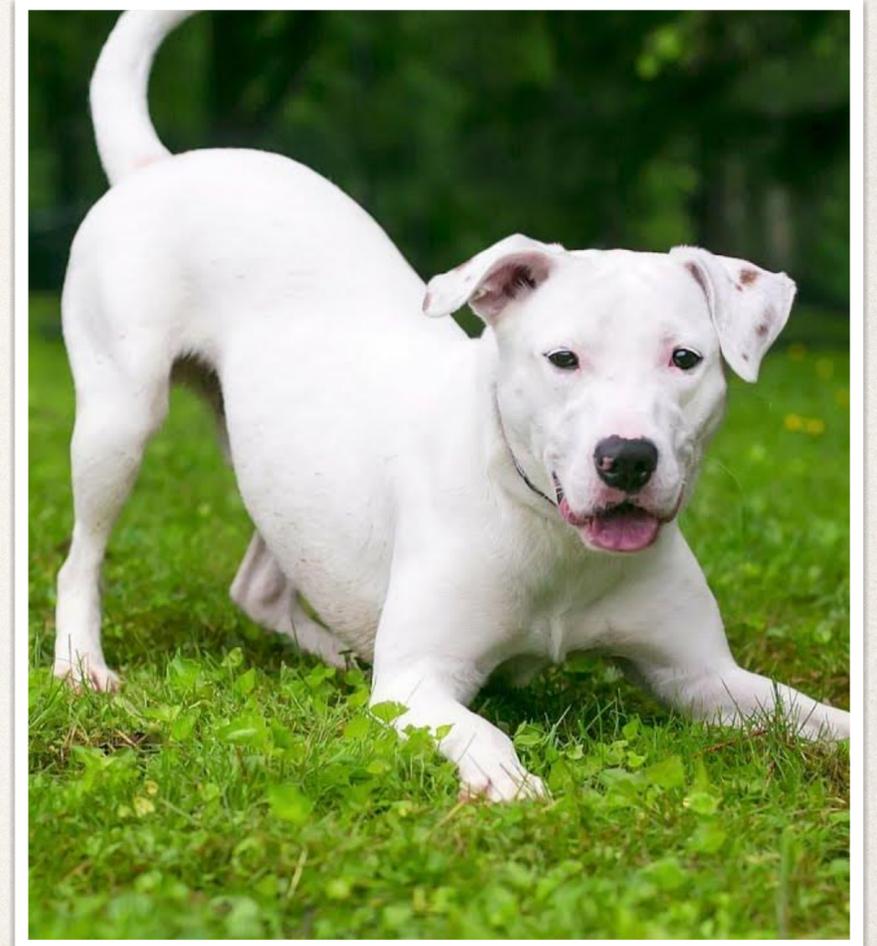
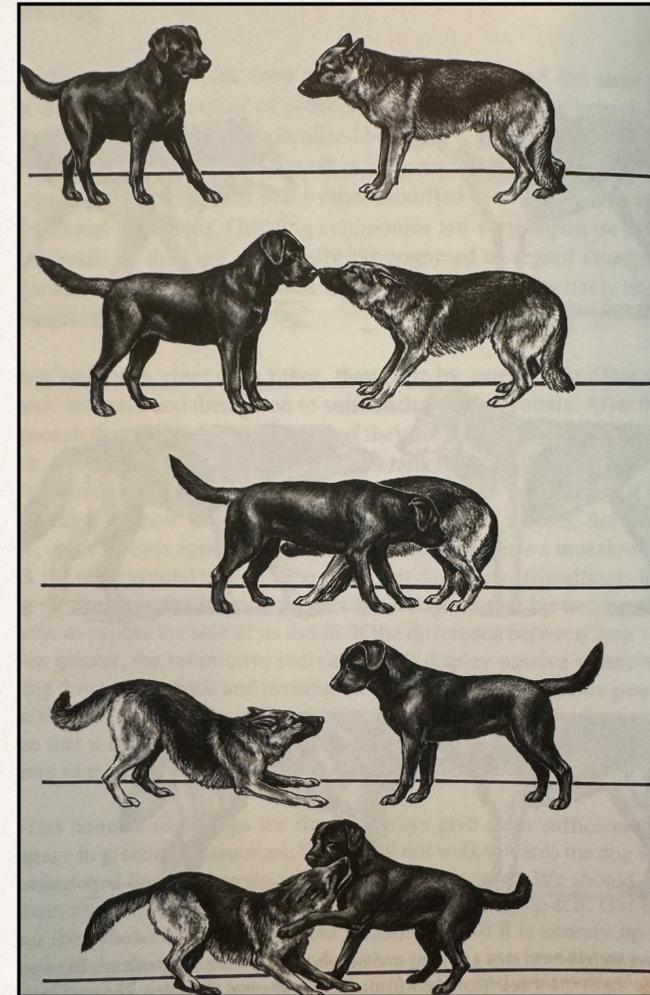


