

**The Mannerly Dog**  
**A Mannerly Dog is Easy to Love**  
Pasadena, Texas

**HOW TO INTRODUCE A NEW DOG TO YOUR CURRENT RESIDENT DOG**

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There are many reasons to introduce a dog to another dog, including:

- An opportunity for temporary playtime
- Permanent living arrangements

Dogs, like people, don't automatically like or want to play with every individual they meet. Introductions must be carried out carefully so we create the best environment for the dogs to enjoy each other's company, play together, and when needed, live happily together for many years. The protocol for introductions is based on careful monitoring of the dogs' behavior so we are constantly checking to see if they are comfortable, relaxed, curious, and showing interest in continuing the process. A play experience should be pleasant for all participants and should have the long-term effect of dogs wanting to play again next time. Living together should mean all dogs get everything they need to be relaxed and comfortable in their home. All dogs need their own separate time to develop and maintain their own pleasant personalities and relationships with the humans and dogs in the home.

*Avoid "testing" dogs to "see how they get along with other dogs."* Researchers have not yet been able to come up with a behavior assessment tool that predicts future behavior like some people think these tools do. We have protocols to help us introduce dogs and you'll see they require observation and action on the part of the humans handling the introduction. We must make sure the dogs have good experiences, meaning we are conditioning dogs through these processes. Teaching the dogs through successful interactions is much better than "testing" to see what will happen.

*Guard against inappropriate interactions that are as unpleasant for the dogs as they are for the humans.* It is a major challenge to correct the behavior created when dogs have bad experiences with each other. It often only takes a single event to cause a dog to be defensive the next time he meets another dog. A dog who behaves inappropriately with other dogs may cause grief in his household by requiring additional supervision, management, and training by his owners, often taking many months or years and requiring the help of a dog behavior professional at great cost. If the dog in question is a foster dog, he is immediately less adoptable, requiring a special home that can provide the management and training he needs. If we make sure to condition carefully, allow the dogs to explore and be curious, and allow them to choose whether to interact or not, we will not accidentally create a problem which could haunt us and the dogs for a long time.

**Parallel Walking**

Take the dogs on a short walk together, practicing "parallel walking." This means each dog is on leash with a human and you're walking along parallel paths a comfortable distance away. This may mean on opposite sides of the street or ten feet apart in a parking lot. Provide plenty of space – however much each dog needs.

Any outdoor area other than your own yard is likely to be a neutral area for both dogs, removing the possibility of a dog behaving as though he "owns" the area and bringing an additional stressor into play.

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*Take the pressure off yourself and the dogs.* Allow the dogs to sniff each other from time to time as they show interest, but focus on the walk; take the attitude that you are simply going for a walk and you don't care whether these two dogs like each other or not. This approach will help you keep the pressure off the dogs and also establish that when your dog is on leash, walking with you is the first priority. Provide treats for each of them when they look at you or when they're walking nicely with you to give them plenty of opportunities for positive associations with seeing another dog and to help them succeed at leash walking. By doing this, you'll prevent dogs from becoming aroused and allow them to "introduce themselves" with no pressure while they're having a good time. Remember, there's no need to push the dogs toward getting close to each other before you are sure they are ready.

*Even if the dogs look like they don't even notice each other, be assured they do.* They are most likely glancing at each other off and on as they walk though you may not see it. You may notice "Calming Signals" between the dogs: they may turn their heads away from each other or sniff the ground as they walk. Dogs share these signals as a way to let each other know they mean no harm or threat. You may see the dogs show signs of stress like lip licking, yawning, or tense ears or tail. Watch for these signs to abate, or for a dog to "shake himself off" as though he just had a bath. It is natural for dogs to be a bit stressed during a new experience; these are ways that dogs relieve stress for themselves. Walking dogs together so they get to experience the presence of another dog at a distance and making sure that experience is associated with stress relief, treats, and having fun gives you the best chance for a positive association with the other dog. Observe how many signs of curiosity you see and how often, compared with how many signs of stress you see and how often. Ideally, any signs of stress show up early and dissipate as you begin to see signs of curiosity, interest, relaxation and playfulness throughout the walk. It's your job to make sure both dogs reach a point where they feel good about this introduction; if they don't, we must abandon it until another day. For more information on Calming Signals, see <http://en.turid-rugaas.no/calming-signals-photos.html>

#### **"Vertical Walking"**

After doing a Parallel Walk for a while, it's helpful to have the dogs follow each other while walking. Continue to allow them space as each dog needs, but allow the following dog to sniff the leading dog's rear as they walk if he shows interest. Don't let sniffing go on for more than 5 – 10 seconds, and make sure the leading dog is relaxed while the other dog sniffs him. Afterward, call the sniffing dog away and drop back a bit while continuing to walk; this provides a break for both dogs. (See the section below on Taking Breaks.) Switch places as you continue the walk and have the following dog become the leading dog. Allow the following dog to sniff the other dog if he shows interest. Again, no pressure from the humans; give the dogs all the room they need to introduce themselves successfully. Your job is to facilitate, observe, and limit interaction time at this point.

