

Insider's Guide To The Basset Hound - Dog Training Secrets

AB Hello and welcome to the transcription of the audio program titled “Dog Training Secrets Revealed”.

My name is Anthony Buchalka and shortly, I will be introducing you to Basil Theofanides. Basil is a prominent professional dog trainer who will be sharing with you the solutions for successful management of many common dog behavior problems.

Dog ownership brings with it many wonderful things such as companionship, fun and exercise and has even shown to be beneficial to one's long term health. Unfortunately for many dog owners, this experience can be tainted by a dog who exhibits one or more of the many possible dog behavior problems which we will cover on this audio, such as excessive barking, biting, nipping and general aggressiveness, excessive chewing, toilet training problems, separation anxiety, food issues such as refusing to eat or the fussy finicky food eater, difficulty in walking on a leash, poop eating and an introduction of a second dog into the household.

Also covered, will be dog socialisation, crate training, choosing a dog with a good temperament, tips for safe travel with your pet, understanding the pack leader mentality – plus much, much more.

Basil will cover all these issues just mentioned and provide a good understanding of why these behaviors occur in the first place, how you can recognise them and importantly, how you can successfully manage these problems.

Let's move onto Basil now.

Basil Theofanides is Training Director and founder of Command Dog Training School, one of the largest and most successful professional dog training schools in Melbourne. Basil has been a nationally accredited trainer for twenty-five years and his experience includes the successful completion of a dog trainer instructor course and the establishment of a security firm specialising in man and dog teams which included the training of security dogs.

In the 80's, Basil developed a demonstration team of German Shepherd dogs and their handlers which conducted regular displays for the general public. Basil has also, and continues to be, involved in the successful training of countless breeds of dogs with their owners in obedience and behavior problem solving classes.

Today, Basil remains the Training Director of Command Dog Training School

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BASIL T Hello Anthony, how are you?

AB Very good thank you.

I thought we might start with you just telling us a little bit about yourself and your background in dog training and what you are currently doing.

BASIL T Yes, certainly.

Command Dog Training School is a company that we own and it has been operating since about the mid 80's.

My training career spans for probably about twenty-five years when I first started with an organisation called Command Breeders Foundation here in Australia. The Command Breeders Foundation was an organisation that bred German Shepherd dogs and then donated these dogs for various services such as customs, police, guide dogs and so on. So I was heavily involved with that in a voluntary capacity. So we tended to puppy walk dogs, bring them up for twelve months and then donate them. So that's where it all sort of began. More out of an interest and then it developed into a full time business.

AB Just briefly, an overview what your current business is doing at the moment.

BASIL T Command Dog Training School provides a variety of services to the general public - pet dog training is the primary aspect of our business.

So we cover kindergarten puppy classes, puppies from eight weeks to fourteen weeks of age which is foundation laying training. We run basic obedience courses for older dogs, anywhere from five months and we take actually dogs in, even up to seven or eight years of age for these courses. It is more really handler education than dog training as such. We run intermediate to advance classes which includes agility training, fly ball training, scent training. Also we run student trainer courses. We provide structured programs for people that want to become dog training instructors.

AB I see, so it's quite a varied business structure.

BASIL T Yes, it is.

AB Would you mind telling us a bit about, just basic dog psychology. A little bit how dogs learn. A lot of people are really unsure how much a dog can learn and what ages you really should start their dog anything.

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BASIL T A lot of people don't realise that you can actually teach young puppies, and I'm talking about baby puppies from eight weeks of age, and you can teach them a hell of a lot. Particularly during the imprinting period which is up to sixteen weeks.

Most people get a puppy from a breeder at about eight weeks of age and the vets may say "look, don't take this dog out until it's had all it's shots" which is actually counter-productive because you have missed the best opportunity to develop this puppy as a well adjusted dog in the future. So we run these puppy programs to educate people in developing behavior patterns for puppies, developing sound temperament so the puppies are not nervous or distrustful. Also, teaching puppies basic commands like come, sit, lie, down and stay and it's very basic for a young puppy up to sixteen weeks. We use food reward and positive reinforcement methods.

But we also do quite a lot of interaction and sociability training with the young pups. So, what that means is, it teaches puppies to interact with other people, other dogs and so it doesn't have any nervousness or timidity towards them when they are older. That's your starting point.

AB So that early period is obviously very important then and that would be the socialisation period you are talking about?

BASIL T Yes that's correct. The imprinting period – so anything that happens to the puppy good or bad or otherwise, can impact permanently on the puppy's character. So let's say for example, if you don't interact that puppy or socialise it or take it out and explore the outside world before sixteen weeks, then you will end up with a very nervous and distrustful sort of a pup which is not what you want. That's the key – the key is to get that puppy out virtually straight away.

AB So what about the people who buy their pet a little bit older, one year, five or six years old – does that mean teaching their dog is something that's going to be more difficult?

BASIL T It can be. It depends whether we have got a dog with a sound temperament. Let's presume that the dog has got a good temperament. Dogs are pack animals which means that they look for a pack leader in any environment they live in. Now, if you take on that leadership role and you go to training and train that dog in obedience, the dog looks up to you as a pack leader and wants to please you and that's the main aspect of all dog training is the dog realising that it is at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of the way it views the whole household and the pack leader is obviously the human part that forms his family and he wants to please that human. That's important. If you don't have that balance in that way, you end up with problems.

