



Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 10.5.1 – May 3, 2010

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. **Feature Article:** What Does That Bark Mean?
2. **Personal Story:** My Dog Escaped – Again!
3. **Regular Sections:**
 - Dog Trivia
 - Member Submissions
 - Dog Talk Weekly News
 - Competitions
 - Free Stuff

~~~~~  
Classified Ads:  
Have something to sell? Advertise it here. \$15 per insertion.  
Discounted rates for multiple insertions. 4 lines / 250 characters.  
Please go here: <http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>  
~~~~~

What Does That Bark Mean?

Humans generally are not as attuned to how a dog barks as are other dogs. We might think that every bark is basically the same. It's a bark.

It might change slightly, but we tend not to put much emphasis on those changes other than to see that the dog is highly excited or just making small talk.

In the dog's world, there is a significant difference between barks.

Have you ever watched your dog respond when another dog in the neighborhood barks? Sometimes, he takes an interest and perhaps joins in, or ignores it. Have you ever wondered why? This might enlighten you.

First of all, interpreting how a dog barks is not just reserved for dogs. We can gain a lot of meaning from the signals they send, too. A low-pitched sound, like when a dog growls, can be a sign of threats, anger and even aggression. This vocalization is the dog's way of telling you to stay away.

High-pitched sounds are a dog's way of letting you know he or she is no threat, and might even be a way of asking permission to come closer to you.

There are three aspects of dog vocals to consider: the pitch, the sound's duration, and how frequent are the repetitions. Interestingly, pitch is used by at least 56 species of birds and mammals, according to Eugene Morton, a naturalist at the National Zoological Park who conducted the research. He found that elephants, rats, opossums, pelicans, chickadees as well as dogs use pitch to send a certain message.

He found that high-pitched sounds are equally universal among animals. Rhinos, guinea pigs, mallard ducks and wombats use high-pitched sounds to let others know there is no threat.

If you listen closely to humans, you will notice that they use pitch to express a certain mood. When we are angry, our voices will lower; when we want to encourage someone to come closer, we use a higher pitch. This is especially true when we try to get a dog to come to us.

In the dog world, puppies attract the attention of their mothers or seek protection by whimpering in high-pitched tones.

Dogs use these different tones to communicate with other dogs and let them know where they stand. Like all animals, dogs would rather not fight if it can be avoided. That's why they send vocal messages first. If they are not heeded, as in a low pitch warning, the next step could be aggression.

This knowledge can help you to differentiate between dog sounds so that you can avoid being attacked. It's not always easy to translate a dog's intentions just by vocals alone, but pitch is an easy way to start.

Teach children to know the difference as well, so they will be able to act accordingly when they meet a dog. All too often, children get bitten because they have not learned what different dog sounds mean.

You (and Children) Should Know How To Read A Dog

In their excitement to play with a dog, children can miss some important clues. This can lead to them getting bitten. You can see why you must learn the different dog signals and teach them to your children. Here are a few common signs.

Approaching a growling dog -----

As we already discussed, a growling dog is sending a specific message for you to stay away. This message usually comes when a dog has a toy or bone and is protecting it. If your child goes near a growling dog with or without an object, the dog will very likely bite. Teach your child to know the difference between a dog's warning and a dog's greeting.

Approaching an unfamiliar dog -----

Children must be taught not to approach dogs they do not know. In their excitement and enthusiasm to get near one that appeals to them, they will be thinking of nothing else as they race forward. This can a) startle the dog and b) cause the dog to defend his owner and himself. Instruct your child to always ask the owner for permission to pet the dog.

Chasing a tired dog -----

During play, children are unaware of the signs when a dog is hot and tired and wants a break. They will follow the dog everywhere he goes, in essence, flushing him out. Summer is an especially bad time for this, when everyone is outside enjoying the beautiful warm weather. If your child persists on approaching the dog when he seeks a shady place to cool down, the dog will become agitated and could bite.

Keep your dog cool

Keep in mind, too, that dogs must be allowed to cool down during play and have fresh water to drink. If a dog becomes overheated and stays that way for too long, he can have a seizure, much the same as humans can when they experience heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

With summer arriving quickly, remember that a vehicle can heat up very rapidly, which can soon send your dog into heat exhaustion. Never leave your dog in the vehicle alone. It can have drastic consequences. In fact, in some regions, dog owners will receive a hefty fine for exposing a dog to such life-threatening situations.

My Dog Story: Over The Fence He Goes!

Tyler, my Belgian Shepherd, is absolutely mad about kids playing ball, especially soccer balls. This weekend, my neighbor's young sons were in their back yard kicking a soccer ball. Tyler raced to the back fence, stood on his back legs with his forelegs on the top of the chain link, and looked over at them.

