

The '10 commandments' for interaction with a fearful dog

My dog is fearful of unfamiliar people. I want to teach the dog that people are not a threat and avoid any growling, showing of teeth, lunging or snapping. I take this training very seriously. Chances are the problem will get worse unless I help the dog learn how to respond differently.

Following these simple rules is a MUST if you want to help and interact with the dog:

1. Allow my dog to approach you rather than you approaching my dog.
2. Position yourself so the side of your body is turned toward my dog. If you face my dog, you appear much more threatening.
3. Don't stare at or make eye contact with the dog. Dogs think that it is a threat.
4. Avoid bending at the waist and leaning over my dog, which is another threatening posture. Stand up straight (for larger dogs), bend at the knees (for smaller dogs, and if your knees are young enough!) or sit down.
5. Avoid sudden movement. Keep your hands at your side and allow my dog to come up and sniff. Don't hold your hand out for my dog to sniff.
6. I'll give you a treat to offer my dog from your open palm, or you may toss one on the ground. Avoid trying to feed my dog a treat from your fingers.
7. If I tell you it's OK to pet my dog, scratch him under the chin. Avoid reaching over his head or back.
8. Never 'kiss' or 'hug' a dog. Humans show love and affection this way – to a dog it may be seen as an act of serious aggression.
9. We'll let my dog decide if he wants further contact with you. Don't insist on trying to "make friends" with him. If he walks away, leave him alone.
10. Speak softly and use an upbeat voice. Smile and don't hold your breath. This will ensure that your body language appears relaxed. The dog does not 'smell fear'; a tense body may be interpreted as a threat by a dog.

Call her to her

Get medium
gentle leader

Muzzle - Y

Shifts behavior
Dog in training

Spray shield

Drag line or
in house

NO punishment