

## Module 1 - Section 2 - Canine Development Theory

### 1. From Wolf to Dog - Pack Rule Theories

### 2. Development Stages

#### 1. From Wolf to Dog - Pack Rule Theories.



This is a subject which always invites debate, and as new evidence arises the subject becomes even more controversial. There are numerous theories as to how this wild predator, the wolf, evolved into a dog and two of these hypotheses in particular have gained widespread acceptance.

The first is the deliberate/artificial theory, where humans played a major role in the selection of breed and the second hypotheses of natural evolution, where, due to a changing environment, the wolves themselves started changing. Both of these hypothesis have been widely written about by experts such as Raymond & Lorna Coppinger, Dr. L. D. Mech and others, but we may never know which one of them is correct.

To get a basic understanding of this theory do have a look at the link below featuring a talk with the Coppingers and when time permits, read the book 'Dogs: A Startling New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior & Evolution' by Raymond and Lorna Coppinger.

A talk with the Coppingers

<http://www.workingdogweb.com/coppinger.htm>

#### Pack Rule Theories

John fisher, in his excellent book – 'Diary of a Dotty Dog Doctor' wrote the following about pack rules:-

*'The purpose of all these mental and physical gymnastics is to try and establish a*

*dominance/submissive relationship between us and our dogs, with us being the more dominant. This is all fine if it's how you want to live with your dog, but I have news that is going to disappoint a lot of people who have striven to reach this Alpha status – it all means diddly squat to your dog”.*

In order to discuss the pack rule theories, we have to first look at why these theories came into effect: -

This terminology originated from a study of captive zoo wolves in the 1930's and 1940's by a Swiss animal behaviourist called Rudolph Schenkel. His conclusions were that wolves in a pack situation will fight to gain dominance, and the winner is the alpha wolf. He believed that challenges for the alpha role were daily, common occurrences and it was only the constant aggressive actions of the alpha male and female that stopped the other dogs from 'taking over' alpha pack position.

Schenkel's finding led to other behaviourist studying captive wolves, and the findings were that there was definitely a lot of violent behaviour and struggles to achieve the alpha positions and this led to agreement of Schenkel's initial findings.

Schenkel's original findings translated into English -PDF can be downloaded below. . The information is from <http://www.davemech.org/schenkel/index.html>,

- [pages 1-10](#) (3.82 MB)
- [pages 11-21](#) (3.91 MB)
- [pages 22-31](#) (3.48 MB)
- [pages 32-41](#) (3.47 MB)
- [pages 42-51](#) (3.44 MB)
- [pages 52-59](#) (2.64 MB)
- [illustrations](#) (2.53 MB)
- [translation of the illustrations](#) (3.04 MB)

However, what was not taken into account in the original studies was the following:-

1. The wolves were captive zoo wolves – no studies were done in the wild on a family pack.
2. The locations they were being studied in were artificial.
3. The wolves were not all necessarily from the same pack or even related in any way – many wolves captured were placed together.
4. The natural evolution of the younger males leaving the pack to find their own territory could not occur.



The wolves initially studied were in captivity, not their natural surroundings and not necessarily from the same pack

The above manner of thinking continued until David Mech (a well-known expert and author on wolf behaviour) started to publish his own findings – at the introduction of one of his articles published in 2000, regarding the situation in which the wolves were originally studied, (well worth reading, and we have supplied the link to the full article below the quote), he says: -

*“In nature, however, the wolf pack is not such an assemblage. Rather, it is usually a family (Murie 1944; Young and Goldman 1944; Mech 1970, 1988; Clark 1971; Haber 1977) including a breeding pair and their offspring of the previous 1-3 years, or sometimes two or three such families (Murie 1944; Haber 1977; Mech et al. 1998).”*



**David Mech**

And.....

*“As offspring begin to mature, they disperse from the pack*

*as young as 9 months of age (Fritts and Mech 1981; Messier 1985; Mech 1987; Fuller 1989; Gese and Mech 1991). Most disperse when 1-2 years old and few remain beyond 3 years (Mech et al. 1998). Thus, young members constitute a temporary portion of most packs, and the only long-term members are the breeding pair. In contrast, captive packs often include members forced to remain together for many years (Rabb et al. 1967; Zimen 1982; Fentress et al. 1987)."*

Further.....