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- AB** So if someone is looking at buying a dog and they go around and check the dog out, it might be one or two years old, is there way they can determine temperament? I imagine it would be very difficult in a short period of time to get a sense of “will this dog have problems or learn easily or with difficulty”.
- BASIL T** What I would be doing is saying to them, if it's had a kennel environment or perhaps one of the shelters, you take the dog if you can for a walk within the shelter on a leash and just see how it responds to leash. See how it responds to the family. If it's outgoing, if it's happy to see you. If it's the sort of dog that cringes or isn't forthcoming, it's probably not the sort of dog you want. By the same token, if the dog comes down and he is jumping all over the place and he is really hard to control, a lot of people tend to get put off by that. But really, it just simply means the dog hasn't been taught not to do these things. What you need is an outgoing happy dog. One that perhaps likes to chase balls, that is happy with a family - by taking him for a walk, you can actually get a good feel for that.
- AB** That's very interesting. You mentioned before your training method is using positive reinforcement and reward.
- BASIL T** Yes, for puppies it is absolutely 100%.
- AB** Can you just briefly explain what that means?
- BASIL T** You need to develop puppies' character and temperaments so they are confident, so you shouldn't use, really, any compulsive methods, any harsh methods. So what we do is we shape the puppy's behavior by using food and we lure the puppy into an exercise, in a position. A simple thing to do, for example, is teaching puppy to sit. A common thing to do is just take a little titbit in your fingers, let the puppy smell the food and of course, then it's focused on the food and then all you do is you simply move the food in an upwards motion and the puppy is going to look up and he is naturally going to sit to be able to look up at where the food is. If the puppy starts to jump at the food, you don't move, you just stand there with the food in one position until finally he gives up and he will just put his bottom on the ground. As soon as he does that, you reward him with the food and it takes about two or three times of doing that before he makes the connection “Oh, I see – if I sit I get the treat”.
- AB** “I get some food”, yes.
- BASIL T** And only once you shape that behavior, do you then bring the command in, but not before.
- AB** Would that reward be used for all types of training or more just for the younger pup?

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BASIL T Mainly for the younger dogs. We do use a little bit of food in our basic obedience classes, but we use what we call a eclectic method. "Eclectic" meaning *a blend of methods*. You can't just simply pigeon hole your training and say "right, I'm only going to use food because that's the only way", which is nonsense. Not every dog is interested in food.

So, we use a little bit of food, we use play training in our other lessons in our older dogs and we also use a little bit of corrective training meaning if the dog does something wrong and he understands the word "no", which you teach him, then you say to him "no, you have done the wrong thing" more or less and then you guide the dog into the action you want the dog to do. So it might be simply sitting, teaching the dog to sit by pulling up on the leash and pushing down his hindquarter and then the reward is the praise and the pat. Not necessarily always the food.

But one thing about dogs what I want you to understand Anthony is that too many people tend to communicate to these dogs as though they are human beings and so a good example of this would be, they come home, they found the dog has dug a big hole and they look at the dog and they say "you naughty dog, what have you done?" Of course the dog is starting to cower and a little bit unsure, his ears go back. So the person, the dog owner immediately thinks "oh yes look, he has got a guilty look. He knows." But in fact, he doesn't know. What he is reacting to is the body language and the vocal sounds that person is making which is threatening. As a consequence, the dog just lowers himself to show submissive. The owner thinking in human terms, thinks "oh, he understands". But dogs actually need to be caught in the act of the misdeed before they realise that they are doing something wrong. So you can't correct a dog afterwards.

AB So punishing a dog – you come home from work, you find a puddle on the floor, taking the dog over and putting their nose near that puddle and yelling at the dog won't serve any purpose?

BASIL T No. It will just simply serve to confuse the dog and make the dog very unsure of your actions and your motives and the next day when you come home, the dog is going to start looking a little bit unsure of you again and the same cycle continues. People just get the wrong impressions.

AB We have mentioned toilet training briefly, we might go into that a bit more. That seems to be a question, oh, probably one of the most important questions a lot of owners have. They have got nice carpets inside and they don't want dogs peeing on the floor.

BASIL T No, that's right.

AB So where would someone start?

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BASIL T The second you get your puppy home, the first thing you would really need to do is, you have obviously had a drive, you pick the puppy up and you take him into the back yard where you would like him to go to. Let him go to the toilet – be patient and when he goes, just quietly “oh, he’s a good puppy – very good”. Now, once he has actually marked that area, you can bring the puppy inside and just observe but you need to restrict the puppy. Don’t just give him the run of the house, so you restrict the puppy and just observe him when you bring him immediately inside. When the puppy starts to sniff around a little bit you start to think, “well, hang on, I think he is going to go again”. So you quickly pick him up and you take him outside to the same spot and you say to him “hurry up” or “busy busy” or “toilet” and then when he goes, you praise him. So that’s the first procedure.

Then, when the puppy has settled a little bit and he has had something to eat or drink, you take him immediately out because he is going to want to go. If he has had a bit of a play with you, then take him outside straight away. You need to be very, very regular with a young puppy. So that means on the hour, every hour – even may be twice in an hour, you might have to take him outside.

AB So that’s right throughout the day – every half to one hour?

BASIL T Yes. It sounds onerous but that is the fact but that’s the way you have to do it with a young puppy for the first few days.

