

## Follow the Leader

by Valerie Broadway

There is a common factor that exists in almost every case I work with; the dogs don't see their humans as leaders. This is often the only reason why there are behavior issues. Dogs live in a world of hierarchy and are always assessing where they fit in related to others around them, human or animal. When dogs think they are at the top of the hierarchy they don't feel like they have to listen to the subordinates, which may include the owner.

It is essential in a healthy human-dog relationship that the human be seen as a capable leader. In the dog world good leaders are subtle, but assertive when needed. Dogs should never be allowed to think they are the top in a human-dog social structure.

Establishing a dog's proper place should begin the moment the pet enters the home. It will never be easier to accomplish than while they are young and moldable. Entitled brats are created when boundaries are not set and necessary push back doesn't happen.

What should be done to keep a dog on the right path, or what if the dog is already off track?

Start by keeping puppies or dogs on a leash until they are under verbal control of the owner, both inside and out of the house. One end of the leash should be held by a responsible human. If the dog has to be left alone then they should be in a crate or managed in some way so they can't get into any trouble. The leash can be short or long, depending on how the dog is behaving in the moment. During this time the human should control every aspect of the dog's life. In most situations this will only take two to three days.

Use the leash to make corrections. When dogs aren't responding to verbal instructions give a sideways tug and release motion that causes them to take a step to the side. Do this once or as many times as it takes to get the

### the Canine Coach

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desired response. In other situations use the leash to extract dogs from certain situations; such as when they try to counter surf, jump on people, get in the trash, or have a house training lapse. When dogs are corrected every single time they do an unwanted behavior they will quickly make the connection and stop the behavior. Once dogs are behaving and responsive to the humans, keep the leash on but now it can drag the ground behind them. They have more freedom but gives the humans easy access to quickly correct or extract the dogs from situations, if needed.

Dogs sometimes believe it is their house and they are letting the people live in it. In some situations dogs believe the people are also their servants. They need to understand it is the human's property, not theirs. It is helpful to have at least one room in the home that is off limits to the dog just because their people say so. Dogs should not jump on furniture whenever they feel like it. If they are allowed on the furniture it should be at the human's invitation only.

Dogs respect whoever is physically or mentally stronger. It is best if dogs believe their humans are both of these things. Most people are physically more powerful than their dogs, especially when the dogs are on a leash. When dogs can be pulled or pushed off balance they get the message that the one pulling or pushing them is physically more powerful.

Mental strength is proven by outlasting the other during times when there are battles of wills. Whoever wins in these moments is mentally tougher. For example, when a person tells their dog to sit, or go into a crate and the dog refuses, the dog wins. Commands cannot



be perceived as optional by dogs. A good leader never accepts being blown off by a subordinate. The heat is on until the dogs comply.

Be aware of when affection is given to dogs. People often give affection at the wrong moments. Affection should only be given when dogs are in a good mindset. The time for affection is when they are calm, relaxed, and in a respectful state of mind. Excessive affection at the wrong time can be seen by dogs as the person groveling at their paws. When dealing with dogs who already think they are running things it can be helpful to withhold affection for a couple of days. Let them grovel at the human's feet to the point of begging for attention. This helps shift their brains into a more respectful state. For a while limit the petting to two or three seconds and then walk away. Leave them wanting more.

Dogs often put their teeth on people or other dogs to remind them that they are above them in the hierarchy; even seemingly friendly dogs

will do this. Never let dogs put their teeth on human skin. When they do this we must scold the dogs so they don't misunderstand our relationship.

When dealing with hard core dogs who are already ruling with an iron paw it may be best to contact a professional to safely help turn things around. In situations where dogs are biting their own family members it will be difficult to do the work without outside help.

When behavior is extreme and dogs are acting out using dominance and aggression they are likely more nervous and insecure beings. The best thing humans can do for their dogs is to take that responsibility from them. They are more at ease when they aren't trying to run things. Only then can everyone have peace of mind and truly enjoy life together.

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## DEBATE

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per person. The National Institutes of Health says that in 2009, the overall cost of cancer care in the US was \$216 billion (yes, billion), but only \$86B was due to the direct cost of cancer care. The other \$130B was due to lost productivity. And by 2020, says the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the overall cost will probably have increased by 40 percent. It's no wonder that in any public wringing of hands about the escalating cost of health care, cancer treatment is always singled out as one of the culprits driving the increase.

Here's what few of the hand-wringers seem to have noticed, though: the cost to society of having all of us long-term cancer survivors out here. It's as if they think that we put a dent in the health of the national economy with the cost of our treatments, but as soon as we finished treatment, everything was all back to normal and we became healthy, fully contributing members of society once again.

'Tain't necessarily so....

According to the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Report for June 13, 2014, cancer survivors have yearly medical expenses of about \$8,200 per person, while the non-cancer norm for medical expenses is roughly \$4,500. By my calculations, in a country with roughly 12.3 million long-term survivors, that's \$101B per year that cancer survivors pay out of pocket for health care—way more than the total direct costs of medical care for (the proportionally less numerous) cancer patients in active treatment.

