



"Obedience without understanding is blindness." ~ Annie Sullivan "The Miracle Worker"

Respecting The Hand

We've all at one time or another had a dog take a treat from our hand and feel like they were taking our fingers with them. One of the first things that I teach my clients is how to get their dog to respect "the hand". I use a simple, yet extremely effective, technique that helps dogs learn and quickly understand that if 'I don't touch the hand, I get the treat'.

Here is how you do it:

1. Get a small treat (about the size of a pea) and hold it in a closed fist.
2. Put your closed fist in front of your dog's nose.
3. Let your dog lick, nudge, paw, nibble your hand **without saying a word** (the goal here is to have them FIGURE out the correct behavior, not for you to tell them).
4. Once your dog stops all contact with your hand (it will usually only be for a second in the beginning so catching it and rewarding it in that moment is important) open your fist and give them the treat.
5. Repeat until your dog stops touching your closed fist when it is presented to them.

Most dogs learn this very quickly but I have had dogs where it took a LONG while for them to understand and my hand definitely took a bit of a beating while being used as a chew toy. BUT by continuing to be determined, waiting for and CATCHING (this is important) the dog leaving my hand alone for a second (and I do mean a second, sometimes a split second), I was finally able to get them to understand. When they did understand it was heaven!

Like I said this is not your common dog and most pick it up very fast. If you follow these instructions and seem to be struggling on getting your dog to understand email me for help at allstarpaws@yahoo.com and I will give you some additional suggestions to help you along.

This simple exercise will help with almost anything that you are holding. By teaching your dog to respect "the hand" they will quickly learn to that it applies while you are holding other items too, even their toys.