

This article was firstly written for the Eurasier breed, but it can be valuable for any kind of breed or mix breed of dog.

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Eurasier : Vanille de NiouTchouang

The science of the *gentle dog*

Anthropomorphism.... humanization of our beloved Eurasiers is not rare. The breed was developed to be a family companion and share our daily life. It is really easy for most of Eurasier's owners to humanize their companion and misinterpret their Eurasier's actions and behaviours. It is also very common to see new owners forgetting basic education and leadership rules because the breed is presented as to be a companion and an easy to train dog.

The dog is a domestic mammal that needs company and naturally lives in a pack structure. But the pack's structure is always in movement. The hierarchy can't be established between dogs and humans because we are two different species. The hierarchy concept exists ONLY in same specie.

From researches, we know that the dog's common ancestor is the wolf. Why we can see all these varieties (phenotypes) in dogs? Because they were selected in different ways and because we can also see different phenotypes in wolves! Wolves from northern Europe, Asia, North America or other areas are all different. Even they are different; they possess the same pack attitude and need to live in it.

The Eurasier is no exception. Like its wolf ancestor, the Eurasier needs to live in a pack. But what exactly is a pack? The Eurasier we know today is not a wolf. Eurasiers were developed to be our beloved companion and to share our life. With many generations, all dogs lost many of their wolf's attitudes and developed a specific dog's communication. The dog's communication is a bit different from the wolf's one.



Finnish Lapphund : *Sugarok Ayla Fleur of Eurasia* & her litter

Dogs share our homes, are our friends and many of their ancestor's natural instincts are a big problem in their human surrounding! We don't want our dog dig in our yard. We don't want it barks at people, sniffs their 'personal parts' or pees on friend's carpet! When our dog climbs up another dog, most of us see it as a sexual thing. We are all wrong! It is not surprising to see these dogs in behaviour clinics! The big problematic is not the dog but its own humans!

A pack is a group of individuals who share their daily life. They can hunt together as a team. They can share a meal. They can share affection. But the most important thing in a pack is the leadership. The leadership concept is quite different to the hierarchy one! Again, we can't speak about hierarchy between dogs and humans because we are two different species. But we live in a pack and share a leadership concept. The leader is the most trustable member of the pack and not necessary the dominant one. The leader is the person you will follow and with whom you feel secure. A pack is a group where all members respect and follow rules established by the pack leader.

In their desire to give their dog love and affection, too many owners forget the most important... to be their dog's leader. With no human leadership, the dog just takes the control. You should be the pack leader your dog needs you to be.

Your dog was trained in obedience and it executes all commands you ask it to do. Fine... but this has no connection to the leadership attitude! Obedience training is like your job. You do it from 9h00 to 17h00 and after work, you do your best to forget it and relax! It's the same thing for your dog. Under leash, in a dog training school, the dog does its job. But when it returns to home, if the leadership is not there, the dog "forget" its obedience and can even challenge the owners! The leadership is based on your body language and attitude, not on your words.



This Lapphund puppy has a submissive attitude in front of our beloved Eurasier *Black Motion Simba of Eurasia*. This is a part of dog's body language we should understand and use in every dog's education program.

Your body is a complex structure. All cells do specific action and all are related. For example, when you are afraid, your pupils extend, your breathing change... All your body shows your fear.

In all your actions, you should be aware of your own body language if you want a specific answer from your dog! If you are frustrated because your dog did not come at the fist command, because you can't give it the pill or any other reason... your body shows your real feeling and can increase the "bad" answer from your dog.

How your dog knows you go to work?

How it knows you prepare yourself for a walk or a play outside?

All answers are in your own body language. The dog is the most universal translator! You can speak to it any kind of language (Spanish, German, French, English...) but it always understands your body language!

Behaviorist Cesar Millan explains the leadership as **energy** and I like his point of view. Energy is every where... positive and negative. When your own energy is positive, your dog will answer positively because your body language will be in accordance to it. But when your own energy begins to be negative (fear, frustration, anger, sadness) your dog feels it and will interpret it as stressfull energy. Some will react with shyness, others with aggressiveness. This is the way energy comes and goes.



Eurasiers : *Dancing Bear Ally to Eurasia & Fatal Attraction of Eurasia*

The leadership has to be the most important part of your relationship. Both dog and human will know exactly how to react when the leadership is well established and correctly maintained.

But how you can establish the correct leadership with your dog(s)?

Where does your dog sleep?
Where and when does it eat?
Where, when and how do you give it affection?
Who controls plays?
The intonation you use to speak to it is also important!

If you want to stop a bad behavior and use a friendly *no-no-no* voice... your dog will probably ignore you or even challenge you! But if you growl after him like a gorilla who just want to not be disturbed... then your dog will understand that you don't agree with its behaviour. Some people will say your dog will show fear in that situation. Yes and no... is it really fear or a submissive natural attitude?