*"Attempting to apply information about the behaviour of assemblages of unrelated captive wolves to the familial structure of natural packs has resulted in considerable confusion. Such an approach is analogous to trying to draw inferences about human family dynamics by studying humans in refugee camps. The concept of the alpha wolf as a "top dog" ruling*

*a group of similar-aged compatriots (Schenkel 1947; Rabb et al. 1967; Fox 1971a; Zimen 1975, 1982; Lockwood 1979; van Hooff et al. 1987) is particularly misleading."*

[http://www.mnforsustain.org/wolf\\_mech\\_dominance\\_alpha\\_status.htm](http://www.mnforsustain.org/wolf_mech_dominance_alpha_status.htm)

What then occurred, due to the research done by Schenkel and others, was that because our dogs are direct descendants from wolves, a direct comparison was made between wolves and dogs. It was believed that we had to act like the wolves that were studied and in order to have a good relationship with our dogs to stop them 'taking over', we had to actually 'dominate' them to keep them in line. Dominance is a description of a social relationship where one of the parties has an elevated status over the other.

Thankfully with the new research that has been done (and is ongoing) we are learning to understand our dogs on a much deeper level than "pack theory".

Are there similarities between dogs and wolves? Yes, apart from numerous studies and research which indicate that the modern domestic dog (*Canis Familiaris*) and the wolf (*Canis Lupus*) both have 78 chromosomes and that their mitochondrial DNA is virtually identical, there are further similarities. They have the same number of teeth, but the size of the brain is smaller in the dog, says Prof. Odendaal. Here is a chart which shows the general differences between the canid species (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/wolf/identify.html>)

## Comparisons between wolf, coyote and dogs

General differences between canid species

	Wolf	Coyote	Dog
<b>Color</b>	Mix of tan, brown, black, gray & especially cinnamon on ears. Some are black.	Mix of tan, brown, gray & some black, but usually lighter than wolf.	Highly varied but usually not the mix of tan, brown, gray & black of wolves. Often more solid colors.
<b>Hair</b>	Furry	Furry	Often flat & short.
<b>Ears</b>	Erect, rounded & furry.	Erect, pointed & furry.	Floppy or erect, lack fur in ears.
<b>Head</b>	Large, long, blocky snout, low forehead.	Long, pointed snout, low forehead.	Short, blocky snout, high forehead.
<b>Tail</b>	Held flaccid or out straight, no curve.	Held flaccid or out straight, no curve.	Usually curved tail and some curl over back.
<b>Precaudal gland</b>	Black spot on back of tail.	Black spot on back of tail.	Usually no black spot on back of tail.
<b>Chest and legs</b>	Narrow chest, legs close together.	Narrow chest, legs close together.	Often broad or barrel chest, legs spread apart.
<b>Weight (adult)</b>	50-100 lbs.	25-45 lbs.	5-150 lbs.
<b>Shoulder height</b>	27-33"	20-22"	10-32" (few are greater than 25")
<b>Total length</b>	5-6 ft.	3 1/2 - 4 1/2 ft.	Highly variable.
<b>Scat</b>	Distinct, cylindrical with tapered fringes of hair. Most are full of deer, beaver, or sometimes snowshoe hare hair. Usually over 1" in diameter. May be as wide as 1.5" and 4-7" long.	Usually less than 1" diameter, and often full of small mammal hair.	Lack of hair, lack of tapered fringe and full of cereal matter.



Wolves have always been regarded by man as having a certain mystique and today, in South Africa, wolf hybrids (part wolf, part dog) are being bred and many people speak about this new breed with awe – *“My dog is part wolf!”*, is the first thing you are told about the dog - our questions would be why - who would want one!