Those out-of-pocket figures are based, however, on long-term survivors who have sought help with the late effects of treatment. A recent article in JAMA Oncology states that, compared to those who've never had cancer, cancer survivors are significantly more likely to delay or not get medical care they need because they just can't afford it. The situation only improved incrementally during the years when health insurance became more accessible via the Affordable Care Act.

To add insult to injury, long-time survivors have a hard time resuming their roles as fully functioning, contributing members of society. About one-third of all cancer survivors report their health status as fair to poor, according to the CDC. They work (many

with accommodations) but have trouble maintaining their normal daily activities outside of work. Another third are frankly disabled by the long-term effects of their treatments and cannot work. That's two-thirds of cancer survivors who are struggling with the long-term consequences of having tried not to die—struggling with late effects whose existence, much less impact, they were never warned about before they consented to treatment. The cost in lost productivity is estimated at almost \$3,900 per person per year, or nearly \$60 billion nationally.

According to the National Cancer Institute, by 2020 it will cost this country \$48 billion to provide one year of treatment to those newly diagnosed with cancer, another \$48 billion to treat-but-not-cure those in the last year of their lives due to terminal cancer, and more than \$61 billion to provide ongoing care for everyone else who has had a cancer diagnosis in their past (or at least, those who actually seek care).

So...what would happen if a newly diagnosed cancer patient were given all these facts about their post-cancer life (assuming they lived) up front, before treatment began? Facts about the difficulty of enduring treatment, the immediate and later financial burdens, and the long-term physiological toll treatment could very well exact.

More than that, what would happen if the public knew all this? What if the costs of long-term survivorship, considered at the population level, became another fevered focus of our national health costs debate?

Every aspect of cancer treatment, from the frequency and types of detection methods used to the cost of chemo to the final costs of dying—every aspect is being eyeballed in terms of risk-benefit ratios framed in terms of cold, hard cash. Even quality-of-life issues have been reduced to numbers (and thus dollars) via a measurement they call the QALY (quality-adjusted life year).

What will happen when the direct and indirect costs of long-term cancer survivorship also become a point in the public health care debate? And what will we choose to do about it?

*Brenda Denzler was diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer in 2009. She became a cancer survivor on the very day she was diagnosed.*

## STEP UP

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me by asking why I felt injured by the proposed interstate highway. I began by saying "as a biologist", the attorney interrupted me and the judge agreed with him. Then, the attorney said, "Mr. Jacob, will you try to answer my question?" I was confused because I had just started to answer his question when he interrupted me and the judge had agreed with him. I started again by saying "I have been studying the importance of wetlands for" and he interrupted me again. Once again the judge agreed with him. I remember saying to the judge "your honor, I don't understand. I try to answer this man's question, he interrupts me and you agree with him". The judge then tells me that I am not on the stand as an expert witness. My reply was "I am an American and I care about the fate of this bird". That was all I needed to say for the National Wildlife Federation to demonstrate standing. The next witness was Jacob Valentine who, as a federal employee, had been studying the Mississippi Sandhill Crane for over 20 years. As the expert witness, he was the professional to make the connection between the loss of habitat and the extinction of the species. All I needed to do was to care.

The judge ruled against the National Wildlife Federation, but the ruling was overturned in a federal appeals court. The interstate and one interchange were eventually built, subdivisions began to spring up, but thousands of acres of wet pine savannah habitat were purchased by the FHA as mitigation and is now managed as the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge. The crane population is continuing to increase, is still listed as federally endangered, but has a brighter future.

Under U.S. law, we all own the fish, birds and wildlife. The population of Cape Fear Shiners has been shrinking over the years because of pollution and habitat loss. As Chatham Park develops, the shiner's habitat will continue to be stressed by non-point source pollution and habitat degradation. Our opportunity to insure the shiner's survival is diminishing. It is time to step forward and be counted.

*Joe Jacob, a Chatham resident for more than 30 years and a marine biologist by training, is president of The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co., [www.hawrivercanoe.com](http://www.hawrivercanoe.com), 336.260.6465. He worked for The Nature Conservancy for 20 years and served as Director of Science for TNC's Southeast Region.*

## SHOCK

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and restaurants. He stated that, "Traffic flow could be an issue if not done right and ultimately cause damage to our local businesses."

With traffic already piling during the day at our beloved circle in downtown, how could we expect to drive on our roads when our population rises so drastically? With talk of the circle no longer being drivable and only used for walking and biking purposes, there seems to be no other reasonable solution. Thus, sacrificing the town's very identity.

"If it's a few scattered houses then it won't have any impact but if it's 20,000 houses in 20 years, then yeah, we won't be a small town anymore. It'll be like Cary," the Pittsboro business owner commented.

With Chatham Park being a Preston Development project, a company based out of Cary, his theory could very well become true.

Our town is being compromised by the idea that every town has to be artificially constructed and revitalized in order to be "the perfect community." But, in reality, we live in Pittsboro because, to us, this is the perfect community and we have a say in what happens to it.

*Brittany Perloff is a freelance writer, poet, and musician. Raised in New York City and residing in Pittsboro, NC, she has an appreciation for multiple perspectives.*

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