## Key Visual Signals and Their Meanings

### Play-Soliciting Signals

- ❖ Play-soliciting signals foster cooperation between players so that each responds to the other in a way consistent with play and different from the responses that the same actions would elicit in other contexts. The difference between an aggressive and playful movement is naturally described in terms of one animal's intention and another animal's appreciation of the intention. The play signal can be viewed as altering the meaning of a signal by establishing (or maintaining) a "play mood."
- ❖ **The universal play signal is a bow.**

— Mark Beckoff 1975





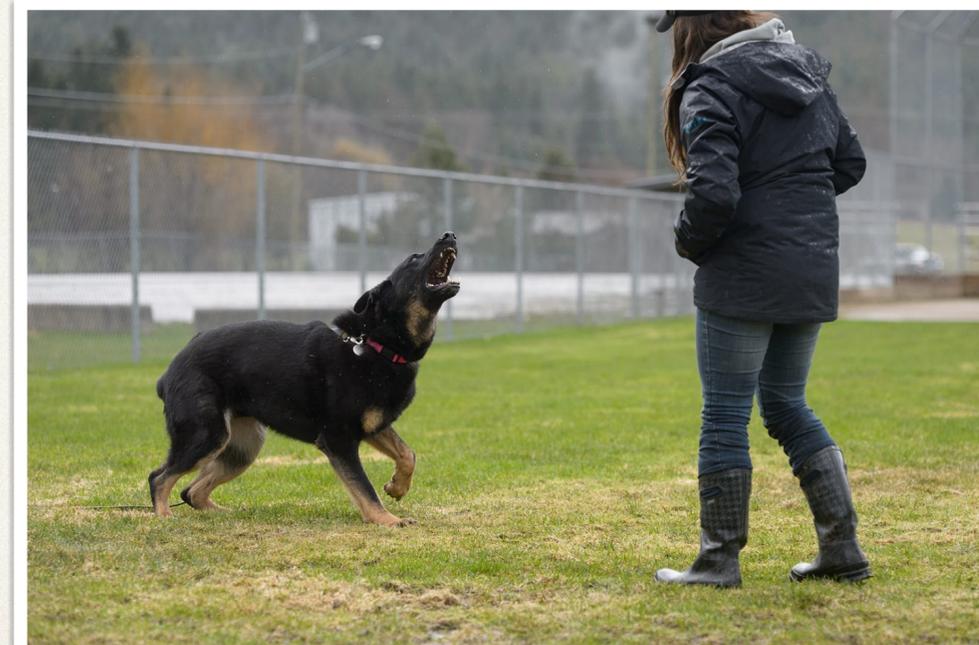
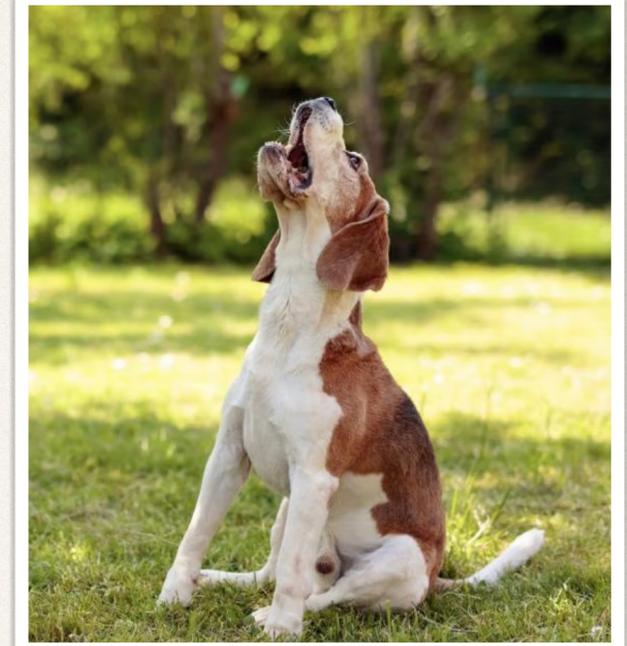
# Analyzing Vocalizations

## Types of Vocalizations (barking, whining, growling)

- ❖ Alert Barking: Short, sharp barks indicating something unusual.
- ❖ Play Barking: Higher-pitched, often repetitive.
- ❖ Demand Barking: Persistent, aimed at getting attention or something desired.
- ❖ Growling: Warning or sign of discomfort.
- ❖ Whining and Whimpering: Indicates distress, fear, or desire for attention.