One other thing too is that if you can’t supervise the puppy, then you need to put him somewhere where if he does soil, it doesn’t really matter. That could mean that you put him outside for a little while or if you have him inside with you, you might just tie him up next to you so he can’t go wondering and then when he starts to cry, you will know he wants to go to the toilet. So you take him outside in that instance and he starts to recognise that “well, if I whine a little bit, I know that I will be able to go to the toilet”.

You can do a similar thing at night. You can either tie him up next to your bed so that way if he does start to cry and he wants to go, then you take him outside, or the quickest way is to crate train the puppy.

AB I would like to hear a bit more about crate training, Basil.

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BASIL T Crate training is a great way and a very fast way of teaching puppies not to soil inside. What you do is you, and I did this with my German Shepherd puppy about three years. The first time I ever used a crate, I would have to be honest, because I really didn't think much of it, but I thought I would give it a shot. I crated the puppy right from the word go which means that you have those little transport crates, the collapsible ones, or you can use just the plastic ones. You put the puppy's bed inside there and you leave the gate open. You don't lock the dog in there or lock the puppy in there.

AB So the dog is not locked completely in the crate?

BASIL T Correct. That's right. It has got to be a positive thing, not negative. So the puppy is used to going inside. He has got the smell of his bed in there and you give him a little chew toy so he is happy just to lie down there and you observe him. Now, he will probably just go in there quietly and have a chew and then he will be able to wander out and that's when you pick him up and take him outside and then you bring him back again. Then he will learn to wander in himself. When he goes to sleep in the crate on his own, then you quietly close the door to the crate. When he wakes up, what is he going to do? He is going to cry. That's your signal. You open the door and you take him outside. So he hasn't had a chance to actually get out and wander on his own volition and just do it anywhere. So the imprinting is such that he cries, he knows the gate will open, he goes outside to the toilet, comes back in and you let him go back into the crate if he wants.

AB So I imagine it's quite important that you place that crate in a position, particularly overnight so you can hear those cries in the morning?

BASIL T That's right. And what you would do in the first instance, over the first couple of nights is put the crate right next to your bedroom, right next to your bed actually and when he cries – he might cry because he is a bit unsure and so you would just quietly console him. You just put your hand there and let him sniff your hand and he goes back to sleep but then when he starts to cry too much, then you know he has to go, that's when you take him outside, he goes to the toilet, you bring him back him, close him inside the crate. Then he will go back to sleep.

AB How long would you imagine this would need to continue, Basil?

BASIL T It depends on the puppy and the individual. It took me three nights to toilet train my Shepherd puppy. After that, he was fine.

AB Wow, three nights. That's amazing.

BASIL T That's it.

AB Is there a difference between younger dogs and an older dog that hasn't been toilet trained that you have just got?

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BASIL T Correct. There is a huge difference. Some people ring me up and say “look, I've got an older dog and I need to get my dog toilet trained”. I think to myself “oh, he is probably just a little puppy”, but in fact, it's twelve months or over.

What they have done is they have just simply put up with having to clean and it has come to head but by that stage, it's too late because the dog is so used to it. So it would mean that you would have to really take some strong steps to change the dog's behavior around the home and you would have to tie him up so he couldn't just wonder around. You would have to crate him and it's a hard slog.

AB So it's really going back to square one – treating that older dog like a puppy, almost.

BASIL T That's exactly right and a lot of people don't want to do that – it's too hard.

AB Would you expect good results doing that or is it quite varied, depending on the age of the dog?

BASIL T Yes, depending on the dog and also the dog's owner. How serious they are about it and how consistent they are. The other thing is too, if you have other members in the household, like children perhaps or just brothers and sisters or whatever, and if they are not all doing it the same way, then that will set you back in your training.

AB Because it's just going to confuse the dog?

BASIL T Correct.

AB What about the people who have a 9 to 5 job? So they are off to work in the morning, it is going to be eight hours. Should they be leaving their dog crated with the door open?

BASIL T This is the thing, the crate should only be done under supervision, so when you are actually at home. I understand what you are saying “should you just leave the crate open?” Well, that's just going to mean the dog is going to wander around while it's inside. My feeling would be, if you are in an apartment situation, then what you should do is get a little child's playpen and you put the puppy or the dog in the child's playpen and you probably have to have a little litter box, like a kitty litter and teach the dog to go to that area.

AB Oh okay. So you can use it just like a cat's litter tray?

BASIL T Exactly. And that would be probably the best way of doing it if the dog requires toilet training, to stop it soiling inside. The majority of dogs, if they are clean, they can still hang on. They will hang on.

AB So they can wait that eight hours?

BASIL T Well, if you take them out to the toilet in the morning, they are pretty right.

AB Basil, what about pads? Some people mention they have mentioned soiling pads. Have you had any experience with them?

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BASIL T That's a hit and miss. I think it's just an expensive proposition to keep buying these soiling pads. I can't see why you couldn't just use just a tray and put just old newspaper in there. I don't believe in using newspaper as toilet training, but in an apartment situation, there is no problem with that because it will teach your dog to use the tray. The pads – it's a bit of a hit and miss, whether they are going to use them or not.

AB Sure. Well, that's quite an interesting approach there and some very useful information. Is there anything else we should add to toilet training before we move on?

