

DOGS' LIFE™

VOL. 4 • NO. 1

YOUR DOG IS SO MUCH MORE THAN A PET™

The CANINE FELINE Peace Process

By Rolan Tripp, DVM



From the **EDITOR:**

“Properly trained, a man can be a dog’s best friend.”

– Cary Ford

ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Like everything else in life, prevention is easier than treatment. If introducing a NEW individual of the opposite species for the first time, make SURE there is no chase. Initially keep the cat isolated in one room for a couple days with food, water, toys, bed and litterbox. That way they can sniff each other under the door, and some of the mystery is gone. When ready, introduce the cat inside a closed portable kennel. Praise the dog for gentle sniffing, and interrupt any pawing or barking. When the dog loses interest, put the cat (free) up on a surface, and keep the dog on a leash. Let the dog see you petting the cat. Have the dog wear a head halter and drag a lead around the house for a few days, so if a chase breaks out, you can step on it to stop the process.

BROKERING AN AGREEMENT

If you already have a home turf war going on, here are some tips on how to achieve peace:

- 1) Separate the parties for a “cooling off period” ranging from a day to a week. If possible, this means no eye contact. Also during the entire peace process, isolate them from each other unless you are there to supervise.

continued on page 2

In this ISSUE

THE CANINE FELINE PEACE PROCESS
by Rolan Tripp, DVM 1

THE WALTER TURKEN TRAINING
FOR ADOPTION PROGRAM
by Brian Kilcommons 3

FEATURED BREED: THE BOXER 3

BARNEY JUST ISN'T HIMSELF ANYMORE
Changes in Behavior May Indicate
Alteration in Health Level
by Peter H. Eeg, DVM 4

That couple fights like Cats and Dogs! Is there really a centuries old undeclared war between these two species? Why is it that some “mixed species couples” get along famously, while others seem to verify the stereotype?

WAR BREAKS OUT

There are a few reasons that dogs and cats might not get along with each other. The most common problem is that one or both were not properly socialized to the other species during their early socialization period. In dogs this occurs between birth and approximately 16 weeks of age, and in cats between birth and 12 weeks. During this period the brain is ready to accept new individuals into the social circle. After that period, there is a tendency to treat new individuals as “outsiders” to be distrusted. This can be overcome, but takes time and a strategy.

Another reason for distrust is based on a case of mistaken identity. When presented with a charging dog, most cats will run. This triggers the chase instinct in the canine brain, and flashes a “Chase Prey!” signal. Cats are not natural prey of dogs, but in the heat of the moment, all is forgotten except the thrill of the chase. In dogs with a tendency toward predatory aggression, if the cat is caught the dog may try to kill and even begin to eat the cat. However in most cases, if the cat stops running, the chase is over, and the dog loses interest. The real problem is that once this cycle starts, the dog continuously looks for the fun of the chase, and the cat either turns fearful or aggressive, but rarely friendly.



2) While isolated from each other, introduce each other's scent. Rub a towel on the dog, and place it near where the cat sleeps. Do the reverse for the dog. Bathing each in the scent of the other is part of the desensitization process, and starts building a bond.

3) If the dog is not really sharp on obedience commands, join a refresher course to be sure you have a strong positive leadership position and verbal control. Use rewards, interrupt negative behavior, and avoid any physical punishment. Work on the LONG DOWN STAY command. If this command is difficult for your dog, teach "Close Tethering" where the dog is tethered on a 6' chain leash with a chew toy, close to a person, and praised for quiet resting.

- 4) Give "off the property" leash exercise to the dog, and drag a string to exercise the cat. Exercise relieves a lot of tension.
- 5) This is also a great time to teach the dog to wear a head halter. This decreases reactivity, encourages calm behavior, and allows effective control of even a charging big dog. This tool also makes it easy to walk any dog while preventing pulling on the leash.
- 6) Get a large molded plastic portable kennel, and feed the cat in it for at least a week. Feed meals, not "free choice" and between meals, leave the door open and a comfy bed inside.
- 7) Begin feeding both pets at the same time, within eye contact but otherwise from a distance. The dog is either tethered or on a long-down-stay, and the cat is inside his or her "safe place" portable kennel, with the door locked for safety.
- 8) In addition to the meals, prepare some REALLY special treats. Use these to reward relaxed posture, and ignoring the other being. Move the kennel closer to the tethered dog, as long as BOTH are relaxed. If either gets tense, move the kennel farther away.
- 9) During these desensitization sessions, give special attention to each while the other watches. The goal is for each to think, "The big boss seems to like him, and all the good things seem to happen when he is near by." During the peace process (except during this feeding treat and praise, "happy hour,") give each pet the "cold shoulder" treatment, so that they become motivated for attention, and associate getting attention with the former enemy.
- 10) Once the cat in the kennel can be right next to the dog, and the dog loses interest in sniffing, let the cat patrol while the dog is tethered. Next mealtime, reverse, and