### Wolf hybrid

It was originally believed that our relationship with dogs went back in the region of 16000 years; however recent evidence (2015) according to Science Daily says that the ancestors of modern day dogs may go back as far as 27000 – 40000 years. Do read the link below to the article. [http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/05/150521133626.htm?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily%2Fplants\\_animals%2Fdogs+%28Dogs+News+---+ScienceDaily%29](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/05/150521133626.htm?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily%2Fplants_animals%2Fdogs+%28Dogs+News+---+ScienceDaily%29)

- Graduate Student/Post-doctoral Fellows Openings - L. David Mech

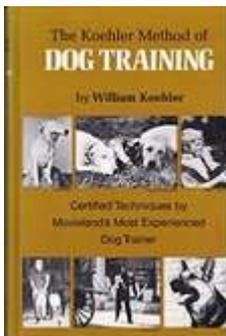
[www.davemech.org/schenkel/index.html](http://www.davemech.org/schenkel/index.html)

### The Old Pack Rule Theory

The way in which a wolf pack was believed to be structured was based on the following:-

- There is an alpha pair in each pack
- Only that male and female would mate and breed
- The alpha male always leads the pack
- The alpha pair have first pickings of any available food
- The alpha pair decides where the pack sleeps.
- The alpha will always dominate the other pack members to achieve what it wants.

We were led to believe that if the dog exhibited any behavioural problems or even appeared stubborn in obeying commands, we had to introduce a rank reduction program to ensure that the dog knew its place in the pack. The rank reduction program included such things as – eating something before feeding the dog, not allowing the dog on the chairs or bed, not playing games of tug, alpha rolling the dog into submission, physical punishment, and a host of other means to reduce the dogs standing, which if you see the points above, are based on the original flawed research on wolf packs.



Prior to the 1900's, a book by W. N. Hutchinson was published, which was regarded as ground breaking - *Dog Breaking: The Most Expeditious, Certain and Easy Method, Whether Great Excellence or Only Mediocrity Be Required, With Odds and Ends for Those Who Love the Dog and the Gun. Primarily concerned with training hunting dogs*

*such as pointers and setters, the book advocates a form of reward-based training, commenting on men who have "a strong arm and a hard heart to punish, but no temper and no head to instruct"*

Then in the early 1900's more people started to advocate the use of harsh techniques based

on the old pack rule theory, two of them better known than others were Colonel Konrad Most and later William Koehler.

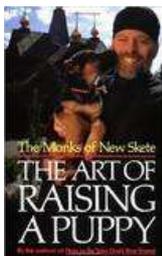
Koehler trained dogs for the military initially and his writings advocated techniques such as hanging and helicoptering (spinning around while dangling) a dog into submission. You would have thought that as we learned more about dogs that methods such as these would have disappeared, but unfortunately they have not, and many people are still using versions of the old pack rule theories today.

I myself encountered the ‘hanging’ method about 1997, when I took my very reactive Rotti, Zeus, to training to try and get help for his aggression towards other dogs. As I exited the car, Zeus launched himself (with me holding on tightly behind him, but being dragged as he weighed even more than me) at another dog. Before I could turn around and move him away, an instructor grabbed the lead and within seconds had lifted Zeus up into the air suspending him from the end of the lead – the dog almost passed out! My reaction to this – I got into the car and left – in tears! It was not because I knew another way at that stage, it was because this to me was inherently disturbing, and I was determined to find another way to help my dog.

Another practise that Koehler used to stop a dog digging was to fill the hole the dog had dug with water and then the dog’s head was forced into the hole and submerged – until the dog was almost drowned.

Around about 1975 a new name in dog training emerged which had a philosophy that was *“understanding is the key to communication, compassion and communication”* with your dog.

This was introduced by the Monks of New Skete (A men’s monastery, founded in 1966 in the New York area. They have bred German Shepherds for over 25 years) and in principal sounded great with a promising new way of working with dogs.



However, The Monks were responsible for the introduction of the alpha roll (originally known as “Alpha-Wolf Roll-Over” and other physical means of punishment such as the scruff shake. The scruff shake is when one grabs both sides of the dog’s face at the same time, lifts the dog off the floor and shakes it vigorously. They often ended this off with a smack (or several) under

the dogs chin with an open hand – enough for the dog to whelp in pain.

It was originally believed that the Alpha Roll was dominant behaviour when one wolf pinned the other wolf down and forced it to submit. However the theory behind the alpha roll was based on research of captive wolves kept in an area too small for the numbers of wolves and was made up of wolves that would not have been together in a natural environment. Much of the research has proven false, especially that of the alpha roll. Also the name was a misnomer by so called wolf experts as it bears little relation to the natural behaviour shown by wolves. The closest to the alpha roll is the behaviour that is called 'pinning' and this does not seem to serve as a correction or a punishment and is often seen in pups and older wolves playing.