BASIL T Certainly. A lot of people tend to leave food and water overnight for their dogs. They don't need it. Just remove the food and the water and you will find they are not going to get up in the middle of the night and have a drink or a feed and then decide to go to the toilet in the middle of the night. So that's the next thing they need to look at.

Also, regular feeding times. So, if you are the sort of person that likes to allow your dog to graze, in other words, you put your food down and then let the dog come and go as he pleases eating, then the dog is going to have irregular soiling patterns and you will end up always having to clean up. But if you feed him at one point in the day, the older dog, then the dog will have a regular soiling pattern and then it's easier to sort of work out "well, he is going to toilet on this time".

AB Take him out for his walk, goes to the toilet and bring him back and you are fine. Terrific. Is there any major difference in breeds, for someone who is looking at buying a dog? Is there a breed out there that is just difficult to toilet train? Does anything stand out?

BASIL T Yes, I'd say, from our experience, Maltese, Maltese Crosses, Bichon Frises can also be difficult. A lot of the smaller lap type of dogs, only because I think people tend to mollycoddle them too much.

AB Okay, they are probably treating them like a human like you mentioned before, like a baby and almost expecting them to wee like a baby would.

BASIL T Correct. It's just amazing how people actually treat their dogs in that sense.

AB Okay, well we might move on Basil to another problem a lot of people have. A dog who is barking excessively.

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BASIL T Yes. Okay, reasons why a dog barks. In the society that we live in now, a lot more people are becoming intolerant of dogs full stop. The slightest bark is going to set people off and say “well, this dog barks all day”. But there is a couple of people that need to do, or dog owners, to prevent the barking issue. Dogs bark because they are bored, because they are not getting enough stimulation during the day. They are not exercised regularly. They don't have enough companionship or they are just simply suspicious of noises and therefore they will bark. So to alleviate that, dog owners need to do one thing first, that is train that dog to be an obedient dog. So, the dog looks up to the owner as a pack leader and respects that person as a pack leader and wants to please that person.

Secondly, daily walks to be able to give a dog extra stimulation. A lot of people say to me “but I've got a big backyard and he has got all these toys”. So the answer I have to them is that “well, gee, you have got a big house but would you like to be locked up in that house, day in – day out? Their answer is no. You would go stir crazy, like a dog would. So the dog does need to get that stimulation outside of that environment.

The next thing is, the dog needs quality time with the other members of the family and this is where people need to learn to bring their dogs inside when they are at home and teach them to go to their and on their mat in the same room that they are at, rather than just simply wondering around and so they are still getting that contact and that companionship and that quality time with that dog owner, rather than out of twenty-four hours, the owner spends one hour with the dog because he feeds the dog and he walks the dog and the rest of the time the dog is in the backyard.

AB So it's little wonder you have got a barking dog.

BASIL T Well, that's right, exactly. So there is all these things that can create anxiety in dogs and they end up barking because it's an outlet for them.

AB Do you have a few more tips on becoming your dog's pack leader because that seems like it is a very important point?

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BASIL T Absolutely. First of all, you need to do the obedience training because that essentially shows the dog has to carry out those exercises for you and get the reward from the owner.

Other things, teaching the dog not pull on the leash. That's all part of obedience because pulling means the dog wants to guide you or lead you wherever it wants to go.

Things such as the dog wanting to rush in every time you open the door and you are just sort of going "okay, well he can come in now" and you open the door and the dog rushes in and does as he pleases. To stop that, what you need to do is open the door just a little bit, close it. Open – close, so the dog hasn't got a chance to rush in. Once the dog stops trying to rush in because you are just opening and closing the door, then you give the dog a command such as "inside" and you guide him by using a treat, a pig's ear or something, guide him to his bed and then you say "on your bed". He goes to his mat, you praise him, so it's a positive him. Let him have his chew thing for about five minutes and then you take him by the collar and you lead them outside and say "outside". So you're essentially, dictating to the dog the terms of coming inside.

Other things, teaching him not to hang around the table when you are eating food. Eating first and then feeding the dog second. Not allowing the dog to go through the door before you. Only allowing the dog to come in when you give him a command. All these sorts of things will lead to you becoming more the pack leader .

AB You mentioned feeding your dog after yourself. I think a lot of owners would probably find that surprising because usually the dog is fed first.

BASIL T That's right. What you are trying to do is establish clearly, well as pack leader, you get to feed first. In the wild situation as it would happen, the pack leader would it, the scraps would be left amongst the rest of the pack to fight for them. So, it's a little thing and it may or may not have an impact but if you are having a pack leadership issue, then you need to consider that. In normal situations, it wouldn't make much difference.

AB Further along the line of a barking dog, what about a dog that is more than just barking, it's an aggressive dog. It may be biting or nipping visitors or possibly even the owner.

BASIL T I will give you some cases in point. There was a lady that I went to see just recently, she had a French Bulldog. Her mother rang up really concerned because the French Bulldog bit her daughter, who was the dog's owner, she is 19 years of age and they were concerned because the dog was aggressive towards them as well. So I went and had a look at this dog and he was just quite a normal outgoing French Bulldog, quite a nice dog in fact and the bottom line was that she had mollycoddled from a puppy. He was allowed to sleep on the bed, every time the dog wanted attention she would pick it up, the dog slept on the couch on their lap and now if the dog jumped on their lap and they tried to get up or move, the dog would growl, as if to say "no, you are not going to move me". So they reacted by sitting back in the chair. So this is sending all the wrong signals to this dog. "Well you are in charge". So then what happened was, she chased the French Bulldog and it ran under the bed because it had something in it's mouth and she went to get it from under the bed and of course the dog is cornered, so it reacts in a defensive way and he bit her on the hand and that was basically the catalyst for her calling us and me coming out to see her.