## Interpretation of Vocal Signals

- ❖ Pitch, Duration, and Frequency: A higher pitch can indicate excitement or fear, while a lower pitch can signal threat or aggression.
- ❖ Context and Accompanying Body Language: Consider the situation and the dog's body language to interpret vocalizations accurately.





# Olfactory Communication

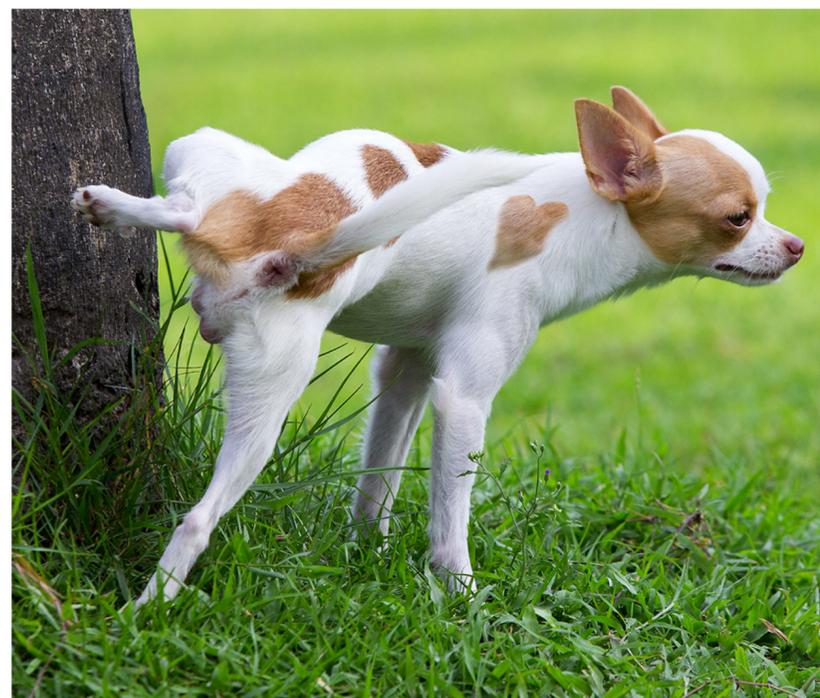
## The Role of Scent

### Scent Marking

- ❖ **Urine:** Dogs frequently use urine to mark their territory. This behavior conveys a range of information, including the dog's identity, reproductive status, and territorial boundaries. Urine marking can occur during walks or in areas the dog frequents.
- ❖ **Feces:** Similar to urine, feces can also carry significant olfactory information. The placement of feces can be strategic, often left in prominent locations to maximize the spread of the scent.
- ❖ **Glandular Secretions:** Dogs have specialized glands, such as the apocrine glands, that produce unique scents. These glands are located in various parts of the body, including the paws, ears, and anal region. Glandular secretions help convey additional information about the dog's physiological and emotional state.

### Skin and Fur Scent

- ❖ **Individual Scent Profile:** Dogs have a unique scent that emanates from their skin and fur. Various factors influence this scent, including diet, health, and environment.
- ❖ **Recognition:** Other dogs can recognize individuals by skin and fur scent, crucial in social interactions and pack dynamics. This scent profile helps dogs identify family members, friends, and strangers.
- **Recognizing Scent Marking Behavior**
  - **Significance of Sniffing:** Dogs spend significant time sniffing during walks. This behavior explores the environment and gathers social information from scent marks other dogs leave, essential for your dog's mental health.
  - **Understanding Marking:** Recognizing the importance of scent marking and sniffing can help owners better understand their dog's behavior. For example, allowing a dog to sniff thoroughly during walks can be mentally stimulating and fulfilling for the dog, reducing stress and promoting well-being.





# Olfactory Communication

## The Role of Scent

### Defecation

- ❖ Dogs often mark their territories by defecating. Defecation contains odor particles that dogs can identify. Some dogs take the trouble potty in prominent places so others cannot avoid detecting it. This behavior is seen in males, especially ones who tend to show more dominant behaviors in social situations. Dogs develop preferences for location and surfaces when going to the bathroom (part of why potty training is necessary).