Are these people cruel and unthinking? No, not at all, they were working and training dogs in the manner they believed was correct! Think about it, the only collar that was used for a dog not that long ago was the choke train – we used and did what we believed the 'experts' told us.

What is hard to understand however, is when people are shown that there is another, less invasive manner of working with dogs available today ( and it works so well!) why so many people will insist in sticking to the old ways. I believe that this is either fear of admitting that they could have been wrong, or is based on the Milgram experiment, where people are actually so ingrained in their ways and the believe that the 'authority' involved, could never be wrong, that they just can't change. To read more about the Milgram experiment, you can see:

<http://www.friendsofthedog.co.za/1/post/2013/01/the-milgram-experiment-and-how-it-relates-to-dog-training.html>

Below is an excerpt from an article by Dutton & Painter, 1981, where Traumatic bonding is discussed in length. Although this article discusses the relationship in humans, there are

many parallels to training in dogs where harsh methods such as the old fashioned methods based on Pack Rule Theory are used. Traumatic bonding is *“strong emotional ties that*

*develop between two persons where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses, or intimidates the other”*. They also say that there have to be several factors in order for Traumatic bonding to occur, and one of the main one’s is *“that there must be an imbalance of power, with one person more in control of key aspects of the relationship, such as setting themselves up as the authority, through such things as controlling the finances, or making the most of the relationship decisions, or using threats and intimidation, so the relationship as become lop sided.”*

This sounds somewhat like the relationship (or lack thereof) between a handler using the dominance theory manner of training and the dog.

#### Emotional Attachments in Abusive Relationships: A Test of...

lab.drondon**dutton**.com/.../**DUTTON-PAINTER**.-EMOTIONAL-...

Recent research indicates that domestic dogs do not form packs with dominance hierarchies in the true sense of the word, although opinions do vary in this regard. Many of the dominance beliefs were based on what are now known to be ritualistic displays of wolf behaviour and many of these have been disproved by further research on the subject by numerous experts such as L. Boitani, F. Francisci, Coppinger, Dunbar and other well informed and knowledgeable people. Due to further research that has been done, it is now questionable as to whether the pack rules even apply to wolves!

If we therefore continue to apply the old fashioned pack rules, the end result will be detrimental to both dog and its handler, and they will never achieve the true bond that can develop between dog and handler, where the relationship is based on trust and mutual respect.

*“Intelligent dogs rarely want to please people who they do not respect”*

W. R. Koehler

Should respect not be a two way street that has to be earned, not enforced?

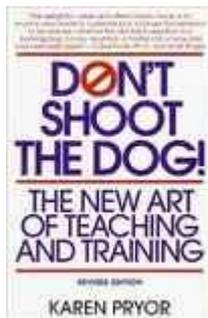
Here is an interesting link for you to read through on recent differences found between wolf and dog puppies which was first published in January of 2013.

Why Wolves Are Forever Wild, but Dogs Can Be

Tamed [http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130117152012.htm?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily%2Fplants\\_animals%2Fdogs+%28ScienceDaily%3A+Plants+%26+Animals+News+---+Dogs%29](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130117152012.htm?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily%2Fplants_animals%2Fdogs+%28ScienceDaily%3A+Plants+%26+Animals+News+---+Dogs%29)

What would be a good idea would be to read as much as you can about wolves and how they interact so that you can draw your own conclusions.

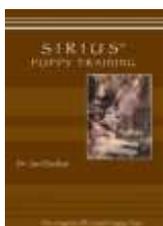
### More Modern Theories



Up until 1985, when Karen Pryor, a marine mammal trainer, published her book 'Don't Shoot the Dog', which advocated the method of operant condition using the clicker to train dogs, the old fashioned methods of training were still the norm. This fantastic book caused a real change in the ways of training dogs by way of Clicker Training, which is still one of the best methods available today.

The next major change in training came about when Dr. Ian Dunbar founded the APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers) in 1993. The APDT advocated the use of reward based training methods the APDT and Dr. Dunbar were responsible for furthering education and promoting new methods being used in dog training.