What it was, the dog was simply pack leader and he wasn't going to tolerate any misbehavior by his lower members of the pack which are the humans of the family.

So to change all that, we had to first of all establish clearly in dog owner's mind that they had to have strength and a strong heart and be firm with this dog and correct the dog and do obedience training with him, and not put up with this nonsense. And that took probably about five or six weeks of one on one training to build the confidence back in the dog's owner and then also for the dog to clearly perceive that dog owner as the being pack leader. That's one instance.

Another instance would be dog nipping the ankles and things like that, usually because they are a bit fearful, a little bit nervous, a little bit distrustful and in that situation, again, the only way you are going to rectify or try to control it, is through obedience training. These dogs don't respond to their owner's commands, so they just keep getting away with it. So the bottom line is the dog owner has to take on that leadership role and show this dog "no, I'm not going to put up with this nipping, you're not going to do that. I'm pack leader, I'll protect you – you don't have to protect me".

AB So it takes acknowledgement by the owner that there is a problem and some commitment to actually put the work in to change it.

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BASIL T That's right. Sometimes this is the difficulty Anthony, where the dog owners, they just don't have the heart to be firm with their dogs, because it's their little baby and at the end of the day, that is why we have a lot of problems with dogs which could have been avoided.

AB OK, we might move on. You mentioned briefly before a dog who is left at home, separation anxiety – that barking could be one of the outlets for that dog. Would you mind talking a bit more about separation anxiety.

BASIL T Separation anxiety is often misdiagnosed but it's where a dog shows anxiety by shaking when the owner leaves, barking excessively, droolling but it displays these behaviors even prior to the owner leaving. The owner will be going through a routine to go to work for example, or to go out such as putting makeup on if the owner is a woman or if it's a man, putting aftershave on or shaving or doing whatever, and then they will get their car keys, they will get their bag or whatever they are taking with them and all these are cues for the dog to start getting nervous because the dog knows that each one of these is getting closer to the person leaving. The person goes out the door, the owner makes a big fuss of the dog, goes out the door, the dog is left in a hyped up state and then starts to get distraught and starts to pace and celibate and some dogs can actually make themselves sick – they will throw up.

Now, if you have got a dog like that you really need to have a two pronged approach. You may have to look at first of all, medical intervention. Perhaps take it to the vet and the vet can diagnose if the dog is showing this nervousness as well or this anxiety and the vet may prescribe a product called Clomicalm which is like a human Valium and that in conjunction with desensitisation training. By desensitisation I mean is whilst the dog is on this Clomicalm you would then, as a trainer, advise the dog owner to disappear for short periods of time and I'm talking about half a minute and come back.

AB Okay, as short as that.

BASIL T Exactly and you have to build up from those little steps and then to big steps and then may be up to a minute and five minutes and so on and so on. So you can see what we are getting at. We desensitise the dog from all these happening. But also you have to change the dog's perception of picking up the car keys and the dog starts to get stressed. Pick the car keys up and put them down again but don't go anywhere. Go to the bathroom and start getting ready but just sit down and watch TV so the dog doesn't think that each of these actions means the dog owner is going to disappear.

AB Right, so you are changing your cues.

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BASIL T But also, take on that leadership roll and again, obedience training. Get control of the dog. Give the dog direction. The dog is going to feel a lot more confident in that it's actually doing work for you such as sitting and staying and confident that you are charge and he is going to be okay. It's only when people go "oh you poor little thing, I won't be long".

AB That's just making the problem worse.

BASIL T That's right. So two pronged thing:

1. Medical intervention in some cases with the use of Clomicalm or other products; and of course
2. Desensitisation training.

There is also a product called "a DAP" which I only found out recently it's called "a Dog Appeasing Pheromone", and I think, I'm not sure exactly, that this is a scent that you spray, that has been manufactured to simulate the mother's milk and so it has a calming effect on dogs and so you spray that on the bedding and that can also make the dog a little calmer.

The other thing is too if you are leaving, put something with your scent on the dog's bed. It could just be an old dirty jumper or something, or your dirty underwear for that matter, but the scent is there and the dog feels a lot more calm.

AB Would it be worthwhile leaving your radio on or anything?

BASIL T Yes and no. That may help, it may not. It's more the fact that the dog is looking for the owner, the physical part of the owner to be there.

AB Would introduce a second dog into the family assist?

BASIL T It can help. It depends on how stressed this dog is and nervous this dog is. If the dog is so stressed that even when it sees dogs it can't relate to them, then it's not necessarily going to work either. But sometimes I would recommend, we use a company called DogZone. DogZone is a day care centre for dogs here in Melbourne and we refer people that have got severe cases of this separation anxiety to send their dogs there during the day and then pick them up at the end of the day. So the dog is mixing with other dogs and also with people and that, over a period of time, it's amazing how less stressed this dog is because he is getting extra stimulation and companionship but if they are really nervous it takes something like weeks before the dog settles finally and then goes into a routine and then is quite happy.