### Anal Gland Secretions

- ❖ **Function:** Anal glands, located on either side of a dog's anus, release secretions during defecation. These secretions carry a distinct scent profile unique to each dog.
- ❖ **Communication:** These scents are crucial for canine communication, serving as an olfactory business card that provides information about the dog's health, diet, and identity. Dogs often sniff each other's anal glands during greetings to gather this information.
- ❖ **Fear Response:** Anal glands may also release secretions when a dog is frightened, further communicating their emotional state to others.





# The Contextual Interpretation of Signals

## Situational Analysis

### 1. Environmental Factors

- ❖ **New Places:** Unfamiliar environments can be overwhelming for dogs. They may exhibit stress signals such as panting, pacing, or freezing. Observing how a dog navigates a new place can give insights into their comfort level and adaptability.
  - ❖ Example: A dog visiting a park for the first time might sniff extensively to gather information and display cautious behavior, such as moving slowly or staying close to their owner.
- ❖ **Loud Noises:** Sudden or loud noises (like fireworks, thunderstorms, or construction sounds) can trigger fear or anxiety in dogs. Recognizing signs of auditory stress (e.g., ears back, trembling, seeking a hiding place) helps provide comfort and security.
  - ❖ Example: During a thunderstorm, a dog might start shaking and try to hide under furniture, indicating that it is frightened by the loud noise.
- ❖ **Other Animals:** The presence of other animals can significantly influence a dog's behavior. This can range from excitement and curiosity to fear or aggression. Understanding a dog's social signals when interacting with other animals is crucial.
  - ❖ Example: A dog might become stiff and alert when encountering a strange dog, indicating uncertainty or potential aggressive behaviors.



### 2. Previous Experiences

- ❖ **Past Trauma:** Dogs that have experienced trauma may have heightened sensitivity to certain stimuli, resulting in exaggerated stress or fear responses. Recognizing these triggers and providing a safe, reassuring environment is essential.
  - ❖ Example: A dog that another dog previously attacked might react aggressively or fearfully when approached by new dogs.
- ❖ **Positive Experiences:** Conversely, positive past experiences can lead to more relaxed and confident behavior in similar future situations. Reinforcing positive interactions helps build resilience and trust.
  - ❖ For example, a dog that has had positive experiences at the vet might approach the clinic with curiosity rather than fear.





# Let's talk about stress, baby...

## Key Stress Signals

### 1. Body Posture and Movement

- **Tense Muscles:** Overall body stiffness and tension.
- **Cowering:** Lowering the body, crouching, or attempting to make themselves appear smaller.
- **Freezing:** Sudden immobility, often in response to a perceived threat.
- **Pacing:** Repetitive walking back and forth.
- **Shaking or Trembling:** Physical shaking similar to a cold shiver.

### 2. Facial Expressions

- **Ears Back:** Flattened against the head, indicating fear or submission.
- **Dilated Pupils:** Enlarged pupils can signify stress or fear.
- **Whale Eye:** The whites of the eyes are visible, often from the side.
- **Yawning:** Repeated yawning when not tired, a common stress signal.

### 3. Mouth and Vocalizations

- **Panting:** Rapid breathing, often with the mouth open and tongue out.
- **Lip Licking:** Quick licking of the lips or nose.
- **Drooling:** Excessive salivation without apparent cause (e.g., food).
- **Whining or Whimpering:** High-pitched vocalizations indicating discomfort.
- **Barking:** Increased frequency or intensity of barking, often with a higher pitch.

### 4. Tail Signals

- **Tucked Tail:** Tail held low or between the legs.
- **Stiff Tail:** Rigid and still, indicating high alert or fear.