His tail was wagging madly. After a few seconds, he dashed from the back fence to the side gate, obviously thinking he'd run over there and join the fun. You might recall that he broke my side fence recently that I have repeatedly fixed. I'm now preparing to rebuild a new, taller fence that he will not be able to scale.

The thing with Tyler is that he is very tall when he stands on his back legs. And he has incredible strength. Not long ago, he got through the back fence into my side neighbor's yard and from there, through a hole in their fence into the kids' yard where I found him playing. At that time, I added a second piece of chain link a foot inside the other wire fence, thinking the distance between the two would be sufficient to deter him from getting out.

Boy, was I wrong. According to the kids, he went flying over the corner of the fence with little hesitation. Since their side is lower than mine, I didn't think he'd try such a daring move, but when excitement takes over, he becomes unconcerned about his own safety.

Fortunately, he was not hurt this time, but I will have to do something else with that fence, too. Besides, when I made my way around the block to their house, I saw that their gate is hanging on one hinge.

Last time he got over, I had asked the kids to close their gate right away so he could not get out until I retrieved him. Obviously, this is no longer possible, making it even more imperative that I find a permanent solution.

If you have such a dog, or even a small one, never underestimate their ability to escape. If they want to go badly enough, they will find a way.

In this case, I wasn't too worried because I had been in the yard all day with him. But you can never be too cautious. I turned my back for 2 minutes to go into the house. When I returned, he was gone.

Regular Sections:

- Dog Trivia

Dogs don't understand words as much as they understand sounds. While they do learn the basic commands, like "Sit", "Down", "Stay", the success of this training is not so much about the words you use, but about the way you say them. You could tell your dog to "Fly" in order to get him to sit, and he won't know the difference, as long as you use the same word each time for that command. As a kid, I often wondered how dogs can learn foreign languages when, in fact, English to a dog is a foreign language.

Some of the most important dog behaviors come from interacting with his environment and not necessarily from his genetics. These influences include rewards and punishments for certain behaviors that we teach them. That is why it is so important to watch how you interact with your dog, or you could be influencing the behavior he displays as an adult.

Puppies are influenced by their littermates while they are still in the mother's womb. Researchers have discovered that if there are more male pups, their male hormones leak into the embryonic fluid and affect all of the pups. This means that females growing in such an environment tend to act more masculine after birth.

The mother's level of stress while she is carrying the puppies in her womb can cause them to be born fearful. If she becomes stressed in the final stages of pregnancy, the puppies can display extreme or exaggerated behaviors.

- Member Submissions

I'm still waiting for you to send me your stories and photos for the Dog of the Month contest that ends May 31. You can view those that have already been submitted here: http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/dog_photo_gallery.htm . You can read the submission details on the bottom of that page. Please note that YOU STILL HOLD THE COPYRIGHT TO YOUR PHOTOS. You are simply giving me permission to use them.

Get your photos in now! On June 1, I will be running the contest where you will have the chance to vote for your favorite photos to name the Dog Photo Of The Month for May.

- Dog Talk Weekly News

I am proud to announce that I have started a Dog Talk Blog where I share more fun tidbits about dogs as I come across them. Be sure to stop by and add your comments. <http://dogtalkweekly.com/dogblog/>

- Competitions

Get your Dog Photos in by May 31 to qualify for the May Dog of the Month contest.

Send Your Photos! Throughout the rest of April and all of May, I invite you to send me your dog photos – the cuter, the better. At the end of May, the members will have a chance to vote on which one they like the best. The winning photo will become the "Dog of the Month". The photo will be displayed on a special "Dog of the Month" page at http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/dog_photo_of_month.htm

Be sure to include a small caption (about as long as that paragraph) giving a few fun details about your dog / photo.
Get more details on the site.

That's it for this issue. I hope you enjoyed it.

Until next week...

Get out there and have fun with your dog. Take some great photos.
Collect wonderful memories.

Sylvia

P.S.: Don't forget to send me your stories and ideas for upcoming issues of Dog Talk Weekly. Just send them to me through my contact form here:

<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

Dog Nutrition is vital to your dog's life expectancy and quality of life. I've written a book on how to make sure your dog gets a healthy, nutritious diet and avoids many of the dangers that come with certain foods. Find out more at

<http://healthydognutritionsecrets.com/healthydogPP1.htm>

Puppy Parenting Course: Are you drowning in a sea of questions about raising your puppy the right way? This 24-week course feeds you all the information you need in bite-size portions that you can use during your puppy's early years. Get a free trial today.

<http://www.dogownersu.com/FreeTrial.htm>

~~~~~

Classified Ads:

Do you have something to sell? Advertise it here. Rates for  
Members: \$15 per insertion: 4 lines / 250 characters. Special  
Rates for multiple insertions. Please send your ad queries to me  
here: <http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

~~~~~