Not all members of the APDT engage in the more modern methods, some are still using old methods, choke and prong collars, but I will never forget when I organized him coming out to SA a few years ago, under the auspices of the ABC of SA, that in one of the seminars he was asked why the APDT accepted membership from people that advocated the use of the



harsher methods. His reply *"it is only by example that we can show another way, fighting and dissing will achieve the opposite of what it is we want to achieve. When we show by example and without prejudice, then we open others up to looking at other alternatives"*.

Another huge step forward was in 1980, when Dr. Dunbar “*created and taught the world's very first puppy class, so that his Alaskan Malamute puppy could attend school. At that time, of the fifty training clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area, none would accept a dog until*

*he was at least six months to a year old!*” This new way of puppy training was called Sirius© Puppy training and the whole class is based on the pups being off lead. Prior to his introduction of the new method, dogs were only taken to training between 6 – 12 months of age!

Dr. Dunbar his wife Kelly (Gorman) are still today, very much the leaders in sharing and spreading education on dogs. They have been joined by many others advocating the more modern methods, such as Patricia McConnell, Dr. Karen Overall, Dr. Nicholas Dodman, Suzanne Clothier, Riese van Fleet, and newer additions are Sarah Fisher, Victoria Stillwell, among many others.

Our more modern theories work very much on the premise of getting the dog to do what we want by utilizing methods such as lure and reward and clicker training. These are based on motivational training where we reward the dog for the behaviour we desire. Nowhere in these training methods are found any of the old type ‘dominance’ training. Instead, should the dog not do what we request, it is ignored not punished.

Sometimes we feel that the more modern methods of Lure and Reward training are taken to the extremes, where there is little or no consequence for unacceptable behaviour, and many instructors will not bring in the fading of rewards soon enough, leaving owners with a situation where the dog will only work with food present, which then in essence becomes bribing. In the Lure and Reward method, some instructors will not employ methods such as the Non Reward Marker or Time-out's either. This is not a criticism of the method; it is rather a criticism of a lack of understanding on the part of the instructor who does not realize the importance of negative punishment.

If we look at the dominance belief in terms of our new understanding and knowledge, we will find that the aggressive, growling dog, who was supposed to be the Alpha dog, is rare. The true pack leader seldom growls and barks, it just doesn't need to! It is normally a dog who is calm and secure in its own position and to whom the other dogs look up to. The lower

ranking dogs, the 'wannabees' will be the dogs who exhibit snarling, growling and barking. The only exception to this is the lowest ranking dog, which will often neither growl nor snarl. This is because it knows its own position in the pack and is happy maintaining a low profile.

Yes, we do, in our more modern training methods, make use of such things as calming signals and body language, but no matter how good we become at it, I doubt if it will ever be an exact replica of what the dog's body language indicates. For this reason alone, how can we ever become one of their pack or vice versa? We can't, we are two different species trying to co-habit in a home environment, as harmoniously as possible.

However, if we view the framework of a successful hierarchy in a development context, it becomes apparent that 'subordination hierarchy' is a better term for the canine social structure, accordingly to Dr. Ian Dunbar. This was first suggested by primatologist Dr. Themla Rowell. This means that the existing hierarchy is kept in place by the *respect* given to the higher ranking individuals. This is also true of a family group of humans. For the most part, the previous sentence appears to work for both humans and dogs, and most seem to live in relative harmony.

If we look further at the pack rules of the newer 'subordination hierarchy' suggested by Dr. Ian Dunbar, we believe that the following points should be taken into consideration:-

What can make this even more confusing for dog owners is that they have been told to cater to the 'top dog/alpha' in the family first, even by those who advocate the more modern training methods i.e. feed it first, greet it first etc., and then give each dog the relevant attention in the correct pack hierarchy order. But, if we look at virtually any multi-dog household, different dogs may exhibit 'top dog' characteristics at different times! An example of this is that one dog may be the pack leader or dominant dog when it comes to food, whereas another dog in the same family may be more concerned about getting attention from the owner, or who gets hold of the ball first. Different aspects are important to different dogs.

This becomes more prevalent when we look at the different breeds. A dog bred for guarding may appear more dominant as it barks and growls at people walking by or approaching the house or owner. A dog bred to retrieve may be 'top dog' when it comes to ball games. So as we have the different breed characteristic we then have a possible situation where that

particular dog will exhibit 'top dog' mannerisms. We then have the dog who just wants our attention, regardless of breed. Many ethologists involved in wolf watching have largely dismissed the theory that wolves adhere to the pack rules.