## Warning Signs

From a Polite Request to a Serious Warning

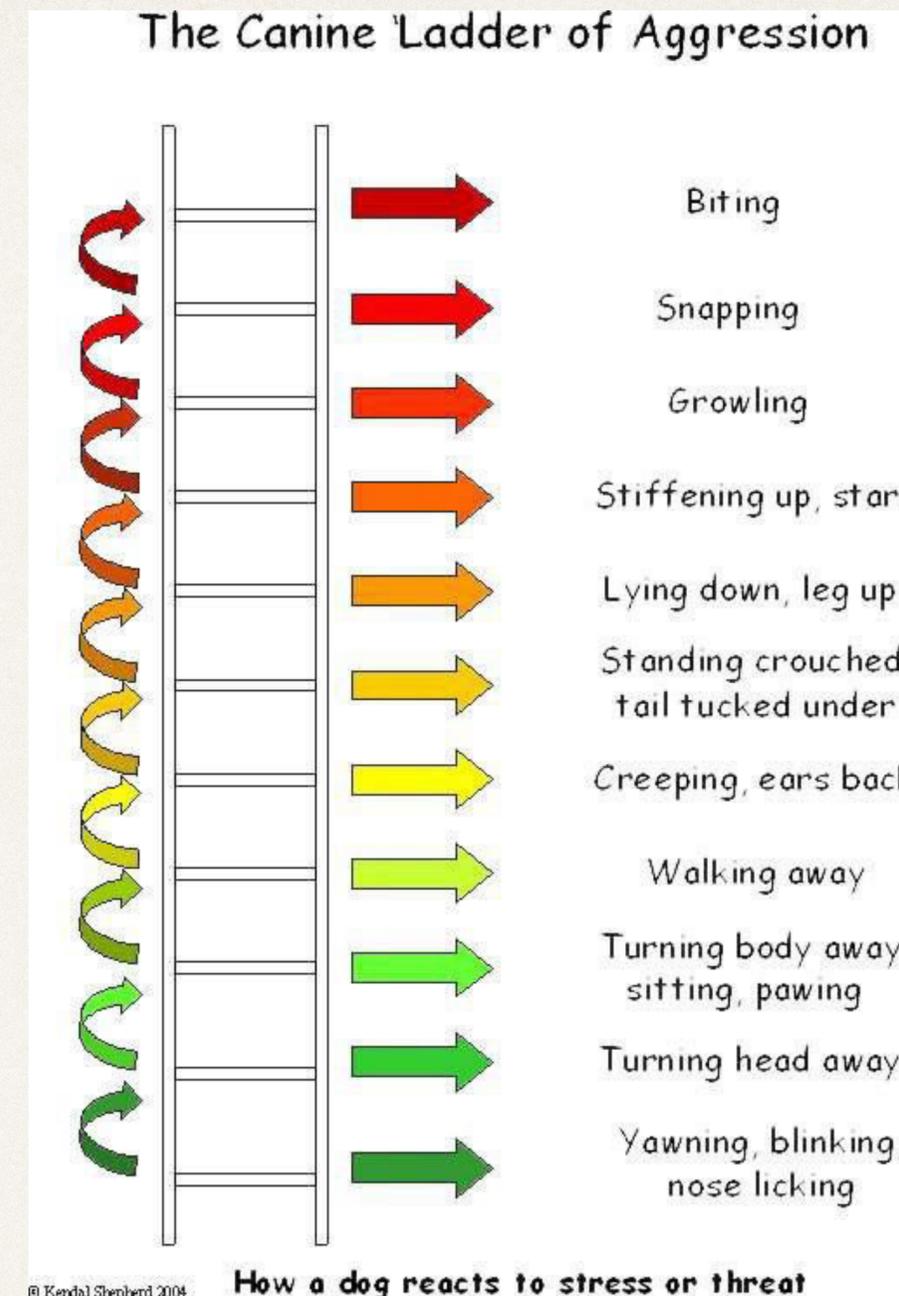
**Polite Request for Distance:** Air-licking, blinking, pawing, yawning, head avoidance

**Urgent Request for Distance:** Ears back, lying down, walking away

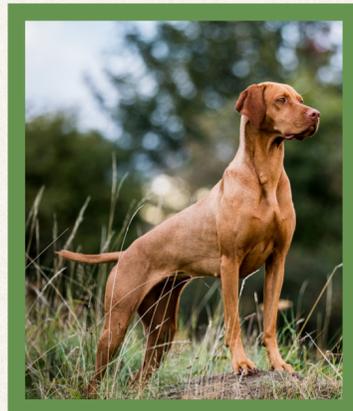
**Rising Stress:** Crouching, tucked tail, freezing

**First Stages of Warning:** Freezing, stillness, fixating with a hard eye, closed mouth.

**Clear Threat to Escalation:** Growling, showing teeth, snapping, biting.



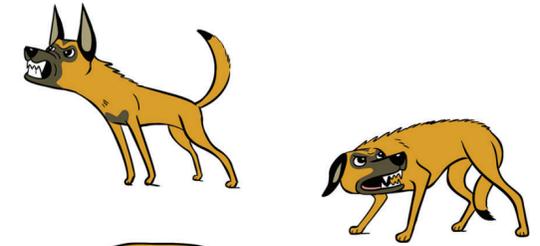
# The Spectrum of Fear, Anxiety, and Stress (FAS)



