



Acme Canine's team of amazing dog trainers. Pictured from left to right are, top row: Jillian Thomas, CPT\*, Milo, Spike, Gypsy, Trex, Chris Deboard, CPT; bottom row: Fiona, Jibbit, Laura Pakis, CPT, Woofie, Sophie, Stella  
 \*Certified Professional Trainer

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Featuring Dog Training Tips from Acme Canine – Part I of II

## Part 1: What It Means To Be The Leader

By Laura Pakis

***Dogs are part of our lives. They are a part of our family. We want to take them everywhere. We buy them the best food and their favorite toys. We love them like furry little children. But they are still dogs and need to be treated as such. Sound harsh? To your dog, it sounds like plain common sense.***

To understand why your canine companion is treating **you** like a dog, you need to better understand the way they think. In this day and age, it is very trendy to rationalize your dog's actions or explain away their bad behaviors. However, it is unfair to humanize them by projecting our emotions onto them. People



sometimes forget that they are animals and don't have the same thought process as we do and can't be expected to always make the same decisions we would.

You need to change the roles in your home. Your dog needs to know that you are the leader of the household pack. Remember, the companion dogs we know today are still descendants of wolves and they still have a pack mentality. It is your job as leader to make sure your dog's basic needs are met, that he is safe from harm, that he has a clearly defined social structure and lots of love and attention. If he is certain that you are doing the job well and that he does not have to continue to vie for the "top dog" position, it will remove a lot of pressure from his shoulders. He can relax, get comfortable and enjoy being a pet dog. Ninety percent of behavior problems can be addressed by clarifying your position and changing your interactions with your dog. He will thank you for it!

Dogs communicate with body language and eye contact. You want to remove as much of that as possible so there are no mixed signals between you and your dog. To a dog, excessive eye contact is either intimidating or a challenge and neither of those are really what you want to communicate. Body language is how your dog reads your intentions and interactions. It is a lot for them to process if you are chasing after them and screaming. They are faster than you and you probably just scared the fleas out of them! For the next few weeks, keep a leash on your dog and let him drag it around. Only do this while you are home to supervise his safety and do not keep it on him while he is in the crate. If you need to correct your dog or stop him from playing the chase me game just step on or grab the leash instead of the dog. It is best to teach your dog appropriate behaviors by setting up the situation. This way you are in control of the situation and more likely to effectively define the desirable response.

Consistency is the key to success. If you are inconsistent with your dog then you are confusing him. Dogs learn by repetition and they learn that a behavior is either right or it is wrong. Dogs do not have a gray area and do not generalize. It is your job to clearly define the rules. They need structure and boundaries in their lives. It takes time and effort but you can have a wonderful, rewarding relationship with your dog.

Some people may dream of a dog who can put his own toys away and then some just want the dog to simply stop urinating

in their home. Maybe you fall somewhere in between. Whatever your end goal is, you should know that you are not asking too much and that with positive guidance and effective correction your relationship will improve.

**Part II – Ways to be the Leader** will be featured in next month's Tartan Times. You may contact Laura Pakis at Acme Canine, 1385 Franklin Street, Lewis Center, OH 43035, [www.acmecanine.com](http://www.acmecanine.com), 740.548.1717. Laura is a regionally acclaimed certified trainer, author, and lecturer. She has more than 30 years of experience working with dogs, including support work, hunting, scentwork, puppy development and behavior modification. She currently has a full-time veterinary referral-based practice in Lewis Center, Ohio.

If you have a pet we haven't yet featured please contact us today! All Ballantrae residents may feature their pet for free! Please email Monika Torrence at [mtorrence@n2pub.com](mailto:mtorrence@n2pub.com) and we'll send you a questionnaire to fill out and email back!

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