Leadership is not hard; it is a natural dog's way. Every time you use your bad voice tone, you should also use your good one to reward the dog when its bad behaviour stops! Like clicker training, leadership is also a question of good timing.

Be your dog's mother, not only its best friend. Friends play together, challenge themselves and even fight to know who the leader is! Mother is the leader and shows the way to the puppy...



Eurasier : *Dancing Bear Ally to Eurasia* educate a 4 weeks Finnish Lapphund puppy.

Where does your dog sleeps?

A dog who sleep in a place where it can see everybody enter or going out the house, shows its leadership on other pack's members traffic.

A dog that sleeps in a human bed may shows its privileged rank in the pack.

These two attitudes can crate many leadership conflicts and it will be not surprising to see the dog challenging the leadership rank in the pack!

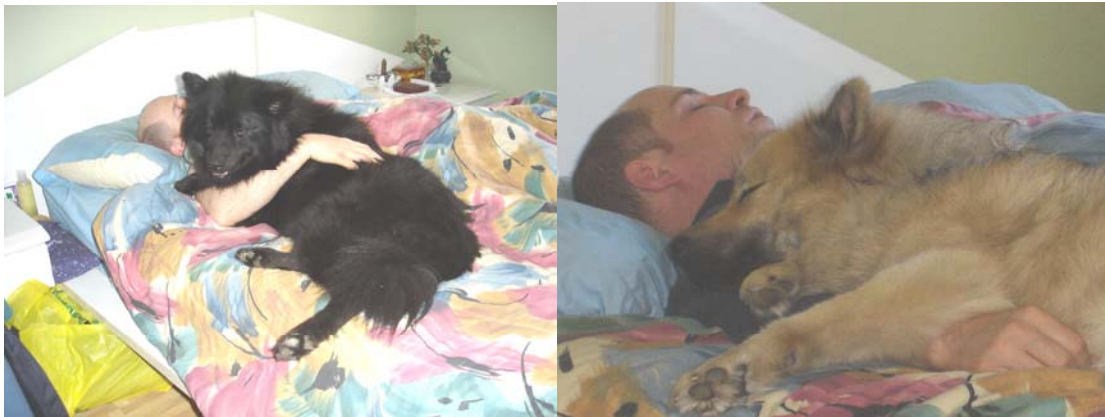
The dog sleeps in your bed.

Right, if it never growls too another human or dog who approach the bed.

Right, if it never pees on the bed.

To avoid leadership traffic from your dog, its bed should be in a place far from the doors.

Any room of the house can be good but not in a place where the dog will do a 'security control' check.



Eurasiers : *Vanille de NiouTchouang* & *Dancing Bear Ally to Eurasia*

Where and when your dog does eats?

The pack leaders (humans) always eat before subordinate individuals (dogs). Your dog should always be out of the table area during your meals and eat always after you... when you make the dishes for example. He should have its own place to eat where it will not be disturbed.

Where, when and how do you give affection to your dog?

You love your dog and show it affection! You pet it, kiss it and gently scrub its head. This is affection and the normal human way to show it. Maybe it is not appropriate for your dog? Is it the good timing? Do you reward something wrong it just made? Do you just give it attention because it asked for it?

In our modern lifestyle, nothing is free. All reward you give needs to be earned. The dog should do something prior to be petted! Ask it to sit... then pet it. You should be the leader, not your dog.

Who controls plays?

The leader is the one who should always control plays and win them. When the leader decides to stop the play... the dog needs to respect it!



Eurasier : Cassandra of Eurasia & her friend Golden Retriever

The intonation you use to speak to it is also important!

When your dog does something wrong, you should use a harder voice tone than when you reward it. A 'Good dog' needs to be happy and friendly. On the opposite, a 'Bad dog' should be a growled voice tone.

To resume...

Before giving affection to your dog, you should give it leadership structure. This can be obtained only by structural education, play and exercise. In a pack of wild canids, the leader asks every member to respect the rules and then gives affection to them.

Humans are passionate "mammals" who need affection to well develop and limited stress. Dogs are canids that need structure by a well established leadership to well develop and limited stress.

The humanization of the dog is the first step to develop all behavioral problems. Be aware to not take that way. A dog can be the most wonderful companion in a human pack but it needs structure.

If you don't agree with all I explained. If you think that these should not be used with your Eurasier; I will just say that you unfortunately humanized it... All methods explained here are currently used by the best behaviour specialists around the world.

The Eurasier was developed to be a family companion. The German philosophy is to share our daily life with our Eurasiers and not confine them in kennels. This in no way means that the Eurasier should be educated in a different way than other pet dogs! Education is not training. Education is the science of the *gentle dog* who shares our family life.

To obtain success in dog's education, all owners need to become their Eurasier's best friend and mother. A calm and trustful leader makes the best friend and the best mother. A leader gives rules, boundaries and limitations. Lack of leadership opens the door to all kind of behavioural problems.



The *Eurasia* pack in our kitchen... photo 2006

“Mother Nature is well structured and we should never work against her...”

Author : Johanne Parent

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