*Take your time on both of these important walks.* Allow both dogs to relax, explore the other dog from a distance and briefly from up close before continuing your walk. When both dogs seem relaxed and comfortable and each has had a chance to sniff the other a few times, take a break and separate the dogs before taking on one of the other steps in introduction. Maybe they

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need a drink, a roll in the grass to reduce stress, or just to lie down and process the information they've received.

#### **Using A See-Through Fence To Introduce Dogs**

The ideal situation for introducing two dogs this way is in two adjacent yards with a chain-link or other fence between them that the dogs can clearly see through. This allows the dogs to be off leash and to approach and retreat as they like, which is just what you want. Each dog should be allowed to be curious and cautious as he chooses and to use his body language, sniff to get to know about the other dog, offer play behaviors, or to use calming signals as he wants to. When not used extremely carefully, leashes easily get in the way of dogs communicating with each other through body language. The humans' job here is to facilitate brief, happy interactions, alternating with being called away for a moment with the handler. Observe both dogs for signs of curiosity and playfulness toward each other.

*If you don't have two adjacent secure yards, you can compromise by having the dogs on leashes.* Perhaps you can have them on either side of a chain-link fence for safety, even if the areas are not secure enough to have the dogs off leash. Baseball fields and dog parks can work well for this, with one dog and human inside the fence and one dog/human pair outside the fence. If there's a fence between the two dogs, we humans may be more able to focus on keeping the leashes loose so the dogs don't associate a tight leash pulling on their necks with the presence of another dog. This is the opposite of what we want; we want each dog to associate the presence of another dog with only good things. Using the leashes only to keep any inappropriate or lengthy contact from occurring, you can gently walk them away from the fence to reward them for interacting well, or walk them away for a break if you accidentally allow things to get out of hand. If a dog is small, you can pick him up and walk away as needed; this is another way to get a dog quickly out of a situation without the possibility of a negative association.

*Assuming you see plenty of curiosity and playful behaviors, keep initial meetings very short – 30 seconds.* Call or lead the dogs away from each other for a break, affection, and maybe a treat. You can repeat these little meetings many times, gradually increasing the amount of time the dogs are together at the fence or sniffing each other on their loose leashes. Remember it's always better to separate the dogs while things are going great than to try for "just a few more seconds" and have things turn bad for everyone.

#### **Taking Breaks**

The purpose of a break is to stop the current pursuit of a new experience and encourage a short rest period and a return to familiar surroundings and activities. Breaks allow relaxation, stress relief, rehydration, and preparation to learn something new or return to something unfamiliar to try it again. When we take a break from introductions, it means separating the dogs. Remember, we have only just begun the process and we must continue to monitor interactions. Giving the dogs a break allows them to relax, re-group, and be ready for the next step. It also gives the humans a break from observing so closely, allowing them to relax for a few minutes before starting again. Position the dogs with doors and/or gates between them during breaks to facilitate relaxation for everyone involved. Allow each dog to get a drink separately so there's no pressure at the water dish; let them lie down and relax if they want, or enjoy a short play session between human and dog if they're calm and seem to want that. Dogs are the best judges of what

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they need during a break, unless they show signs of becoming over-aroused; then we must help them calm themselves because arousal does not lead to good introductions. If a dog is over-aroused, we may need to stop the introduction process for now and start again in a few hours or on another day.

#### **How Do We Know The Dogs Are Ready To Play Together?**

- Both dogs are relaxed with loose, flexible bodies – no stiffness.
- Both dogs are offering play behaviors
  - turning tail while looking back over their shoulders at the other dog
  - play bows
  - loose, bouncing actions inviting play from the other dog
  - tiny bursts of running, inviting the other dog to chase
- Neither dog is showing aroused behaviors like mounting, stiff-legged bouncing, rearing up on back legs, charging or body slamming the other dog
- Each dog is clearly interested in playing with the other dog.
- Both dogs are approaching and retreating from each other.
- Both humans are calm, relaxed, and ready to help the dogs succeed.

