



Tone of Voice & Body Language

Have you ever noticed how excited your dog gets when you or a member of your household becomes animated and excited? Or how your dog's body language changes when people argue?

Dogs do not innately understand our words. They are a foreign language. I like to say that our dog's are learning three foreign languages in the following order:

- body language
- tone of voice
- our words

Dogs understand our body language well. If we add a bounce to our step, so does our dog. If we bend forward, our dog understands that we are claiming the space in front of us as ours only. If we are loose and relaxed our dogs relax and become more engaged. If we are tense, sore or stiff, many dogs will become hesitant, reserved and careful in their work.

We need to offer our dog clear body language signals to avoid confusion in our dogs.

Tone of voice goes hand in hand with body language. When our voice is upbeat, excited, happy and a few octaves higher than normal, our dog is excited to come and quicker to please. If our tone is gruff, then our dog thinks it has done something wrong. Imagine if you're angry but your tone is excited and becomes more animated, your dog will be confused or think they were good when in fact, they ate the new couch cushions.

Our obedience cues/commands should be upbeat, happy and increase our dog's motivation during training. If your dog is TOO excited, consider a calm, even tone of voice.

Save your firm or gruff tone from when you are communicating to your dog that it has done something very bad.

When you use "no" as your non reinforcement marker, keep your tone flat.