

THE

# ALPHA ROLE

By Robert Cabral

One of the greatest mistakes we make as humans is to place our “ways” upon our dogs. Humans and canines see things quite differently. Mainly, canines strive for pack structure and seek out an alpha leader. This is different than we see it as humans, so I ask you to open your mind. Humans see a dominant role, or a leader as something oppressive or totalitarian. Dogs however see this as a sense of security. When dogs have a leader they understand this leader’s job and respect it. It is rarely challenged once properly established and there is a great deal of comfort and security that the dog gets from having this firmly established in his life and in his pack.

If you are looking to provide a sense of stability and security to your dog, there are several things you should establish right away. Remember, a dog’s training can, and should take effect immediately. We do not slowly change a situation for a dog. If the new rule says, No furniture.. It is immediate. We do not let them on the sofa for a ½ hour and then ask them to leave. New rules are put into place immediately and are not worked in gradually.

Let’s start with this, if you are establishing yourself as your dog’s leader, EVERYTHING belongs to you and YOU share it with your dog. This includes, food, toys, time, affection, furniture, etc. Allowing your dog to see that you are the leader will allow him to see himself as a lower ranking member of the pack that needs to be protected and he will look to his leader for guidance. One thing I like to use to teach structure is “I eat first.” That means I eat, and when I am done, my dog eats. I put his food down, walk away and allow him to eat. Leaders Lead.. SIMPLE... I use the leadership role as a method of teaching my dog what is right and wrong. I believe that when a dog has a solid grasp on the concept of leadership, we can have a fun and harmonious life together. The key thing to remember in getting your dog to see you as a leader is less emotion. As tempted as you are to cuddle and kiss your dog, you are not doing him any favors by doing this during this phase of training, at the end it’s great, but being firm with your dog during the command phase will give more value to your praise at the end. Your dog will have some challenges when you are constantly cuddling and kissing him. This is not to say that a new dog gets no affection, rather he gets affection for things he has done. Affection is a form of reward that I use with my dogs every single day.

Giving a dog constant affection and never providing or demanding structure oftentimes will develop a strong dog that will protect you and probably make stupid choices in keeping other people and dogs away from you. YOU will become your dog’s property and HE will make decisions on how to protect and keep you. These are decisions that will lead to his demise: Dogs that attack people, or other dogs are taken away from their owners and are killed. Once your dog gets to this level of dominance chances are you will lack the ability to deliver the proper level of correction necessary to regain control. So, it is better that you start the program out right and follow this advice to get your dog in line right from the beginning. Being indifferent to a dog is the single best thing you can do to building a strong bond with him. This is advice I give in my article on bringing a new dog home. It is pertinent to understand if you want a scared dog to come around. Trying to hug a dog that is scared is a recipe for disaster. Forcing a dog to be near you is also not recommended. Dogs form deep bonds, but it takes them time to trust. Dogs observe and then decide. See what it is that your dog is seeing, and see it through your dog’s eyes. **For more information go to [blackbeltdogtraining.com](http://blackbeltdogtraining.com)**



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