Many other animals live in packs as well, but these are normally animals of the same species. As humans and dogs are not the same species, we cannot form a pack. That we form a social group goes without saying, but we do not form a pack in the true sense of the word. A pack is something which is *species specific*, and even the way we smell is different.

Where then does that leave us? Do we dump the theory of pack rules completely or is there some merit in them?

### Is there any merit to pack rules?

Although we believe that the old pack rules really have no place in our modern society with the more modern methods we have available to us, there is however nothing wrong with teaching your dog to be well mannered, as we would do with our children, which is why we believe that House Rules are essential.. Every home and situation is different and the important thing is that if you ask a dog to get off the furniture, release a tug toy etc, it is expected to happen. If the dog ignores the request and continues doing this 'own thing' then the question to ask is "where has the training failed - not assume that he is exhibiting alpha/dominance behaviour.

Our job as behaviourist, trainers and guardians is not one that should be taken lightly. If we think about it, we as the owners actually control all our dogs' needs and resources – food and water, veterinary care, exercise and even reproduction. By utilizing these resources we can get our dogs to do anything we like without the use of force and physical chastisement and with the dog being rewarded for performing the behaviours we request. As Patricia McConnell says "*our house dogs are sitting on a veritable gold mine of resources*".

To investigate some of these beliefs in more detail we have split them into sections to examine whether there are any benefits to them at all:-

The Alpha Roll – This is a severe modification in the old pack rule theory which was based on the behaviour of the wolf when it wanted to discipline or control other members of the pack. The Alpha Roll involves swiftly rolling a dog onto its back and holding it there until it submits by lying still and looking away from the owner. It was even suggested that if the owner growled and shook the dog the process would be even more effective!



However these initial studies were incorrect and what the new breed of Ethologists have found is that when a wolf wanted to dominate another, he would ‘muzzle grasp’ (Place his own muzzle, mouth wide open & teeth bared GENTLY over the muzzle of another wolf) (Roger Abrantas). Now here is where the difference came in – the pinned/grasped wolf would then roll over and submit **voluntarily**. Ian Dunbar states that if a wolf did flip another wolf against its will, then its intention would be to kill the other wolf.

I don’t believe that we fully comprehend the amount of damage that a method such as the alpha roll could cause apart from the fact that if the dog was prone to aggression, it could well feel the need to defend itself and the owner could end up being seriously hurt. This then says nothing about how much harm would be done to the relationship between the two. Using physical force of any kind actually reduces your ‘rank’ in your dog’s eyes.

In terms of our more modern understanding of dogs, the aspect we *should* investigate is why the behaviour of aggression started. This type of behaviour does not evolve without reason; it is mostly a result of the dog’s interaction with both its owner and/or its environment.

From a psychological point of view the damage that could be done is tremendous. One of the worst cases I have personally experienced with the dominance theory being brought in was that of a happy, loving 8 month old Great Dane who trained with as a puppy.

He was habituated with the family's children from 9 weeks of age and the relationship between all members of the family was excellent. One afternoon they had a couple visit them who had a young baby. They put the baby on the sofa and Boris, the male dog, came up to smell the baby. Before the owner knew what was happening, the father of the baby had dived on top of Boris and proceeded to perform an alpha roll on him. He said afterwards that the dog's behaviour was potentially dangerous (by smelling the baby?) and the owners had to sort it out and what he had just done was the way they should go about it.

During the following week, the owner said that the dog's behaviour changed completely. He was no longer the loving dog he had been, often slinking away as people approached him and going into hiding. His relationship with the other dog in the family, a bitch, changed as well and he started snapping at her. The dogs had always had access to the sofa but would jump down when told to get off. Boris started growling at anybody who told him to jump down and refused to budge.

The handler was understandably concerned and upset and phoned for advice. When I saw Boris again, I couldn't believe the change in him, this was no adolescent behaviour, this dog was completely different.

After undergoing full behaviour modification starting at scratch again, utilizing lure and reward, clicker and TTouch, Boris was back to his old self after a week or two.

A month or two later I bumped into his owners at the shops and on asking how Boris was doing was told that they had decided that their garden was too small for two such large dogs and her in-laws had adopted Boris.