## THE SPECTRUM OF FEAR, ANXIETY & STRESS

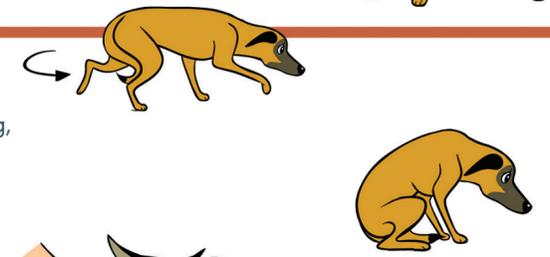
### RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FIGHT/AGGRESSION (FAS 5)

- Offensive aggression: lunging forward, ears forward, tail up, hair may be up on the shoulders, rump, and tail, showing only the front teeth, lip pucker - lips pulled forward, tongue tight and thin, pupils possibly dilated or constricted.
- Defensive aggression: hair may be up on the back and rump, dilated pupils, direct eye contact, showing all teeth including molars, body crouched and retreating, tail tucked, ears back.



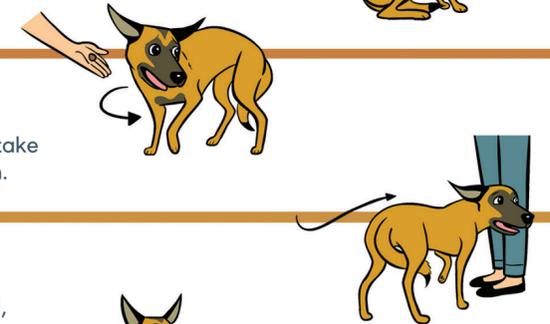
### RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FLIGHT/FREEZE/FRET (FAS 4)

- Flight: ears back, tail tucked, actively trying to escape - slinking away or running, mouth closed or excessive panting - tongue tight instead of loose out of mouth, showing whites of eyes, brow furrowed, pupils dilated.
- Freeze/Fret: tonic immobility, pupils dilated, increased respiratory rate, trembling, tense closed mouth, ears back, tail tucked, body hunched.



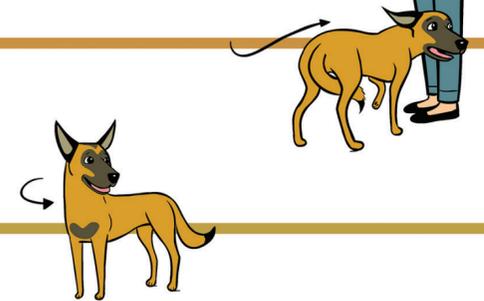
### YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 3)

- Similar to FAS 2 but turning head away, may refuse treats for brief moments or take treats roughly, may be hesitant to interact but not completely avoiding interaction.



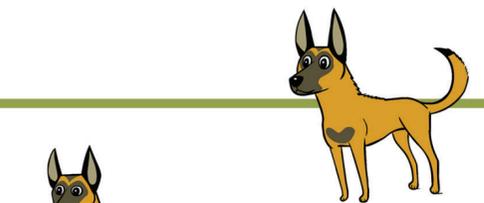
### YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 2)

- Ears slightly back or to the side, tail down but not necessarily completely tucked, furrowed brow, slow movements or unable to settle, fidgeting, attention seeking to owner, panting with a tighter mouth, moderate pupil dilation.



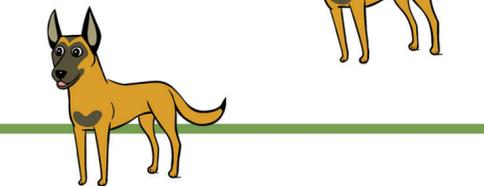
### GREEN: MILD/SUBTLE SIGNS (FAS 1)

- Lip licking, avoids eye contact, turns head away without moving away, lifts paw, partially dilated pupils, slight panting but commissures of lips are relaxed.



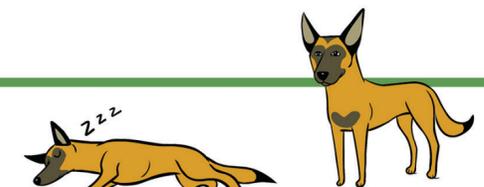
### GREEN: ALERT/EXCITED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Tail up higher, looking directly, mouth closed, eyes more intense, more pupil dilation, brow tense, hair may be just slightly up on the back and tail, may be expectant and excited or highly aroused.



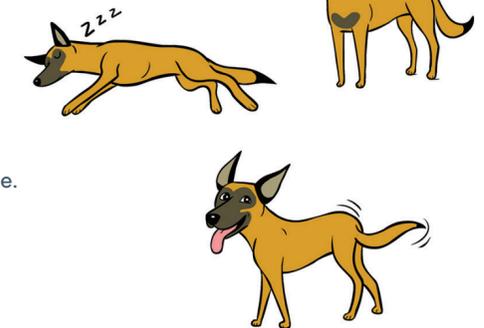
### GREEN: PERKED/INTERESTED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Looking directly but not intensely, tail up slightly, mouth open slightly but loose lips, ears perked forward, slight pupil dilation.



