

EASING THE FEARFUL DOG'S FRIGHT AND DEALING WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF FEAR

I THOUGHT I SAW A GHOST - OR OBJECT FEAR

If your dog is afraid of certain objects, like a beach ball, you would need to use the Jolly Routine around the ball. At first, do not even move or roll the ball but let your dog approach it on his own. The dog approaching first gives him an element of control that will help him with confidence.

If he is very leery, put a special treat near the ball and let him eat it. When he is calmly eating a treat at one distance from the ball, then put the treat a step closer and repeat the process. Keep repeating until your dog will eat a treat right off the top of it or right next to it.

For some dogs, the above process may take only ten minutes. For others, it may be a couple of days. The main thing is to let the dog tell you when he's ready to move closer to the ball and that will be when he is calmly eating a treat at a certain distance from the ball. Once your dog is calmly approaching the ball, then you can add movement all the while you do the Jolly Routine. Use this approach on all foreign objects that your dog seems fearful of.

I THOUGHT I HEARD A GHOST - OR NOISE FEAR

Common noise fears are fireworks, fire engines, gunshots, jackhammers, thunderstorms, screaming or crowd noises, loud music and vacuums or lawnmowers. For dealing with this fear of noises, you have several options. Either acquire a tape of the noise your dog is afraid of, or create the noise yourself.

If you acquire a tape of the noise your dog is afraid of, first play it at a volume level that you would play as if you had a baby sleeping in the next room. Make sure you are with your dog during the first stages of socializing him to this scary sound. When your dog appears relaxed at this level, turn up the volume by one-half a level. So if you started on level 2, then go only to 2 ½. Your dog will tell you when he is ready to go to the next volume level by again acting relaxed. If at any time he becomes frightened, remember to do the Jolly Routine and lower the volume back down to the previous level when he was relaxed. Frequent playing with your dog during the scary noise will lessen the impact upon him and in fact get him to associate something good with the awful noise.

If you are recreating the noise yourself, first make sure your dog is not afraid of the object itself, like the vacuum. Use the Jolly routine and use food described earlier to acquaint him with the object first before you turn it on. Next turn the object on in another room so the noise is very distant and then play ball or practice some obedience work with your dog in the opposite room. Once he is relaxed, put the vacuum in a closer room. At this point you are not moving the object. Work in a step like manner until your dog can be in the same room as the object, in this case the vacuum, with it turned on and him playing around it or going to get a treat placed on or near it. Next you may actually

start to vacuum slowly, again remembering to use the Jolly Routine if he appears to be afraid.

MY GOSH, THAT IS A GHOST - OR PEOPLE FEAR

Dogs can also develop fears of different people if not socialized properly. Dogs are not prejudice like humans, but simply fear what they have not been exposed to before. Try to expose your dog to people who vary in age, weight, height & nationality. Expose your dog to people wearing different clothing such as hats and glasses, even scuba gear! Expose your dog to people who have beards, people who use wheelchairs, people who are carrying objects such as grocery bags, canes, tennis racquets, suitcases & tools.

Any combination of people you can possibly imagine, you want to expose your dog to using the Jolly Routine. Simply have the person you are introducing your dog to feed your dog a treat. What a wonderful way for Fido to learn that people are not scary and they carry treats too! Please make sure that if your dog is excited about meeting someone new, that you have Fido sit before he is fed. That way he is learning good habits as well as being socialized.

If your dog is very fearful of someone, do not drag him toward the “three headed dragon.” You will only make your dog’s fear worse. Just have that “dragon” stand still and be quiet while you leave a trail of treats toward them. When your dog is comfortable going up to the person, then have the “dragon” feed him a treat. If your dog will not approach their hand, have your “dragon” drop the treat at their feet for your dog to eat. All the while you are acting JOLLY to assist your dog in gaining confidence. Once your dog easily takes a treat dropped at the “dragon’s” feet, then have the person crouch down. Let your dog approach and eventually have your dog take a treat from their hand.

NEVER AT ANY TIME SHOULD YOU PUSH OR PULL YOUR DOG TOWARD A PERSON THEY ARE AFRAID OF. Your dog may be so fearful that he may feel that he has no choice but to bite them to keep them away from him.