Having known Boris since 9 weeks of age and the owner I did not believe this and I decided to pursue this further and the owner opened up to me that as Boris's aggressive behaviour which occurred after the alpha roll incident had frightened her, she was understandably hesitant about him being with the children and they had decided to re-home him.

The two children were heartbroken and not only had one alpha roll affected the dog adversely; it also affected the whole family and their relationship with Boris. The one main

aspect that we have in our favour in a situation such as this is that dogs have the amazing ability to forgive us our mistakes!

*“The small percentage of dogs that bite people is monumental proof that the dog is the most benign, forgiving creature on earth”*

W. R. Koelher

#### .Never let a dog lie in a strategic place such as top of stairs

If we examine the pack rule of never letting a dog lie in the hall or doorway, we will find that this was based on the theory that an Alpha dog always positions himself so that he can see the comings and goings of his pack. As Barry Easton says ‘a large pack doesn’t always stay together all the time so it doesn’t matter where alpha positions himself, he won’t be able to see the comings and goings of his whole pack’. He further suggests that if the Alpha does position himself strategically, it would be more to do with spotting intruders, rather like the family dog lying next to the gate watching the comings and goings in the street.

This is one of the very few pack rules that makes a bit of sense to us. Not from the point of view that it is dominance behaviour in any way, more from the aspect of safety. If you have elderly, infirm people or toddlers and children in the house, it makes sense to teach the dog its own ‘place’ to lie down in to prevent people tripping over it.

#### People go through doorways first.

For the same reason, the second so-called rule of people having to go through the doorway first based on the principle that it was the Alpha’s privilege to go through first. Let’s look at it from this perspective – are you going to go out in the rain first to allow your dog to eliminate? He’s welcome to go by himself!

We do believe that in the situation where elderly or infirm people are staying in the house or a Mom with a young child, that the dog should be taught the ‘wait’ cue for when it is necessary. This just ensures that nobody is knocked off their feet and as far as we are concerned, it is ‘polite’ behaviour.

Teaching and learning are not encouraged at all by intimidation. Many of the old pack rules were based on dominance behaviour from the owner and this is the prime reason why they should be discarded. Where is the connection that when a dog enters our home he is joining

our 'pack' and as such he should defer to a leader and be subordinate? Instead he should become a part of our family and therefore the House Rules we put into place would apply, just as they apply for our children in the home environment, in schools, work places and civilized society in general. Dogs very seldom exhibit so called pack behaviour so we don't see how they would understand what we are telling them when we exhibit this supposedly alpha wolf behaviour.

### Conclusion

We have to remember that dogs are not wolves, but neither are they human. It is our responsibility to accept that we have a different social system and as our dogs don't read, it is up to us to learn as much about their social system as we can, and then implement the relevant house rules around this.

The more we learn about dog and wolf behaviour, the more it becomes evident that the majority of what had initially been written about it should be discarded. Once again, there is a lack of knowledge, both in some trainers and among the general public and it is our job to ensure that we do our utmost to educate people and show them the correct manner to interact with their dogs.

- The Alpha Fallacy : <http://www.friendsofthedog.co.za/alpha-fallacy.html>
- Pack and alpha : [http://www.auf-den-hund-gekommen.net/-/Pack\\_and\\_Alpha\\_Yes\\_No.html](http://www.auf-den-hund-gekommen.net/-/Pack_and_Alpha_Yes_No.html)
- Dominance in Dogs – Facts or Fiction : <http://www.deaf-dogs-help.co.uk/help/dominance.htm>

## **2. Development Stages**

Just like humans, dogs are of the species that matures slowly after birth. The pup is not completely developed and is incapable of surviving on its own. Not all, but the majority of mammals experience a socialization period, during which; they can happily accept new and novel experiences. The length varies between species and with puppies it is believed that the most important period is from 3 weeks to approximately 16 weeks of age. After that, the 'curtain' comes down and it is much harder to habituate a dog to new experiences. This

period is timed to coincide with the period when dogs living in the wild begin to wander further away from the den.

