

HOW TO PREVENT BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN DOGS USING GAMES AND FOOD

Excerpt from *Culture Clash* by Jean Donaldson, Pages 108–109.

WHY DOGS GET INTO TROUBLE OR DEVELOP BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Lack of alternative. This is the most important thing. The puppy is going for plant dirt because he wants to play, explore and put stuff in his mouth. He is not “bad.” He is a “dog.”

- What legal activity can he engage in that will meet most or all of these requirements?
- What kind of chew toys does he have? Does he use them? If not, why not?
- Do you stuff a KONG and bones for him as puzzles for part of his daily food ration?
- Is the puppy stimulated in other ways, like training and problem solving?
- Does he get to play fetch or tug daily? Does he get to play with other dogs?

If you have not addressed these questions, you have the core of your problem. And know, you are not alone. Most domestic dogs are under stimulated. Remember, the redirection stuff is icing.

After you institute a regime, there will come a time when you will say that it’s been weeks since he’s even tried to go for plant dirt or other forbidden things.

- *Many destructive behaviors we see in dogs are the result of boredom and a lack of mental stimulation.* Dogs need activities which give them constructive ways to burn off energy. They need both physical and mental activities. Dogs need to use their minds by problem solving daily.
- *Dogs instinctually hunt for their food.* However, their “hunting” typically consists of eating quickly out of a bowl, so they miss out on their natural instinct to hunt, move, pull, grab, chew, and think! This is where an interactive toy comes in. These toys make the dogs use their natural instinct to hunt, scavenge, and seek, which keeps them busy and out of mischief!
- *Meal time is the perfect place to begin modifying your dog’s behavior.* Interactive toys such as treat balls, puzzles, and a KONG can open up a whole new world for your dog. We recommend feeding just ONE meal a day in a puzzle or treat ball and giving one frozen KONG a day as another outlet for their energy. Studies show once an animal learns to work for their food, they prefer to do so!



See interactive toys that are available at our shelter store!