

Why Your Dog Is Like a Mirror



A lot of people ask me, [how do I train my dog?](#) Or even more important, how do I go about correcting bad dog behavior that already exists? And the answer is always this.

When it comes to training a dog it's important that we first start with a solid foundation. That's where you get the dog to listen to you, get them to calm down, focus on you and where you "win the dog's mind."

After this you can apply the training side of things where you explain to the dog what you are wanting. And then you ensure that there is consistency in the household with how people are interacting with the dog.

However the subtle part, the part that many people dismiss or fail to realise the power it holds is the energetic side of our relationship.

By energetic I mean, "The Way" that we do everything, how we interact with our dogs and how we are feeling.

It's so easy to say to ourselves, "Oh my dog doesn't really understand how I'm feeling" or "My ongoing frustrations at work doesn't really effect my dog" however over the years I've come to realise that our dogs really do pick up on our energy and are greatly affected by our moods.



You see, **our dogs are like a mirror to our souls.** They are a reflection of us, and can act like a mirror which means that very often... **we are the problem and we are the solution to our dog problems!**

If we are angry, short-tempered, or have anxiety, a dog is likely to reflect the same type of behavior. On the other hand, **if we are cool, calm and relaxed, we're more likely to have a dog that mirrors that behavior and that is calm.**

So, I want to share with you what I believe are the key parts to developing an amazing bond with your dog, and then look a little deeper into this subtle area of how our dogs reflect our energy.

The Foundation: Before we move into the area of energy, we need a solid foundation. And in order to build the foundation, there are some very practical steps that we need to take in order to gain the respect and trust of our dogs. This includes how we feed our dogs, who controls the food, how we greet dogs, interact with dogs and walk dogs. These are the most important practical aspects of our relationship with our canine counterparts. We have to understand how to calm our dog's mind down, get him to focus on us, and know that we're making the decisions. That's the key, and to be honest, that's a large part of what I share with clients, building a foundation isn't the only important part.

Consistency: Another key aspect is consistency, which is quite boring to most people! It means everybody's got to stick with the plan. It's not like we're training a new behavior because your dog has a disease, and once the disease is gone, we can go back to doing the wrong training. You, and everyone else that plays a large part in your dog's life, have to stick with the right training if you want to achieve the best results.

Training: The part that many people start with is the training, and this, in my opinion, is a big mistake. Without a solid foundation in place, the training will not work long-term or when you or your dog is under pressure. **So, before we get to this step, we do have to have a solid foundation in place first.**

So, what exactly is 'training'? Well, for example, if we don't want our dog to come in the kitchen, we need to do a little bit of work showing them exactly where the kitchen starts and finishes. For example, this could include putting some builders sticky tape on the floor for a period of time. Then we can do the training, showing them, 'Good dog' for staying out, and 'Nope, this is what happens to you if you come in the kitchen.' That's the training.

Every step I just mentioned is important, but **today I want to focus on the subtlest side of building an amazing relationship with your dog, which is how our emotions and feelings can affect our dogs. It's a step that a lot of people miss, and it's a fundamental, very powerful part.** The energy side of things takes into account how you act, how you do things around your dog, how you are feeling and what you are thinking...it all impacts your pup. The bottom line is that **how you behave around your dog has a massive impact on how your dog behaves. Your dog is your mirror...he reflects you.**

The best way I can put it is your dog is like a sponge.

I know that I personally am constantly in awe of how smart and sensitive our canine companions are. If your dog is hanging around in a place where there's always screaming and shouting or lots of noise, your dog is unlikely to be a dog that spends most of his time lying in the corner totally chilled out and half asleep. However, if you live on your own in a very quiet part of the country and you're very soft-spoken and mild-mannered, you're far more likely to have a dog who is more chilled out, relaxed and less reactive!



The concept seems fairly simple, but there is one thing I want to make clear...

The biggest mistake I hear is that people assume that if they have a dog who's biting and aggressive, it means they are an aggressive person who goes around fighting and biting people. The correlation is **NOT** that direct!

If you have an aggressive dog, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are an aggressive person. Instead, it's quite possible that you have a lot of frustration or resentment regarding your work or home life, or maybe you are wanting to lash out about something in your life. Your dog can pick up on that frustration and pent-up anger, and then it has to go somewhere. The bottom line is that it's very hard to hide how we really feel from our dogs! How dogs are able to pick on this energy, I don't fully know, but they certainly do. And boy, are they good at it!



Another thing to think about is how much energy your dog is capable of soaking up.

Some dogs are little sponges, while others are big sponges that can tolerate soaking up more energy. (And it has nothing to do with the dog's physical size!) Regardless of how much energy your dog can soak up, eventually he's going to say, 'I've had enough,' and the energy will start to overflow.

So, it might be that you're frustrated with work and your dog soaks in that energy. When you take him down to the park after he's soaked in that energy, he may become frustrated and irritable, which causes him to [snap at you or another dog](#).

This might leave you wondering, 'Why did my dog react that way'?

It's simply because your dog is picking up all that energy you're pouring out and he just can't take it anymore and has to let it out.

At the end of the day, my dogs are not perfect. I'm not perfect. My wife's not perfect. And our kids aren't perfect. But, my family is all very aware of how our energies influence our dogs...And being aware of it is the first stage of learning.

It's vital that each day we take an internal look at ourselves and think about how we change both on a practical level and a spiritual or mental level to help our dogs control their behavior.

As the saying goes... *'It's not what you do but the way that you do it.'*

It's the way you do things that truly matter. You can be quite rude in asking somebody to help, or you can be very polite in asking somebody to do the same thing, and you get a totally different response.