The pup has been chosen and the client will have made arrangements to collect the pup at 8 We disagree with the statement that the Coppingers make that *'it cannot learn to cope with that environment because it does not have the necessary cell connections'* Whether it is because we always incorporate Tellington TTouch which is believed to activate cellular activity, into behaviour consults (to some degree or other), we have had a lot of success at helping dogs in this regard, regardless of age. Not all dogs will have a 100% rehabilitation, but all of them do improve substantially.

The following table will show you the development stages up to 16 weeks of age. This is a rough figure and changes to up to 18 weeks with some breeds.

Stage One Birth – 13 days	This is approximately from birth to 13 days and is also called the Neonatal Stage/Period. Imprinting between mother and pups takes place. The pup is born almost helpless; it is blind, deaf, has no teeth and can only crawl in a limited manner. It can't control bodily functions such as elimination and body temperature and is really a creature of reflexes. Its world consists of food and bodily contact with the mother and littermates. If it doesn't get food or the body contact it needs it will either whimper or whine.	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Two days old</b></p>
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<p>Stage Two 13 – 21 days</p>	<p>Also called the Transition Period. Between 13 to 19 days it will open its eyes and ears but both are very limited and will slowly begin responding to light, movement and sound. The pup starts to be able to control bodily functions. The milk teeth start appearing and it can start eating solid food and pups will attempt to get up on their feet, but continue crawling, often backwards. They will start to recognize mom and littermates. Toward the end of this period they may begin trying to get out of the whelping box. Many breeders start introducing novel stimuli into the whelping box and start to pick up and interact with the puppies.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Two weeks of age</b></p>
<p>21 – 28 days</p>	<p>This is a very important period with rapid sensory development and is often termed the Awareness Stage. Pup becomes alert to its environment and will startle easily at sudden sounds and movements and the ear canals are fully open. The pup may start to recognize the breeder and people it sees on a daily basis. It is able to regulate his body temperature. Dr. Dunbar believes that this particular stage is even more important than previously</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Three and a half weeks of age</b></p>

	<p>believed. He says that this is a stage wherein breeders need to do all they can to socialize a puppy and let it meet as many different people and be exposed to as many different sounds and experiences as possible and this to be continued until the pup goes to its new home as 8 weeks.</p>	
<p>28 days – 16 weeks</p>	<p>his and the previous period overlap and in some books it is broken down into further stages of between 19-49 days and termed the Canine Socialization Stage. The second breakdown is Human Socialization Stage which occurs at 7-12 weeks and the last being the Fear Period between 8 – 11 weeks. However, we along with others believe that these stages overlap. Dr. Dunbar spoke of how the tests that pups were exposed to in order to the first fear period were not adequate to confirm this stage. This is also a critical period of development of social awareness for both canine socialization and human socialization. Play behaviour becomes increasingly intense. Pups start to develop problem solving abilities and coordination becomes better. Between four to</p>	 <p><b>Eight and a half weeks of age</b></p>

	<p>five weeks of age pups begin to show the first signs of aggressive behaviour and they will engage in conflict with their litter mates.</p> <p>Between 5 to 7 weeks is the time when the pup learns to relate to self and to its litter mates. The pup starts to learn about Bite Inhibition by playing with its litter mates. Many pups found in pet shops are approximately 6 weeks of age (some younger) and miss out on this crucial period in their lives. Many of the dogs we work with for fear behaviour have been adopted at 6 weeks of age. Who knows how long before that they were taken to the pet shop?? Many good breeders start to isolate their pups for short periods of time in order to get them adjusted to leaving the pack and you can suggest to owners that they ask the breeders to practice this.</p> <p>At about 6 weeks the eyes focus completely and weaning takes place between 6 – 8 weeks. At about 8 weeks is the normal time for the brain waves to have developed into that of an adult dog and this is the time many pups go to their new homes. An associate in USA says that it is</p>	
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	<p>actually illegal in the state of Colorado to remove a pup from its dam before 8 weeks of age. The period from 3 to 16 weeks is the most important part of your pup's education and the utmost care must be taken to ensure that all experiences are positive ones. Bad experiences occurring at this stage can become permanent, although that TTouch, together with behaviour modification can go a long way to help the dog overcome problems should they occur, but prevention is far better than cure. If the pup does have a bad experience and his behaviour seems to change suggest to your client that they consult a behaviourist as soon as possible to help. The sooner the problem is tackled the easier and quicker it will be to resolve.</p>	
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