AB Terrific. We might just move onto a couple of food issues. Firstly, the dog begging for food and he is always around at the kitchen table. Is there any way to stop that other than just locking your dog up at meal times?

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BASIL T Quite simple. Don't feed them at the table. Dogs learn by association. People give them a little titbit and don't think it's any problem. All it takes is once or twice and the dog has picked that up as a signal and as a habit. Again, it comes down to the dog owners setting up parameters and guidelines for these dogs and saying "no, whilst we are having dinner, you can be in the same room, stay on your mat". Again, what does it come down to? Obedience training. Getting control. Vocal control. When you say "no", the dog understands that. When you say "stay", the dog understands that. So if you put him on his mat and you say "drop" and you say "stay" and you go have your dinner, the dog is not allowed to get up. So that what it boils down to.

AB So a lot of these issues are boiling down to not spoiling your dog too much. Obviously, you want to love your dog but if you love them unconditionally without teaching them anything, they are going to go off the rails.

BASIL T That's right, yep, exactly.. You really have to first of all provide the dog – you can give the dog love and all that and the dog will still love you as such, but it may not respect you if you don't start establishing yourself as being the pack leader and teaching the dog to do various things for you.

AB What about the dog who is refusing to eat? A meal is put down in front of them, they sniff it, have a bite and walk away.

BASIL T Well, let's presume the dog is healthy and he is not suffering from any ailment which robs his appetite and you do this and then you put the food down and the dog just goes "oh, I'm not really interested". Then what you do is you take the food away after fifteen minutes and he skips that meal. The next time round, you put the same food out again. Fifteen minutes after that, if he doesn't eat it, he skips that meal. One thing about dogs, they are pretty resilient animals. They are not going to starve to death if you don't feed them for two or three days. In the wild, they can probably go without food for weeks. So what you do is you let it go and you give it up to even three days before you then may have to look at changing what you are feeding the dog. But again, changing, you have got to look what you are going to change to.

My suggestion is to look at a super premium dog product. There is a lot of good dog products. We use Nature's Gift Dog food. It is an Australian canned food however, it's cooked in the can. There is no preservatives or additives. There is no bi-products and it is an exceptionally good product and it's all a balanced diet as well because they control the amount of fat and what vitamins go in there.

AB Check you local vet / pet shop for availability of premium dog food brands. Where should people look for premium foods? At a local pet store or vets?

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BASIL T Usually the super premium foods – well, the Nature's Gift you can get from supermarkets. You can get other products as well like dry food products such as 'Advanced' which is an extremely good dry products, super premium product and you can get that usually from pet shops, vets and places like DogZone for example.

AB Okay, terrific. The last issue there in regard to eating is poop eating. A dog eating their own poop or another dog's poop.

BASIL T Yes, it's called coprophagy. That's the clinical term – coprophagy.

AB It sounds much nicer than poop eating.

BASIL T It's actually taken from the Greek word "copro" which is faeces and "phagy" which is food. So coprophagy is something that young dogs will tend to do because they are just curious. They will just go "oh, this is interesting. I might just have a bit of a taste of that". But what can happen though is they can develop a habit and so you need to break that habit as soon as possible. That means as soon as you know the dog has done some poo, you have to clean it up to prevent that.

Sometimes it's because of poor diet or undigested food products going through their system. So then you might have to review what the dog is eating and if he is eating stuff that he is not breaking down and it's coming out the other end, and it's still half broken down, so he eats it again. That's why again, making sure your dog has a balanced diet will prevent these sorts of things from happening. They are not going to get really necessarily sick from it, but if they start eating other dog's poos and other animal's poos, they could ingest worms and things that you don't want to go through their system. That's why you shouldn't let a dog lick your face, because you don't know where he has been.

AB That's true, and a lot of us probably do that everyday.

BASIL T Of course, that brings us to another subject to zoonotic diseases which is any disease that's transmitted from dog to human. So these diseases can be in the form of worms, intestinal worms and it's a pretty nasty thing. So the key really is prevention. That means always being hygienically conscious when you are dealing with your dog.

AB Yes. Basil, another question that really relates to my own experience, and I know a lot of dog owners have this as well, is a dog that runs away from home. I have a Bichon Frise twelve years old. She is, I think a reasonably well trained dog, she probably doesn't get enough walking outside. The minute the door is open, she is out the door and gone.

BASIL T What happens is because dogs learn by association and experience, it takes one of these experiences to happen and the dog finds that is a positive thing. So let's say the first time - when would be the first time you recall that this ever happened?

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AB That would be a number of years ago when she was probably about three years old, I think.

BASIL T Okay. And when she did run out, where did she go?

AB Not far, to about two doors up. She just sniffed someone's garden basically.

BASIL T Then what did you do after that? Did she come back?

AB No, we had to go and get her.

BASIL T What was she doing? She was quite happily sniffing?

AB Yes, very settled there and happy.

BASIL T Again, because dogs enjoy being outside in that environment, they are opportunists, and they will go off and they will have a sniff because that's what they do. If she doesn't come back immediately it just simply means that may be you didn't train her enough to respond to your commands, or you may have said to her "come back here, you naughty dog, come back" and that sort of growly sound and that is actually quite a negative to a dog and the dog will end up getting further away from you. But all it takes is that one experience and the dog thinks "great, I had a fantastic time when I ran out. I sniffed all these things. I played with the dog next door. I got fed by this person down the street. I knocked over this rubbish bin and grabbed all the food." All these things can happen. So, when the dog gets put back inside the backyard, it could be a bit mundane for the dog in the backyard and so it waits for another opportunity to get out again.

