

HOW TO BRING IN ANOTHER DOG WITHOUT WORLD WAR 3

by Sandy Berry

Before you bring in a new dog (or any other pet or a new human baby), you need to make sure that the dog you already have is perfectly trained. I have had so many students who, not wanting to take the responsibility of training their dog to its fullest potential, would go out and get another dog to "keep him company". What do they now have? Double trouble! Both dogs, needing training, can get into twice as much mischief as the one by itself.

Having more than one dog however, is lots of fun, providing that you take the necessary precautions when bringing in the new one. First of all, it is always easier to avoid dog fights if the new dog is of the opposite sex than the one who now lives with you (although you can get away with having two of the same sex with most breeds, they must be completely under control), but please read the paragraph later on cautioning you about having intact dogs of opposite sexes.

You need to do a lot of research to find out what kind of job the dog you are looking to bring in was bred to do. They were all bred to do a job and, if you are dead set on purchasing a Beagle (who was bred to hunt), and you don't hunt, you can get away with getting one, but you will need to spend time with him and give him a job to do. Otherwise, you will probably have a difficult job keeping him at home.

I have Belgian Sheepdogs and, since I don't have any sheep in my back yard, I use obedience training and showing to fill the gap and they don't miss the job that they would do instinctively. I also do not have a chewed up household, dug up yard, and other unwanted behaviors that I would have if the dogs were not given the job or training and showing, because the job that they were bred to do requires that they have a lot of energy. Not everyone should be owned by a Belgian Sheepdog. The same is equally true of some other breeds.

It is a good idea to get a dog who is younger than the existing dog because, by instinct, they will defer to the older dog (until the older dog gets real old), especially after you get some training into the new dog. It's not a bad idea to keep the adult sizes pretty much the same on both dogs.

It is also a good idea to bring in a dog of the opposite sex (BUT ONLY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED IN THE NEXT PARAGRAPH!) because the male will usually give in to the bitch. The bitch will usually rule the male. This is not written in blood anywhere, but you can observe multiple dog families and you will usually see this. It is not always the case but, in the majority of times, my males have always walked away and allowed the bitch to have or do anything that she wanted.

If you are not a knowledgeable breeder with a definite plan to better your breed, or you don't have a contract with the breeder that you bought your bitch or dog from to show in conformation, it goes without saying that, when you have dogs of the opposite sex, they should definitely be spayed and neutered. If they are going to be shown in conformation, they can't be spayed, and females should be boarded at a reputable kennel when they are in season! Breeding should always be left to the breeders!

Once you have your dog trained to the point that he or she understands that if you want a new dog, it doesn't matter if he or she likes it (since you are the pack leader) and you have researched the breeds and decided what you want, you can begin to consider bringing in the new pet.

When you have found your new friend and decided that you would love to share your life for the next ten or fifteen years with him, you begin the strategy of adding him to your household. You need to take your current dog and meet with the new dog on neutral territory (some place that your dog doesn't consider to be his private property). This can be a park, outside the kennel where you purchased the new dog, a parking lot, the vet's office, or any place where your dog does not feel that the place belongs to him.

The reason that this works is that when a pack is on the move (changing location or hunting, etc.), many times they

encounter a wolf that for some reason has been ousted from another pack and, if he can get along with the pack leaders in the group, he will be accepted to join them. If they have wintered in their dens and marked their territory, it is much more difficult for a new wolf to be accepted. The dog thinks the same way.

When a new dog comes on the scene, many times we tend to not give as much attention to the old friend as we have in the past, because everyone is intrigued with the new puppy. This can be a fatal mistake. The old friend should get even more attention if possible!

The dogs should be fed in separate bowls and in separate places, with some kind of barrier to insure that the new dog does not make the mistake of trying to eat out of your older dog's bowl. One of my dogs eats in the kitchen, and the other eats in the utility room. The older dog should always be offered his food first, which elevates him in the hierarchy over the newcomer.

Caution should be taken when treats are handed out. The older dog should always receive his first and, again, should be separated from the new dog when given a chew treat. Then they can each chew to their hearts' content without fear of attack. Once they both know the down stay, they can join you and be put on a down stay while they enjoy their chewy treats. If you do this a lot, it becomes a habit and, as they age, they will put themselves down and not try to go to the other dog and his prize.

When you leave home for any reason, you need to separate the dogs even if they appear to be best friends, particularly if they are the same sex and most particularly if they are intact males or females. But this suggestion is not limited to dogs of the same sex or intact males or females. It is, very simply, a small amount of insurance that can save your dog's life! You must remember that, even though we have been able to humanize these wonderful creatures, they are still animals and can actually kill each other with no remorse.

You can bring in a new baby exactly the same way that you bring in a new puppy. If you can get your family to bring the established dog to pick up you and the new baby at the hospital, you will cut out an amazing amount of trauma and stress for you and your dog! Then the dog can share this wonderful experience with you and will learn to love and protect the newest pack member just like you and the rest of the family do.

So many times when a new baby comes into the family, the dog goes out, and this is so terribly unfair to both the dog and the baby. Spend some extra time with the dog just like you do when you bring in another puppy, and allow them to join you when you care for the new baby. In no time at all, you will have a new nanny who will insist that you see what's wrong, each time the new pack member whimpers. But do NOT leave your baby unattended with your dog, no matter how sweet and gentle the dog is.

It is lots of fun to have a double dog household, but remember, also that it causes double training, double vet bills, double feed bills, etc. It also gives double pleasure!

Finally, having more than one dog seems to help me a little when I lose an old canine companion. It seems that my grief is a little easier to hear when shared with another who really understands. And somehow the other dog always does!