### GREEN: RELAXED (FAS 0)

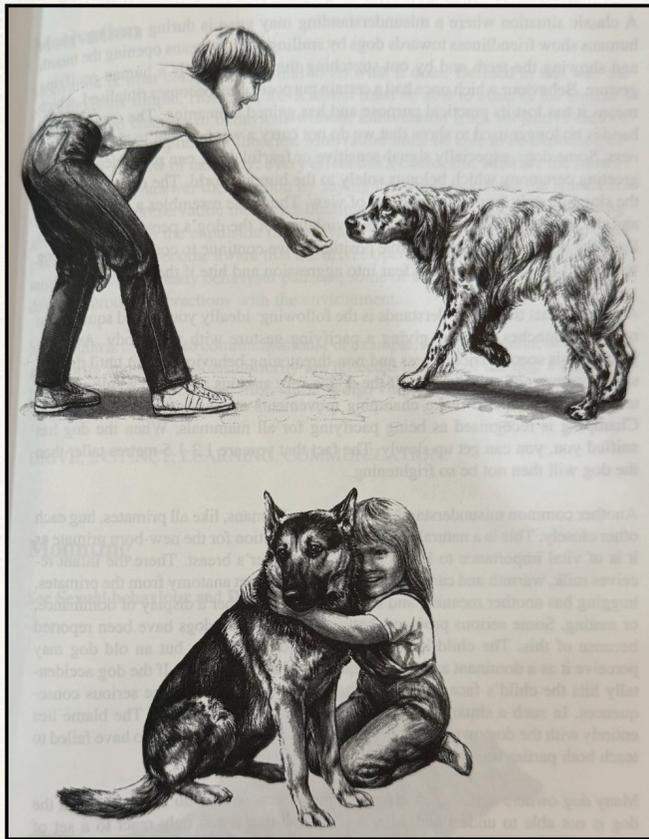
- Sleeping.
- Neutral: ears in neutral position, not perked forward, brow soft, eyes soft, mouth closed but lips relaxed, body loose, tail carriage neutral, pupils normal dilation.
- Friendly greeting: slow back and forth tail and butt wag, ears just slightly back, relaxed brow and eyes, may have mouth slightly open with relaxed lips and loose tongue.





