**Canine Aggression**

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| Lately it seems that the news has been full of dog attacks and it brings up a good question. Are we as human beings bringing our dogs up properly or are we creating the anxiety and fear that may times causes dogs to become aggressive.  Aggression is a very common problem in dogs and it usually is caused by one of two things. Either someone has trained the dog to be this way (which seems to be the case in all of the recent pit bull attacks) or a dog has learned that aggression will remove him from a situation he is unhappy with. The first scenario is the easiest to solve --- DON'T TEACH YOUR PET TO BE AGGRESSIVE! Beside the fact that it's not very nice to take you dog out on a walk to injure people, the dog could turn on you! The second situation can be a bit more difficult and you may require the help of a dog psychologist.  The first step to keeping your dog from hurting other dogs or people is prevention. When your dog is a puppy, make sure that he spends time around both men and women of all ages. If you know someone with a gentle canine, have him / her bring their dog over to play. The second thing to do, although it may sound strange, is to have your pet neutered or spayed. Unless you are planning to have a professional breeder help your dog to reproduce, you should have it done. It will remove lots of confusion caused by chemistry. Third of all, be gentle with your dog. Don't ever hit him / her. If you have a problem you should tell him “No” in a firm voice. Hitting your dog will only cause him / her to be confused. As the world heard in The Wizard of Oz: “He's very gentle, with gentle people that is!” Also, no matter how friendly Fido is, he should never be allowed to run freely. In almost of these recent attacks the owner was nowhere to be found.  No matter how you raise them, some breeds are naturally aggressive or you might have adopted a dog that is nervous and / or aggressive. So what then? No matter how aggressive your dog is, you and he / she should go to obedience training. Your dog must be able to listen to you. After that make sure you establish a loving relationship with your dog. If your dog cares about you, he / she will attempt to sense your comfort level. This is a blessing in the case of an emergency, but it could work against you. When many people walk their dogs they have a tendency to tug on their dogs leach if they see another dog. In this situation you've assumed that you dog will be aggressive. You may have also given your dog a reason to be aggressive. If you pull your dog away from another dog, you are saying: “I don't like that other dog, he makes me nervous.” If your pal has it in him, he / she may try to correct that problem for you. Try the opposite approach, every time you see a dog during your walk, give him / her, a reward. This can also be used with people who seem to make your dog anxious (such as children\*).  Let's look at the worst-case scenario for a moment. If your dog does get in to a fight with another dog, keep your face away from the two dogs. Try to remove the winning dog from the fight by either grabbing his back legs, or tail and pulling. If the dogs are small try to pick up the winning dog, however as stated before keep it away from your face. Making a lot of noise or throwing a coat between them may also work. Unfortunately, dogs that are trained to fight will not be stopped by any of these tactics. There is only one way to stop a trained fighter and I'm warning you it's not pleasant. If you are squeamish you may wish to stop reading. Trainers of fighters will stick a finger inside the dog's anus. The pain will make the dog stop. As stated earlier, don't teach your dog to be aggressive!   \*Mixing children and dogs can have unpredictable results, always watch carefully when small children are around your dog. |