

# The Three Lessons Every Dog Needs to Know

We have learned over years that Bordeaux puppy owners need clear guidelines for raising their New Puppy. The three lessons work for all dog breeds, not just big ones. The three lessons just become more important as you consider the Bordeaux and other large breed dogs. The three lessons are the simplest form of what we teach people to do with their new puppy. Please read on,

**CUTE PUPPY** - After all those weeks of waiting and hoping, you finally drive to the airport or breeders and pick up your special Bordeaux puppy. That perfect size, that wrinkly face, that cute nose, that soft coat, and lovable puppy smell. Perfect! By the way, there is nothing cuter in life than an 8 week old Bordeaux puppy. When you are looking at any breed, take note if your breeder shows you adult animals first. That is what the puppy will be when it grows up.

Your new Bordeaux puppy will Grow very quickly. And as his size changes, socialization of your Bordeaux is very important. Please, start the lessons early. It much easier. I have had to teach them to untrained adult dogs and that takes special skill.

**THE NEW PACK** - You're thinking this new puppy is the 'new member of the family'. The puppy is thinking you are the 'new members of its pack'. When it comes to adult large breed dogs the second perspective is the one that counts. You are the puppy's new pack! Keeping that perspective in mind will go a long way to starting the puppy out right.

ALL Specie have some kind of 'pecking order' (Horse, Cows, Cats, Dogs). The reason for a social order is to keep the peace. Once the order is sorted out, life goes on smoothly because 'social politeness' of sorts is instinctively observed. One moves out of the way for the boss cow with no challenge.

Dog are no exception. Every pack has an alpha dog and an alpha bitch, when both genders are present. (Please take no offence, bitch here refers to the female canine. Female dog is an oxymoron). The 'alpha' is the socially, most dominant pack member. The rest of the pack orders itself in a stair step manner.

If you will simply teach the three lessons early your Bordeaux is quite satisfied to accept their master as Alpha. When canines sort out the order on their own, the process can be gruesome and is lessened if the alphas are the humans and take their place in the correct manner. Which is the point. Be a GOOD Leader!

## **Lesson 1**

### **The Dominance Rollover**

**WHY** - The point of this lesson is to teach the puppy its social position in the new pack. Life is good if the dog in the house is placed socially under ALL human family members. Life can be un-fun if the dog in the house thinks it is socially equal too or above any of the humans in the household. Most of us have heard of dogs that mind the man in the house but not the women. Well, that related to Lesson 1. Only close family members should teach Lesson 1. This includes toddlers even though you will need help them.

One of the points most people like about the Bordeaux is that it is a guard dog. One of the Few guard breed considered good with children. You should note that the animals that protect the pack from outside intruders are the socially lower animals (red shirts if you remember Star Trek). One of the purposes of your Bullmastiff is to protect the family. This protectiveness is instinctive and

usually is not shown until about two years of age when the animal becomes adult. Although not guaranteed, Lesson 1 can help insure that that will happen.

**METHOD** - Lesson 1 is simple to teach. Take your puppy and place it on its back (roll over). Try not to pick a hard spot. A towel or carpet works well. This is not done in play, but as a deliberate act. Depending on the size of the dog and the person doing the lesson, you may actually kneel over the dog with one knee on either side. Watch that the dog doesn't scratch or claw you in any sensitive areas. If needed, reach around behind and move the dogs legs. This is usually not a problem with a puppy.

The puppy will likely fight this position because it is the most vulnerable position for the animal to be in. Remember it has learned some pack lessons from its littermates. Hold the puppy in this position until it quiets down and submits. If the puppy tries to bite, take both hands and grab a cheek and shake the head a couple of times....don't be too rough! At the same time say 'NO' in a loud, firm tone. I have seen puppies almost scream at me in defiance. But after consistent work, they turn out to be some of the best dogs I have owned.

You do not say much during the lesson. Do not sympathize with the puppy. Be careful not to teach this lesson when you are angry. Do not be loud and/or aggressive and make ugly faces at your puppy!

That's it for Lesson 1. This is a lesson you will teach for the rest of the dog's life. Infrequently after it grows up. Depending on the temperament of your Bordeaux you will repeat this as often as needed. Remember, it can be worked into other things like nail trimming, grooming etc.

**FINAL NOTES** This lesson teaches many things. The three lessons together are very basic obedience training. The kind that starts before formal obedience class, which we do recommend. In fact, all the training you do with your puppy fits into an interconnected system that constitutes 'obedience' training. Remember, 'you can't teach nothing', that is to say - watch what you teach, for you teach all the time!

Lesson 1 also helps later with living with the dog. It will make trimming nails much easier (social peace), going to the vet more fun, etc

## **Lesson 2**

### **Anyone can take Anything out of its mouth at Anytime**

**WHY** - Lesson 2 is important to teach your new puppy to protect the 'little people' in our homes. Even if you don't have children at home, young ones probably visit once in a while. Young children don't always know not to bother the dog when he is eating.

Protection of food and toys was a normal part of the litter pack. There isn't much sacred with 5 brothers and sisters around. But, it is not acceptable now. Like Lesson 1, this is easier to teach to a young animal. It is important to be consistent. You should not laugh at the cute puppy one time, and correct it the next.

**METHOD** -To teach this lesson, make a conscious effort to go to your Bordeaux puppy and remove the favorite toy or food from his mouth. If the puppy growls or snaps, just close its mouth and give the head a quick, little shake. At the same time, say 'NO'. Repeat the lesson until the puppy accepts it. Bordeaux's will accept things very well but you still need to teach the lesson. Vary the routine with different favorites - meaty bones are the real test!

**FINAL NOTES** - You may think this is 'baiting' the dog or setting him up. True. It is better now to get the lessons over with now, then to need to deal with it later. Remember, good obedience

training is about setting your Bordeaux up to succeed, not to fail. That is an important mind set for you and your dog as you train.

## **Lesson 3**

### **No Open Mouth Activity to a Human - Period!**

WHY - If all dogs were taught this last lesson, fewer people would be afraid of dogs. This is a hard lesson for some people to teach, because it seems cute to have the dog 'mouth' you. On top of that, it doesn't hurt when done on an adult. That is NOT the case for the little humans in our lives. Like Lesson 1, this is easier to teach to a young animal. It is important to be consistent. You should not laugh at the cute puppy one time, and correct it the next. So what do we do?

METHOD - To teach this lesson, work on the following. Every time you are working with the puppy and he/she starts nipping, or mouthing you (any open mouth activity) stop it. This can also include growling which leads to open mouth activity. This can happen in either play or resistance and should be taught at the moment it happens (remember Lesson 1).

Close the mouth and shake the head while saying 'NO!' The method is very similar to that used in Lesson 2. Your little puppy is smart and he/she will learn this lesson quickly. It will need to be done several times because the puppy will 'forget' when playing gets fun.

FINAL NOTES - As a side note, Lesson 3 will be instinctively forgotten when the dog perceives you to be in danger. The lesson does not interfere with guarding.

That's it. Three simple lessons that will serve you well. These will work on any breed. Some breeds just need them more. Remember, good obedience training is about setting your Bordeaux up to succeed, not to fail. That is an important mind set for you and your companion animal as you teach.

Happy puppy raising....enjoy your new puppy! Some work now pays big dividends later.