

inside your dog's mind



Q My seven month old female beagle – Maya, is a good dog. She listens to our commands and is very loving. The only small problem we face with her is when we take her for a walk. She refuses to leave our building compound. When we finally manage to drag her out, she'll stop and sit down every few steps. This happens till we reach the end of the lane. After that she walks just fine. Why does she do this? And how can we change it?

H. Desai
Mumbai

A Many puppies, depending on their breed type and early socialisation, can become overly attached to their “home base.” Some dog experts call this concept “den affinity” and in nature it protects young dogs from wandering away

from their mother/littermates and inviting potential harm from other animals or the environment. Typically, this tendency lessens as the dog matures.

One of the solutions you can try is to take Maya with you for a drive as frequently in a day as possible. When you are nearly home, have one of your friends or family members exit the car with your pup on lead and walk the rest of the way home. This will help to build an additional assortment of neutral experiences with the outside world in your dog's mind.

Every day vary the distance your pup is let out with its companion handler to walk home. Once your pup relaxes on these walks, start letting her out with a friend a short distance from your home. This time though, have

them meet up with you later down the road away from your house. Once this step is successful, progress to steadily reducing the distance between where your dog and her walker exit the vehicle and your home. It should be fun for your pup to meet up with friends and family at different points on the walk. Most puppies will really begin to enjoy the variety and connect it with the car.

Now use your vehicle to help make an association of safety in your pup's mind. Park the car at the end of your driveway and see if your pup will happily trot to your car and get in for her daily ride and walk about on errands or back to your house. You can vary where the car is positioned out on your street so that your dog can still see and smell its familiarity. We want her to look forward to the correlations you have built in her mind with being out and the car as the link to having fun.

It should not be long before you can park the car some distance outside your compound and as your dog is looking for the car, she becomes involved in the sights and scents of a good walk and will not have the previous association of “putting the brakes on” when going for a walk. Once that happens, you no longer require the car to be parked down the road.

O My wife and I recently adopted a homeless dog. She is a sweet Spitz-cross. Our main problem is that she chases our cat. Our cat has been with us for over ten years and is traumatised by this dog. Suzie (our dog) won't leave her alone for a minute. She will bark and jump at the cat constantly, even if it is sitting quietly in a corner. Our cat has now begun to lose clumps of hair, probably due to the stress of the dog chasing her all the time. Is

particular traits for assisting humans: hunting, herding, and pulling sleds. Depending on Suzie's ancestral genetics, her programming could very well be strong for the first two (if not all three) of those instinctual drives.

Although lovely and beautiful, Spitz dogs certainly do need structure when it comes to controlling chase, herding, and hunting drives. Therefore, you cannot let her continue to practice these behaviours as they are

tethers" can truly thrive in management focused re-training.

Initially, Suzie should not be in the same immediate proximity as your cat. The two animals will need a short "vacation" from one another; I recommend at least six weeks. This can be achieved by allowing your cat to move about the house normally, but Suzie will have to earn the right to similar freedom from now on until she can demonstrate for a full month beyond their six week rest from one another that she understands how to behave around your cat.

As long as your pup can remain calm and well-behaved, she can be in her crate, behind a gate, on a tether, or dragging a leash around your home. These desired behaviours can also be supported with a basic training class. If your dog acts up, remove her from the situation immediately and put Suzie in a different one where she is unable to harass your cat. With patience and persistence, Suzie can learn that only good behaviour will earn her freedom in her new home.



there something we can do to rectify the situation? We really would like to keep both animals.

P. Anderson
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inherently rewarding and self-reinforcing.

Presently, the main safety concern is that Suzie only learns the behaviour we would like her to retain as a well-behaved pet when around your cat. This first step in her training is called "management." Your dog will need be exposed to experiences we would like her to practice when around your cat. Dogs trained to accept the concepts of: "crates, gates, leashes, and

A The primary reason your pup is chasing your cat is that she is displaying normal dog behaviour for her breed type, even if inappropriate for your household situation. Spitz type dogs have been selectively bred for three

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