

About 40 years ago a massive assault was launched in dog training based on a new theory called the 'Alpha Dog.' In its wake, the formerly amiable relationship deteriorated. The dog owning and training world was advised to mimic wolf behavior when interacting with dogs. This implied that the dog owner or trainer had to become the Alpha or top dog by physically dominating the pet. According to the recommendations, this position was to be established by picking up the puppy, scruff-shaking him, throwing him down, straddling him, and growling at him. Thus the dog was to be forced to submit to his human Alpha. (Ironically, brood bitches of domestic dogs neither have the habit of scruff-shaking their pups, nor of rolling them over, or pinning them down when they misbehave, as every long-time breeder can confirm.)

It is a shame that the dog world so readily accepted and followed this ridiculous and detrimental concept, which destroyed the respect of our dogs for mankind and for each other.

Before our dogs became the victims of this kind of abuse, adult dogs would not fight with a bitch or a puppy. I had never known of a family dog that attacked a family member. When a young child got too rough or abusive, the dog would just get up and walk away without expressing any hostility.

When we observe the wolf's dominant behavior, we have to understand one basic law of nature. It is the law of survival, which rules the behavior of every creature.

In this respect, the expression of dominance is very important in many wild-living animals for the continuance of the species through the survival of the fittest.

Due to domestication and selective breeding, however, aggressive and dominant behaviors not only completely lost their importance for the survival of our dogs, they became detriments. Now that forceful dominance has become an essential part of the interactions between owner and dog, our dogs are conditioned to accept and express this dominance as a principal behavior trait, like the wild-living animals. This hastens their demise in the human environment.

After specializing over a quarter of a century in dog behavior problems, my conclusion is that we are systematically destroying our dogs with these dominant concepts, no matter what breed. The authorities contribute their share by drafting vicious dog laws based on any breed that has caused a fatality. Even friendly breeds will be included. Some of the breeds whose aggressiveness was the reason for the cancellation of their owners'

homeowners insurance are the Chesapeake, German Shepherd Dog, Akita, Chow, Collie, 2 Golden Retriever, Dalmatian, Doberman, Husky, Malamute, Labrador Retriever, Newfoundland, Rottweiler, and various mixed breeds.

After centuries of devotion, servitude, and companionship to mankind our dogs are being sold down the river. They have become throw-away objects in our "instant" society. There are dog owners who lose interest in the cute, fluffy puppy

once it grows up and becomes too big to live in the house. This once-loved puppy becomes an ignored and neglected animal that is chained to a tree in the backyard. Once the dog starts barking for the attention and affection he was used to receiving, he becomes a nuisance and the neighbors file a complaint. The owners now have an excuse to dump off their once-loved dog at the animal shelter. After three to five days of boarding, the unwanted pet is destroyed.

Many owners don't even try to find out the cause of the problem or try to fix it. They simply replace their misbehaved dog with a new one. Others use the quick fixes recommended by experts and beat their dog into submission or put them on drugs.

The message is reverberated among dog owners that increasing dog attacks have genetic reasons and are breed-specific. Presently Pitbulls, Dobermans, and Rottweilers are considered the villains. In March 1990, one large humane society in Los Angeles killed thousands of dogs within a few weeks for the sole reason that they were either Pitbulls, American Staffordshire Terriers, or had Pitbull characteristics. This slaughtering spree included any breed of dog with a pushed-in face, such as the Bulldog, the Pug, and the Boston Terrier. All these dogs were considered not adoptable and received the death sentence.

How sad, how tragically sad! For all they have done for us, our dogs are rewarded with punishment and destruction!

“The only salvation for man’s best friend is to extinguish the darkness of ignorance and misinformation in his owner and turn to the light of education.” ~  
C.W. Meisterfeld, PhD