So the way to prevent that is to first of all, be aware where your dog is when you are opening doors, but also teach it (I come down to this time and time again you will notice, Anthony), is obedience. Tell him to stay. He is not allowed to get out. When you open the door, close the door and release him and say "finish". That means he can get up now from his stay. Or you teach the dog not to rush out by cracking the door open, when he is inside the house for example, just about 5 centimetres, closing the door again. Opening, closing – opening, closing. Repeat this and then go back and sit down inside. So therefore you change that association or perception the dog has that the door opens and then it gets a chance to rush out. In fact, all that happens is the door opens and it closes again and you go back and sit down. He will give up in the end.

AB You are right Basil. You keep coming back to this basic obedience training. Is that something the average dog owner can do at home or should they really be seeking expert help for that?

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BASIL T They can. The majority of people can teach the dog some very basic things but in a lot of cases also, they do need to get some expert help and that's where we would recommend people to go to a professional dog trainer and seek that assistance. I mean there is good trainers and there is bad trainers. What they need to do is see which trainers are members of reputable organisations.

We are members of the Australian Association of Professional Dog Trainers which means that we have to get an accreditation each year in terms of the way we operate, not just simply our training methods but also our customer service, our insurances. All those sorts of things have to be up to scratch and so on.

So yes, the pet dog owner needs to really source out some professional trainers in their area.

AB Briefly, what would be covered in basic obedience training?

BASIL T Basically, our obedience program is a short course of eight weeks and also we have a ten week course. In the course, the dogs learn social walking so there is no pulling on the leash when they walk them. They learn to come back when they are called. They sit at the heel which is level with your left leg. They drop on command with a hand signal. They do sit stay and drop stays. Up to 5 metres distance for a minute with distractions plus also interaction and sociability training with the other dogs and handlers. So in real life situations when you are walking your dog down the street, the dog is still responding to you. Plus also we help with problem solving in that course.

It's all structured, which means there is a clear outcome at each session. They receiving training notes and handouts so they know what they have to practice and then we also guarantee our programs that they will achieve those outcomes provided of course, they practice as well. Daily practice of 5 to 10 minutes goes along way.

AB Basil, you mentioned walking on a leash. How could someone start that home? What equipment would they need? There is choker chains and all types of leashes.

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BASIL T Correction collars are commonly called choker chains. They are okay, but if they are not used correctly, there is no point in putting it on. A lot of people expect that, okay, we will put this chain on and the dog will choke himself and then he will stop. Well, in fact, that's not the way it's intended to be used. The idea of a correction collar is that the collar stays loose and when the dog starts to forge ahead, the handler has to stop, say "no", because the dog has learnt by voice command, and then give the chain a slight tug back before it tightens. So it's the sound of the chain and also the sudden taking up of that slack that corrects the dog back and then the dog gets praised for stopping and then you continue on. That's one approach.

The other approach is to use a head halter. There is a number of products on the market. There is the haltee which is in Dunbar brand. There is the Black Dog Training halter which is made locally in Australia. It's actually distributed, I should say, locally in Australia. There is also, which is what we use, there is also the Gentle Leader which is another form of head halters. You slip that over the top of the dog's muzzle and around it's neck and you clip it on and it's like a horse with a bridle, you control the dog from the muzzle. The idea is not to jerk the leash because you can actually injure the dog's neck, but just as the dog starts to forge you stop and gently draw the leash in towards you at the dog's nose height. The dog has to turn and look you and stops as a consequence. Some dogs don't like that they will start to try and fight to get it off their muzzle, so it's a case of working out what is best suited for that particular dog.

AB And again, commitment, patience and understanding. These things aren't going to be taught overnight.

BASIL T No, that's right. People have to have patients as well, that's right.

AB Basil, often people have a question "bringing a second pet home". There is some concern, when they have bought a dog they may already have a dog at home or a cat, is there anything that they can do that can make that experience a happier one for animals and humans?

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BASIL T If they have an older dog, let's presume this dog has been quite okay with dogs in the past, it shouldn't really be a great issue. Also if this dog has again had some obedience training and is quite clear in terms of the owner being the leader in the household and it being at the bottom of the pecking order, it's not going to be an issue.

The way to do it would be to introduce these dogs outside of the home environment into a neutral area, like a local park on lead and then let them meet, let them have a sniff of each other and then walk them together and then walk them home. When you get home, make sure nothing changes with the previous dog that you had, like don't overwhelm that older dog with extra affection that you normally would because then that sends a signal to that dog "oh, you're next in line" and therefore you will end up with fights because that dog will then see the other young dog as a threat. If you simply treat them as equals, you don't have those problems.

AB If there is some snarling and snapping between two dogs, should you just stand back and let them sort it out?

BASIL T Never. That's an absolutely misnomer. An absolute misnomer. Absolutely not. No, you are the pack leader. You step in there and you sort both these dogs out, correct them, reprimand them and give them time out and don't tolerate that nonsense from them.

AB Okay, that's a very important point. I have seen a lot of owners myself introducing their dogs to another dog and the thinking is "I better sort it out or one of them will become the pack leader".