*When it's time to let the two dogs play, allow it for a very few minutes and take a break.*

Playing off leash is best, but not always possible. If the dogs are to be allowed to play together on leash, the humans must be careful to move forward with the dogs as they move toward each other; the goal is to keep the leashes loose. As always, loose leashes are imperative for good introductions; we do not want to interfere with the dogs' abilities to choose what body language to use. A tight leash can result in a dog sending a message he did not intend and the other dog reading that message and responding in kind, circumventing your efforts to help the dogs be friends and creating negative associations for both dogs. While keeping the leashes loose, handlers must also move about to keep the leashes from becoming tangled; tangling can result in you not being able to separate the dogs if one or both of them becomes aroused or stressed, causing a fight. Letting dogs play while on leash is an energy-intensive effort for the humans involved as they move forward and back, holding leashes up and out of the way, following the dogs' leads as they offer play behaviors to each other, and keeping both dogs physically and emotionally safe.

In general, signs of a good play session include the following:

- Both dogs are relaxed with loose, flexible bodies – no stiffness.
- Each dog is giving the other dog room, never pinning them down or in a corner, and either dog has an easy escape route to leave the game when he chooses.
- The dogs are taking turns chasing and being chased or being on top when wrestling.
- There may be loud play growls and the dogs may bark at each other.
- The dogs may have their mouths wide open with teeth showing, but they are not biting down on each other, only placing their mouths on each other in a symbolic manner.

#### **Moving Through the First Days Together, After Introductions**

Keep the interactions short at first – 30 seconds – calling the dogs apart for petting and treats for a minute or two and then allowing further interaction if they want to. Repeat several times,

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then have the dogs take some time to be separate from each other, either on separate sides of the room or yard with you or in their confinement areas. After a break, allow further playtime but supervise these interactions every time. Gradually increase the length of the play sessions. As with all good training, reinforce good behavior while making sure the dogs don't get over-aroused. Separate the dogs while they are still having a good time, using lots of praise, treats, affection, whatever the dog likes. Don't "keep trying" until things go bad between them, because it can happen very suddenly and you don't want to have to react to a sudden fight. It's easier to encourage and motivate a good relationship between two dogs than to try to create a good relationship after some emotional damage has occurred. Don't leave the dogs together when you are away from home unless you are willing to bet \$100 that they will remain relaxed and friendly with each other the entire time you're gone. Spending the time now to wait until the dogs are almost "asking" to be allowed to be together for more time will pay off later when they have built a great relationship and allow each other to make the necessary choices to be together or apart. Don't try to hurry things, even if the new dog is a temporary visitor; if the dogs don't want to spend time together, they won't have a good time doing so. If you can bet \$100 the dogs are "asking" to be together, let them.

#### **Continue Fostering Positive Associations**

Be aware that although you wanted a new dog, your dog did not get a choice. Your dog did not invite the visiting dog – you did. Your dog needs your support and observational skills to help him succeed. Make sure that when the new dog is around, your current dog is having a good time! If he does not want to play with the new dog, have another family member spend time playing with or training the new dog while you play with or train your current dog so that he can associate the new dog's presence with something fun and rewarding. You can have "group training time," where you give both dogs treats for sitting; at first, leave some distance between them and have separate family members training. Later, you'll be able to have both dogs sit in front of you while you give them each a treat. This exercise will help both dogs learn that there are plenty of treats for everyone, it's easy to get one by sitting, and having the other dog close is a good thing because it means everyone gets treats.

#### **Train Your Dogs; Don't Count On Them Training Each Other**

People train dogs; dogs may not have the same goals in mind as you do. Though dogs may be able to learn by watching other dogs, you want to control what your dogs learn rather than allowing them to share any bad habits they may have. The two dogs might learn activities to do together that they would not have thought of on their own. Better to take charge of training yourself so you can

- Make sure your new dog learns what you really want him to do,
- Maintain your current dog's training,
- Quickly notice behavior changes and change your training accordingly.

*Create a simple training plan, listing what family members will reward the new dog and your current dog for. Post it on the refrigerator, and make sure everyone follows it. Here are some examples:*

- Relieving themselves in the right place
- Sitting

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- Lying down
- Moving away from the front door rather than toward it when you open it
- Coming when called
- Bringing a human a toy
- Going to a crate or bed.