# Misunderstandings between Human and Dog

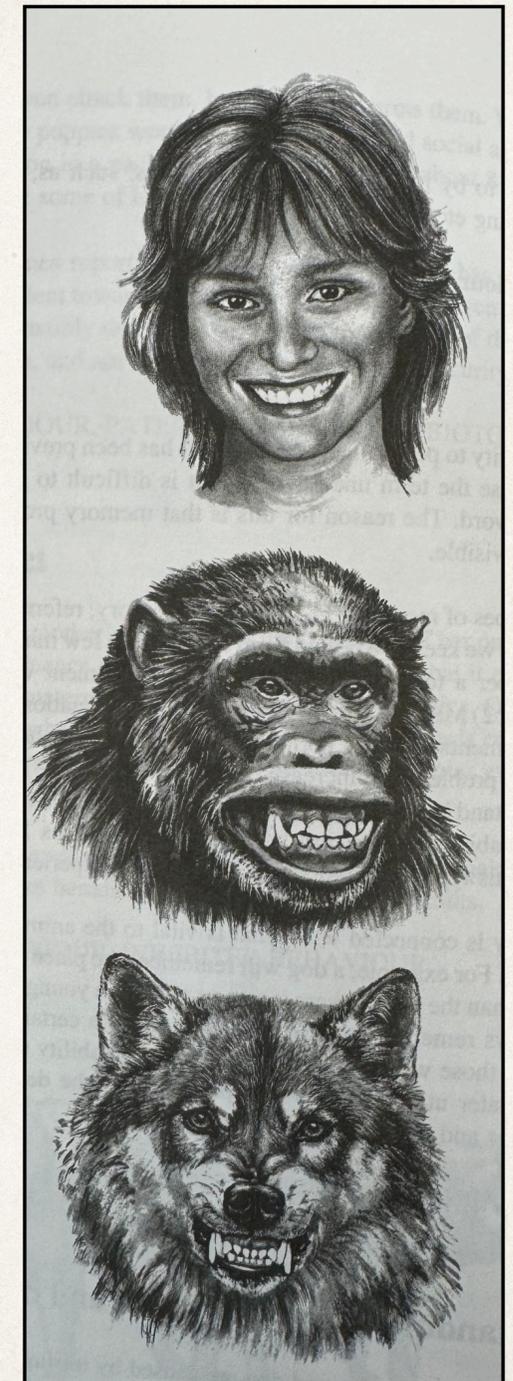
## Kids and Dogs



Both attitudes shown by the children in the above illustration are typical human expressions of friendliness. However, they can also be potentially dangerous when the dogs do not understand their meaning. In the upper illustration, the boy decreases the distance separating him from the fearful dog, which is trying to increase the same distance. In the lower illustration, hugging—an expression of affection in humans—may be misinterpreted as dominance, with subsequent catastrophic consequences.

## Variations across Species

When different animals use similar expressions, misunderstandings are likely. The human smile shows friendliness, the chimpanzee shows fear, and the wolf expresses aggression.





## A Kiss to Dismiss

**Is your dog really saying, “no thanks?”**

Dogs are constantly communicating in subtle ways. We must learn what they are communicating and do our best to help them feel comfortable. The more we receive the subtle signals, the less our dogs will resort to escalating to growls and bites. So the next time you observe your dog lick someone in the face, ask yourself, is it a kiss or might it be a dismissal? If it is a kiss or a dismissal.





# Anthropomorphism

## Attributing “Human” Characteristics to Animals

Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics to animals. We must beware of anthropomorphism, as it can lead to misunderstandings of animal behavior and the formulation of incorrect hypotheses.

On that note, a wealth of new research on canine cognition and emotion is fascinating. As an incredibly social species, dogs form social hierarchies and experience many emotions, including happiness, joy, sadness, and despair. There is no such thing as an “alpha” dog. “Alpha” is a completely misunderstood and misused word in canine behavior. A dog can, however, be dominant or submissive in a particular context or over a resource.

We also must remember that dogs live at the moment and do not have a conscience; they do not know our “right” from “wrong.” Dogs react and behave in the present with all the information they have collected over time and in the present environment.





# The Culture Clash (Jean Donaldson)

## The "Disney Dog" vs. Behaviorism

- ❖ The Disney & Lassie Myths are hurting dogs. There are no perfect dogs. Dogs are individuals.
- ❖ A dog's intelligence is about that of a human toddler at max capacity. Treat them as such.
- ❖ Dominance in training is out. Kindness is in. Your dog is not vying to be the alpha, and you shouldn't either.

### WHAT IS BEHAVIORISM?

The theory that psychology can be objectively studied through observable action.

**Operant Conditioning**

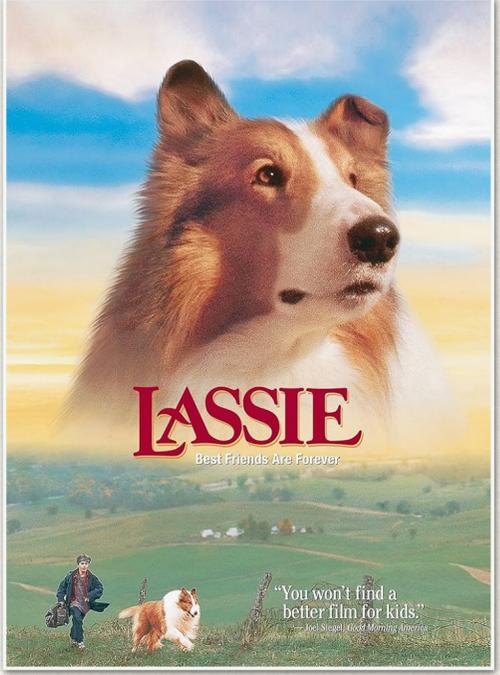
Subject learns behavior by associating it with consequences.



**Classical Conditioning**

Subject learns to associate two unrelated stimuli with each other.







Thank you for learning!

## Additional Resources and References

- ❖ Fear Free Pets .com
- ❖ Best Book: “Dogs in Translation” by Katja Krauss and Gabi Maue
- ❖ “On Talking Terms with Dogs: Calming Signals” by Turid Rugaas
- ❖ “Canine Body Language: A Photographic Guide” by Brenda Aloff.
- ❖ Articles and Scientific Papers: Refer to journals like “Applied Animal Behaviour Science” for the latest research.
- ❖ Online Courses and Workshops: Websites like Coursera, Udemy, and professional organizations like the IAABC.
- ❖ Professional Organizations: International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC), American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB).