



BARK MANAGEMENT 101

Most dogs bark, and while barking can sometimes be a behavioral concern, it CAN be a natural part of doggy daily life at home. Some owners encourage it... "You wanna cookie?? Tell Mommy! Baby want a cookie?"

OR it can be a habit of just barking without thinking OR barking first, thinking second. While there are some dogs that just bark now and then, barking can become a problem when the dog barks too much, too loudly, or when the barking is accompanied by other undesirable behaviors.

BARKING IS A PROBLEM IN A KENNEL ENVIRONMENT. It creates chaos, stress, hearing loss, yelling, and overall obnoxious behavior. Barking happens BECAUSE WE ALLOW IT.

Let me say that again.

BARKING HAPPENS BECAUSE WE ALLOW IT.

BARKING. MUST. BE. STOPPED. This is not a suggestion. It is a requirement of your job to deal with barking and get it stopped. It also a requirement that you appreciate your non-barkers/non-demanders.

SO - let's learn bout barking together:

Barking serves generally three purposes: 1. Distance-creating ("Back the heck off!") 2. Distance-reducing ("Come over here!"); or 3. Alerting the pack.

Solving or troubleshooting your dog's barking problem depends heavily on understanding just what type of barking your dog is doing. This can be done by observing the cause and characteristics of your dog's barking.

PREVENTION is ALWAYS better than REACTION. Prevention is TEACHING & expecting behavior. Reacting is MANAGING behavior.

In ALL training:

**Thou shalt not match thy dog's energy level (Lead them to a calmer, quieter place.)
Thou shalt not bark at the dog (English is NOT their primary language.)**

Barking dogs can be frustrating, until you find the appropriate solution. Do not give up on the dog. **Find the behavior you want and work towards/reward it.** Address/disagree regularly with behavior you don't want.

FAILING TO CORRECT UNWANTED BEHAVIOR IS INTERPRETED BY THE DOG AS AGREEING WITH THE BEHAVIOR. LIKEWISE, WITHHOLDING PRAISE FROM A DOG THAT IS "GETTING IT RIGHT" IS SIMPLY INCONSIDERATE AND POOR FEEDBACK/COMMUNICATION.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY: If you only deal with bad behavior intermittently, the behavior will get stronger and you will not be viewed as trustworthy by the dog, due to frequent rule-changes. It touches the part of the brain that is affected by gambling addiction - "Sometimes I win, Sometimes I lose, Wonder what

will happen the next time I try?" If only some of us address barking and quiet, the dogs will be confused.

Remember that as SOON as the behavior shifts, you MUST shift to a demeanor of appreciation too! (Colder/Warmer rules are in play! "Go Lay Down! (dog does it) Good. Thank you." (Sweet. Don't be so gooey that the dog makes a bad decision causing you to change your response again.)

Barkers can be broken into several broad classifications. I've lumped a few of them together, because their solutions are the same.

"The Demanders" - Attention-seeking & Demanding/Boredom Barkers

INTENTION: Distance-reducing (Bring a dog or person closer)

IF DOG GETS REACTION THEY WANT, it's Reinforced/Rewarded & will get stronger.

Attention-seeking barkers:

- **DOG'S MINDSET:** "Come talk to me. I'm lonely. I need attention."
- Characterized by a bark which is high in pitch and accompanied by pauses and moments when the dog looks around and listens for a response from anyone. ASBs are not picky about who they get attention from.

Demanding/Boredom Barkers:

- **DOG'S MINDSET:** "HEY! This is BOGUS! Get over here and open this door RIGHT NOW!"
- Characterized by loud, obnoxious, "Get the F over here" - Rhythmic (adrenaline-pumping), Insistent, Forced barking.
- Can also be characterized by a flat, rhythmic boring bark with occasional sorrowful howling directed at nothing. This kind of barking is repetitive in nature and is usually of medium pitch.

SOLUTIONS:

HANDLER'S MINDSET: "Yeah. NO. We aren't doing this. I'm sorry that you are struggling, but I'm not giving you the attention you want when you are acting like this. You need to go do something else that is calmer and quieter. If I have to come over there, our moment won't be as sweet as you were hoping it would be."

TECHNIQUE: Look/feeling of disapproval and a sending away. These dogs need a strong request/encouragement that they go lay down and relax. Encourage these dogs to take it down a notch by using a calming, but assertive tone and an unwavering requirement of a different behavior. Be aware that if you run over each time this dog barks, you may create a more demanding dog. You may need to use an escalating certainty that the behavior is NOT acceptable. Is this working? Is this dog improving? Or am I now creating an attention-seeking barker? Do I need to go into the room to finish the job with spatial pressure or guidance onto the bed? (Be careful.) If you get compliance, change your tone to appreciation!

TIP: Get good at "Sweet face/Mean face" attention. Use sweet face attention each time the dog is behaving, and mean face each time you must go disagree with a behavior.

"The Alarmists" - Territorial and Fearful Barkers

INTENTION: Distance-creating (Chase a dog or person away)

IF DOG GETS REACTION THEY WANT, it's Reinforced/Rewarded

CAN BE HARD TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE, BUT THE SOLUTION IS THE SAME!

Territorial barkers:

- **DOG'S MINDSET:** "Get out of here! This is MY room, MY space, and YOU are unwelcome"
- Characterized by a blow up burst of fierce, low-pitched, intense of barking. This kind of barking is usually startling and short lived. It is accompanied by a dilated pupils ("shiny eyes"), distinct body posture: the tail is up, the ears and the corners of the mouth are forward, the stance is tall and forward on toes, the hackles are up, and the nose is wrinkled. Territorial barkers initiate barking when a

perceived threat enters into the dog's imagined territory. (Remember – the dog defines his perceived territory, not you.)

Fearful barkers:

- **DOG'S MINDSET:** "That dog scares me! I'm worried for my safety! I need to defend myself, because if I don't, nobody else will! I will chase them off with my fierce bark and aggressive blow up."
- Characterized by sharp, high-pitched barking accompanied by a distinct body posture in which the dog's tail is tucked between her legs, the hackles are up, the pupils are dilated, the nose is wrinkled, and the corners of the mouth are back. OR by a blow up burst of fierce, low-pitched, intense barking. This kind of barking is usually startling and short lived. Barking is initiated by a perceived threat coming close to the dog. For the fearful barker, barking is designed to increase the distance between the threat and the dog. While the dog may step forward while barking, the dog will usually retreat as well or push herself to the rear of the crate.

SOLUTIONS:

HANDLER MINDSET: "If I LOVE DOGS, and I've been given the responsibility and authority for the wellbeing of my zone, I WILL NOT allow my dogs to be afraid of the dog on my leash OR the dog behind the glass or crate door."

TECHNIQUE:

PREVENT THE VULNERABILITY. This dog needs reassurance that I have control of the area AND the dog on the end of my leash and there is ZERO need to be threatened or threatening.

- Thumb grip.
- Short leash. Minimize slack and free movement of leashed dog.
- I convince the dog of my leadership through my strong, but non-threatening body language - big, confident, assured posture - "I'm in charge! This is MY ZONE! I've got this! This dog won't hurt you - I PROMISE!"; direct eye contact; and visually disagreeing with the behavior. The bulk of this solution is HANDLER/ LEADER-based. A leader walks the dog, NOT the other way around. Who is walking who?

"The Let's Go'ers" - Excitement/Anticipation Barkers

INTENTION: To HURRY to the next anticipated thing

Excitement/Anticipation Barker:

- **DOG'S MINDSET:** "I gotta go. We're going to go do this cool thing and I'm late! Gotta go NOW. Let's go! Let's go!"
- Characterized by high-pitched barking, accompanied by a great deal of continuous movement, a wagging tail, and variable intensity. Gate latches, thoughts of "What's happening next?" and movement gets these dogs going.

SOLUTION:

HANDLER MINDSET - "Yeah. NO. Not doing this. I have all the time in the world. I am calm. My breathing is slower and calmer. I am not breathless. My demeanor is soft and patient. I am not interested in a pushy dog. I like CALM dogs. I only MOVE for calm dogs."

TECHNIQUE - To reduce this barking, I AM SILENT, I stop moving, stop clanging gates, and stop rushing around. I wait for calm behavior. I only open gates on dogs that are calm, still, quiet. If the dog is calm, then winds up, I go backwards in what I was planning to do. If I was planning to go out, I shut the door and simply walk away and return when the dog is calm.

Convince these dogs that quiet calmness is the only thing that continues the movement that they desire. This behavior will often get worse before it gets better. If you do speak, use one of our 6 words to ask for a different behavior. Don't repeat it more than once every 10 seconds. Wait. Breathe. Be still and calm or walk away. Do NOT rush around at a level 8 pace with these dogs or around these dogs. Do not slam gates and doors. Slow and calm is way better than rushing. This work is mentally exhausting, so DO NOT RUSH TO GET TO THE YARD. Simply tell the Group Leader that you are working on mannerly behavior.

“The What-the Heckers” - Separation Anxiety/Anxiety Barkers

INTENTION: The dog finds itself with a problem and needs to solve it.

- **DOG MINDSET:** “Have I been left behind?” OR EXTREME: “I am panicked/freaking out that I’m locked in this place/can’t find my mom/a human/my sibling.”
- Characterized by high-pitched frantic barking, and accompanied by neurotic pacing, drooling, whining, scratching, chewing, and howling. Dog is unreachable. THIS IS A VERY LOW NUMBER OF DOGS!

SOLUTION:

HANDLER MINDSET: “I’m not sure if I can get any currency or traction with this dog, BUT I’m going to look for some small sliver of hope for a behavior I can shape. Find that. Reward it with food or kibble. My timing must be impeccable.”

These dogs need a little sympathy & re-assurance that they can go lay down and relax. Encourage these dogs to take it down a notch by using a calming tone and a soft request for a different behavior. Be aware that if you run over each time this dog barks, you may create a more demanding dog. Is this working? Is this dog improving? Or am I now creating an attention-seeking barker? Consider teaching a trick, like “Bed!” and party like a rockstar when they perform the trick!

Other Problem solving devices and methods:

Teach “Down”

Practice getting “Down” from each of your dogs with a hand gesture (palm down, flat hand, moving whole hand towards floor), especially in times of calm. Practice this at least 10 times a day in the beginning, working most with your “problem” dogs, BEFORE you have an issue.

Training:

A number of training options can provide help in the barking arena. You can work on “Leave It” or “Go Lay Down,” (MUST BE ABLE TO GET THE BEHAVIOR, and for us it really means “Go on your bed OR lay down/defer where you are - BUT you can’t hover near the door with the intention of being a thug”) and even put barking and “Quiet” on cue (see below), and even work on certain calming signals. “Bed” is another good one!

Spatial Pressure:

Use spatial pressure to disagree with barking and release to appreciate quiet. Use the pressure of door open/close to convince the dog to offer a different behavior. Remember the goal is to TEACH the dog, not MANAGE the dog.

Water therapy:

AKA Water bottle. This is a “last resort” option, and is not always the best solution, especially if your dog’s barking is related to issues of fear or anxiety. Keep in mind that water is an intermittent negative reinforcement and tends not to work, due to inconsistency. This will just confuse the dog and potentially cause them to fear you.

Teach “Quiet” by putting barking on cue:

Attention Seeking, Boredom, and Anticipation barkers can be taught “Speak” and “Quiet”. Because this is TRICK TRAINING, it requires great consistency. If you are unsure of how to train this, ask an Advanced Handler.