*Your new dog's "world," what he's allowed to do in his new home, needs to be very small at first so you can control what he's learning to do.* Confine him when you're not watching him, use a leash to encourage him to remain where you can see him, and pay close attention to everything he does to familiarize yourself with his potty habits and favorite activities. Create a routine that works for the dog and yourself while providing plenty of fun but controlled activities to help him relieve stress and learn what is expected of him. Your current dog's world will be smaller because you have to provide for the new dog both physically and emotionally. Re-introducing your dog's skills of staying in a crate or confinement area is helpful at this time, as is fortifying the routine of his life if it has become more lax and re-instituting regular training sessions to enhance his self-control. You can give the dogs additional privileges as they settle in together, like being left out of crates or confinement areas more often and being allowed to rest on furniture if you choose.

#### **Making Room for a New Dog in Your Home**

Your dog has to give up some of his space/privileges to allow the new dog a few. This means providing both physical and emotional space. Because the new dog is in the home, your dog may feel there's an intrusion, and that does not lead to a happy relationship between the dogs. In order to let both dogs know there's plenty of love and attention, food and toys, to go around, make sure both dogs have:

- Comfortable, secure sleeping areas, away from the other dog at first.
- Separate eating areas and maybe separate water bowls at first - you can feed the dogs and provide water in their crates or confinement areas.
- Separate crates or confinement areas so they're not together while you are away.
- Plenty of time with owners by themselves – away from the other dog.
- Plenty of time to play together while you supervise.
- Plenty of opportunities to create positive associations with the presence of the other dog.
- Plenty of training sessions so they learn self-control and how to make behavior choices that serve both the dogs and you well.

A new dog in your home needs his world to be very small to give you control over the situation so he learns what you want him to learn. Your current dog's world probably seemed fine to him before, but now must be smaller in order to provide only supervised contact between him and the new dog. Make sure your dog perceives these changes as positive rather than as him losing some of the benefits he previously enjoyed.

#### **The Importance of Eliminating Trigger-Stacking**

Providing for the dogs' basic needs is important beyond simple survival; it helps ensure stress is at a minimum so the dogs are always in the best position to experience interaction with each other. Trigger-stacking occurs when a dog is already stressed because of one trigger and

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one or two other triggers come into play, “stacking” on top of the initial trigger and causing a reaction. A dog may have the skills to cope with a single trigger like hunger or some built-up stress due to becoming aroused recently over the arrival of the mail carrier. He may not have the skills to cope with hunger, arousal over the mail carrier, and having the next step of the introduction process with another dog right at that moment. Be aware of every potential stressor or trigger affecting a dog and gauge your interactions and training plans accordingly. Allow the dog to recover from one trigger before presenting the next. Become an expert at reading the dog’s signals so you know what his behavior indicates at any given time.

#### **Helping Your New Dog Adjust To His New Home**

Consider the routine your new dog was accustomed to at the shelter or wherever he lived before you got him, and try to mimic that routine as much as possible at first while you change one part at a time as needed to fit the new dog into your household routine. Ask the shelter staff what your dog’s schedule was like: what time he ate, went outside for potty breaks or playtime, and what time lights were turned out for the night. Your dog most likely stayed in a kennel or cage, so your home crate training is a natural next step. Shelters should have provided your dog with enrichment like Kongs stuffed with food, chew bones, and toys, and you should provide all those types of enrichment for your dogs at home, too. Each of those types of items fulfills a different need for your dog – problem-solving, chewing, and playing.

#### **Basic Needs for Every Dog**

Every dog needs food, water, shelter, a comfortable bed. A sense of security is provided in general by private time to play, chew, rest, sleep and eat meals without feeling threatened; this is somewhat different for confident well-adjusted dogs than for dogs who are fearful or anxious. All dogs need periodic healthcare and grooming in order to maintain physical health. Dogs’ mental and emotional well-being as well as your own will benefit from an assigned confinement area for when you’re not home, an approved potty area, exercise, play, and access to chewing items and toys for enrichment and play. Social contact with humans must be provided on a regular basis so dogs maintain the skills at interacting well with humans. Regular interaction with other dogs likewise maintains dogs’ skills at interacting. Every dog in a household must have these basic needs provided and must not be required to find them for himself. Bad associations can be quickly created when dogs are allowed to seek out their own sleeping places or check out other dogs’ food bowls.

#### **Proper Introductions Are Important!**

Having multiple dogs in a home can be fun for dogs as well as humans. For multi-dog households to be workable, we humans must take action to ensure success. Even if your home is to have an additional dog in it for only a short time, as when you are fostering a dog or have a visiting dog for a short period of time, following a careful process for introducing dogs to each other is the first step in developing a household that works for everyone in it – whether a temporary or permanent situation.