

Pack leader, Head of family, Matriarch- Whatever You Would Like to Call Yourself!

The term pack leader is a bit dated nowadays and using psychology thinking like a dog is the way forward. Your family pet is a pack animal and there is no getting away from this simple fact. Your dog is also very content being in a pack. It gives him security, food and fulfilment and most dogs DO NOT want to be anything but a member of this pack. Your family is his family and your home is his DEN

There is always a family leader which, without this, it would be chaos and the family unit would breakdown. Usually it's the parents that lead a family giving guidance. Like wise your dog also needs guidance and requires a leader. With a leader in place your dog does not have to worry about any danger or finding his food and like all leaders your dog wants to respect the leader

Wolf Study:

Whilst most studies about dog packs actually relate to the study of the wolf, it is still questionable as to whether the findings did actually relate to the domestic dog.

Dr. Frank Beach spent thirty years studying dogs, at Yale and UC Berkeley. Nineteen years of this was devoted to the study of the social behaviour of a dog pack, in which he studied a pack of beagles. The most comprehensive study on dogs that exists

These are some of his findings: I have highlighted key points:

- Male dogs have a rigid hierarchy.
- Female dogs have a hierarchy but it is more variable.
- When you mix the sexes, the rules get mixed up. Males try to follow their constitution, but females have "amendments".
- Young puppies have what is called "puppy license". Basically, this means they can do almost anything. Bitches are more tolerant of this than the males.
- Puppy license is revoked at approximately four months of age. At that time, the older middle-ranked dogs will literally give the puppies "hell". This involves psychologically torturing them until they offer the appropriate appeasement behaviours and take their place at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The top ranked dogs ignore all this.
- There is **no physical domination**. Everything is accomplished through psychological harassment and is ritualistic.
- A small minority of „alpha dogs” gained their position by bullying and force. Those that did were quickly disposed showing no-one likes a dictator.



- The vast majority of alpha dog's rule benevolently. They are confident in their position and don't stoop to squabbling to prove their point. If they did become involved in squabbling, it would reduce their rank as only the middle-ranked animals squabble. Middle-ranked animals do squabble. They are insecure in their positions and want to advance over other middle ranked animals.
- Low ranked animals do not squabble. They know they would lose, know their position and accept it.
- "Alpha" does not mean being physically dominant. It means that the dog is in **control of the resources**. Many alpha dogs are too small or too frail to physically dominate the other dogs, but have earned the right to control valued resources. An individual dog determines which resources he considers important. Therefore an alpha dog may give up a prime sleeping place simply because he could not care less about it.

Dr. Frank Beach considered his findings and how they related to the dog-human relationship:

- **Physical force of any kind reduces your rank**". Only middle ranked animals that are insecure in their place will squabble.
- To be alpha in the dog-human relationship, you need **to control the resources**. This does not mean not allowing the dog to sleep on beds or insisting that you go through doors before the dog however in the case of young male dogs the pack leader will have to show true leadership skills. It is enough that your dog shows basic respect by asking them to sit before opening a door for them, giving them their food, playing a game or taking them for a walk all of course under control. ***Dogs need strong though not aggressive leaders. More wilful dogs need stronger leaders***
- If you control the things that your dog wants, **then you are alpha by definition**.
- Train your dog. In the dog-human relationship, this replaces the phase in the dogs development of "revoking puppy license". Children, women and disabled people are capable of training a dog, but few people are capable of physical domination.
- Reward deferential behaviour rather than rewarding pushy behaviour. If one dog pushes in front of another, give the other dog the attention or food. Make the first dog sit before it gets treated.
- **Be a leader, not a boss or dictator. [Read 5 Golden Rules](#)**