BASIL T Yes. Absolutely not. You just don't allow that. Sometimes what will happen is the dogs will start fighting and they will injure themselves and you could end up with some serious injuries. No, you shouldn't allow that, at all. Don't tolerate it.

AB Basil, is there any travel tips you could suggest for someone taking their dog on a holiday, possibly?

BASIL T By aircraft or just the back of the car?

AB Well both really. Probably by the car is the most common method.

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BASIL T Let's presume your dog doesn't get car sick for a start. What you need to do is to make it quite safe for the dog. So when he is in the backseat of the car, if it's just a sedan, you need to harness the dog in and clip that harness onto a seatbelt. A lot of people tend to, as drivers or passengers of vehicles, we clip ourselves in but we forget about our dogs. Now if that dog, if you hit the brakes and that dog is flying around, for a start – apart from injuring himself, it could be lethal for the passengers inside because this dog is flying around. So you need to harness the dog in.

If you have got say a 4 x 4 wheel drive or a wagon of some sort, you can get one of those grills put in which is sensational because for a start, it means the dog isn't going to come in onto the front seat and the dog is quite secure in the back and he can move around. If you really even wanted to make it even safer, you would also harness the dog into the back as well.

AB Okay, terrific. Well, we're about to wind up. There is two other issues I'd just like you to briefly tell us a bit about and that's firstly a dog who is chewing, may be possibly furniture or whatever he can get his teeth on or a dog digging holes out the backyard which is a common problem for people.

BASIL T These are two common problems that we have with people ringing us up and again, we have to address three particular issues:

1. Has the dog had obedience training? That's a good outlet for him. For a start then we know the owner understands the dog and the dog understands the owner.
2. Does the dog get regular exercise? If he doesn't, then that needs to be addressed.
3. Companionship inside.

But also, you need to look at the dog toys from the chewing aspect. If the dog is chewing anything and everything it's become a habit for it because it doesn't have the appropriate chew toys to chew and it finds other things to obviously destroy. Some good dog toys out there would be the 'Kong Toy' which is pretty well an indestructible toy and there is also another product that we use called the 'Aussie Dog Toys' which are really virtually indestructible. If people give their dogs too many toys – some people say “well, I've got a lot of toys. He has got ten or twelve toys” but the dog gets bored with them, so what we recommend is that they remove all those toys and simply place three of those toys back in there to play with and rotate them around everyday.

So, there are a couple of simple things that people do:

1. Digging.

Dogs dig again because of boredom but sometimes people will give the dogs a bone and then they leave for work. So the dog goes “oh, I will take this and I will put it somewhere for later” because they have got a full tummy so it's surplus food. They end up with dogs digging holes to bury their bones. So then, if that's the case, don't give the dog a bone that he can just take and bury. Either tie him up so he can't do that and let him chew it all and then get rid of it, or give him stuff that he will actually be able to chew and swallow, such as lambs neck, chicken wings, chicken carcasses – all good for their teeth, but generally the dogs will just eat them up as a meal.

Other reasons why dogs dig – or one of the things you can do to stop a dog digging is to bury it's faeces in the hole because generally dogs don't want to dig that up and that's a quick way of stopping that behavior. These are just simple tips that people can do apart from regular walks, of course.

AB Basil, you mentioned those fresh bones for dogs. What about cooked bones?

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BASIL T No, never cooked bones. That's an absolute no, no because as soon as you cook a bone, it becomes brittle. Now, the dog may be able to chew it but what he has done he has broken a bit of this brittle bone off, he has swallowed it and it's got sharp edges and somewhere along the gut it could get caught and rip the gut lining. I've known of cases where dogs have had severe internal bleeding because of that.

AB Basil, we have covered a lot of ground today. I think there is a lot of help out there now for people who have dog problems. Would you mind just recapping some of the important points for somebody who is really about to get a new dog whether it's a pup or an older dog.

BASIL T Certainly. First of all:

- There is a cost factor. Dogs will cost you money. There is vet bills. There is food bills. There is training. There is all these things that people have to consider. You don't just buy a dog and that's the end of it.
- Also, they have to have training of some sort because they need that guidance, they need that leadership otherwise you will end up with an unruly destructive dog that you don't want.
- The next thing is to give that dog also regular walks. Give it a good diet, a balanced diet.
- Ensure the dog is getting regular contact with people and other dogs.

If you do all that, you will end up with a great companion.

AB Basil, for people out there who would like to visit your website, would you just mind letting them know your web address please.

BASIL T Our web address is www.dogtraining.com.au

AB Just once again please.

BASIL T www.dogtraining.com.au

AB I would like to thank Basil for sharing his great knowledge and expertise today on Dog Training and I will say goodbye to you now Basil and thank you very much.

BASIL T Thank you very much Anthony, it was my pleasure.

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AB That brings us to an end to this audio program titled "Dog Training Secrets Revealed". Congratulations on this big step to improving your experience of being a dog owner.

This audio was recorded to provide understanding and effective management of many of the common dog behavior problems that you may come across as a dog owner. I hope you have gained some valuable knowledge and will now be more confident in tackling or even preventing these problems in the first place. Remember though, for any training to be successful, it will require some commitment, patience and consistency.

Thank you for your time and I wish you good luck in all your dog endeavours.

Good Bye!

END OF TRANSCRIPT

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