leave the cat in the carrier, and let the dog patrol. Be there to interrupt but not physically punish barking, or pawing or gnawing the kennel. Praise the dog and give treats anytime he ignores or acts relaxed around the cat.

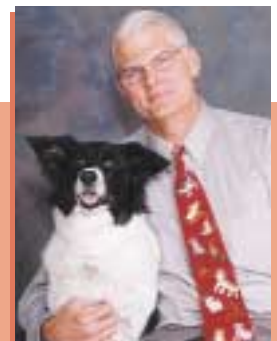
- 11) The next step is to have the dog tethered, while you play with the cat. Try dragging a string or other toy designed to get the cat to run. If the dog gets excited and tries to pull on the tether, you are going too fast. Back up to previous steps, and try simply holding the cat on your lap, giving special grooming and petting and treats, while the dog watches YOU "accept" this being. In difficult severe cases, this peace process might take weeks or longer. Trying to push it too quickly will cause the problem to worsen, instead of improve.
- 12) If problems persist, seek the services of a qualified professional by contacting the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (800/248-2862), the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (www.avma.org/avsab/profile.html), the Animal Behavior Society (www.animalbehavior.org), or the Animal Behavior Network (www.AnimalBehavior.Net).

TREATY

As you begin to have trust in allowing them together, begin letting both be unrestrained, but with the dog wearing the head halter and dragging a 10' line, to give you some control. Make sure the cat has plenty of places to get up high, away from the dog. If the dog gets close, and the cat swipes the dog's face, support the cat. It means the dog was being inappropriate, and the cat was just teaching proper manners.

PEACEKEEPING

The final step is delivering "aid" to peaceful individuals. Determine the "special treat" for each party. Usually this is a tasty food morsel, but some dogs really like squeaky toys, or a tug of war game (for non-aggressive dogs). The goal is for each to suppress their tendency for conflict, in order to receive their very own peace offering. 🐾



Dr. Rolan Tripp is a general practitioner with a special interest in animal behavior. He teaches Applied Animal Behavior at both Colorado and Wisconsin University Veterinary Schools. Dr. Tripp appears frequently on the Animal Planet Network, and lectures throughout the US at veterinary meetings.

Dr. Tripp has written a manual, *"Pet Perception Management – A Behavioral Program For Veterinary Practices And Pet Owners"* This manual is 200 pages, and is a "cook book" for how to begin offering behavior services in a veterinary hospital. Most of the manual is made up of 8 1/2 x 11 hand outs to be given to clients, so many pet owners purchase it directly. The manual is \$49. Ordering information: (309) 417-3174.

The Walter Turken Training for Adoption Program

By Brian Kilcommons



The Walter Turken Training for Adoption Program (WTTAP) is a community-based program that teaches selected volunteers how to train shelter dogs through understanding their body language, breed characteristics and the different ways dogs learn.

The program is founded on communication, education and involvement with highly trained and dedicated volunteers

who donate three hours or more a week. These volunteers commit a piece of their heart every week working with dogs. The seven weekends of training to become a WTTAP volunteer is rigorous — physically, mentally and emotionally. The challenge to these caring men and women is working with untrained dogs of all ages, sizes, temperaments and backgrounds. Dogs learn and react differently, to be able to understand these differences and then select a way to instill wanted behavior is a formidable undertaking.

Ninety percent of all dogs surrendered to shelters have never had any obedience training. One-third of shelter dogs are purebred dogs. Many of these dogs never had an opportunity to develop a positive relationship with a human. This is not the dog's fault. It is

touching to watch a dog's eyes light up in understanding. For the first time in their confused lives, communication between our two species is established. This is a powerful moment for both teacher and dog.



Shelters where the Turken Program has been implemented have increased adoptions as much as fifty percent and reduced returns by thirty percent. The dogs are quieter in the kennels since they have had exercise, attention, and training. Well-behaved and happy dogs get adopted faster. Dogs that are trained stay in their homes and are incorporated into their family more quickly and completely. People take pride in their new, smart companions. In this way, the local shelter becomes a source of wonderful family companions and the word spreads through the community. When people trust that the shelter dogs are trained and trainable, more people feel confident adopting.

Walter Turken, my friend and mentor, made this Program a possibility. The impact WTTAP for dogs, people and the community can be magical. Walter would have liked that.

If you would like to help and learn more about changing the life of a shelter dog in your community please go to www.greatpets.com and click on the Walter Turken Training icon. 🐾



BOXER

BREED GROUP: Working

NICKNAME: NA

ORIGIN: Boxers were developed in Germany but get their English name from the way they strike out with their front paws when playing or fighting, which is similar to a human boxer sparring in the ring. Mastiffs, Great Danes, Bulldogs, and Terriers are included in their ancestry. Early in their development they were used for hunting, bull baiting, dog fighting and pulling carts. Later they were also trained to round up cattle. Because they easily learned tricks they became popular in theater and circus acts. This versatile breed has also been used for police work, guide dogs for the blind and guarding their master's property.

COLOR: Tan, brindle and various shades of red, with white markings, and occasionally all white

HEIGHT: 21 – 25 inches (53 – 63 cm)

WEIGHT: 60 – 75 pounds (27 – 34 kg)



TEMPERAMENT: Originally bred to participate in dogfights and bull baiting the ferocious temperament has been removed and today's Boxer is an even-tempered family dog. This alert, dignified and self-assured breed is often referred to as the "Peter Pan" of the dog world because they seem to keep their youthful energy and are always ready to play, even in old age. Playful, patient and affectionate they are good with children. Even though they show a good deal of curiosity they are sometimes wary of strangers and when threatened they will exhibit fearless courage.

TRAINING: These highly intelligent dogs should have early obedience training to ensure a well-behaved pet.

EXERCISE: Boxers are very energetic and need plenty of exercise.

GROOMING: This breed has a short coat that requires weekly brushing.

POSSIBLE HEALTH CONCERNS: Boxers chill easily in cold weather and have trouble cooling off in very hot weather. Some may suffer from bloat, cancer, gum and dental problems, cardiomyopathy, sub-aortic stenosis, epilepsy, allergies and hip dysplasia. Having a short-muzzle they may drool, snort, snore and pass gas.

LIFE EXPECTANCY: About 10 years 🐾



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"Barney Just Isn't Himself Anymore"

Changes in Behavior May Indicate Alteration in Health Level

"Barney just isn't himself anymore. He seems not to hear us when we ask him to do the things he's always done. Is he developing bad behavior?" This is a question that veterinarians are often asked about older pets. It is important to recognize a simple fact; Old age is not a disease.

Senior pets often develop health issues that can appear initially as changes in behavior. These changes can be misinterpreted as a sudden loss of normal good behavior in the pet. In fact the behavior changes do not stem from a willing desire to be "bad". They are due to several common medical conditions that can be present in our older pets such as: cognitive dysfunction syndrome, osteoarthritis, and endocrine imbalances.

Cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS) is a condition of reduced dopamine production in the brain. This can lead to a reduction in your pets' ability to recognize normal behavioral stimuli. They appear less interested, less active, or less

familiar with you and their environment.

Osteoarthritis (OA) affects one in five dogs in the United States. Many times owners think that the sudden loss of their pets' interest in playing or being active is due to old age. In fact OA causes chronic discomfort and loss of ability to use the affected joint(s) properly. This leads to a reduction in desire to move or respond to environmental stimuli.

Endocrine imbalances also can have a profound effect on your pets' behavior. Low or high levels of thyroid hormone or steroids in your pets system can have a substantially negative impact on their response to their environment.

If your pet starts to behave atypically, the first thing you should do is consult your veterinarian. In many cases simple screening tests or blood samples can help discover the true reason for your pets' change in behavior. Medications are available that can help return your pet to his normal behavioral ways. 🐾

Invisible Fence ^{BRAND} TiPS

In order for your Invisible Fence[®] system to work properly, the Power Cap[®] in the Computer Collar[®] should be changed regularly. Battery life can be drained by several factors, including low temperatures, the number of times a dog challenges the system and the fit of the collar on the dog's neck. On average, your Power Cap should be changed every three months.