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Creating Lifetime Companions

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Whether you are new to puppyhood or it's just been a while, here are some helpful tips...

Teacher/Learner relationship - use lots of praise & reward. This can be in the form of hugs, kisses, verbal, training treats, pat on the head, or just a happy voice. Make yourself a safe place to be around.

- Always remember "the thank you"! If you say "puppy sit" & he does, then it's followed by "good sit".
- Be consistent & make him earn the praise.
- If you cannot reinforce what you want, don't ask him.

Treats & Training - it's never too early to start training... even if it's just learning his name or kennel or potty. If your pup loves food, it's a great way to motivate & reward just be careful not to do too much. We suggest training rolls that can be cut up into small pieces & are actually a well-balanced dog food. It is sold at the major retailers. You may need it on your first leash walk as well!

Socialization - and no we don't mean doggie daycare or dog parks.... not just yet anyway. Your puppy is a sponge & will adopt bad behavior as well as good at these parks. Plus until they are 4 months & have had all their shots, you don't want to expose them to those dangers. So in a safe environment, try to have them handled by kids, neighbors, be around cats & other dogs, be outside in the rain, see bikes & skateboards, or during fireworks etc.... Get them used to life as soon as possible. We cannot stress socialization enough **before** 6 months of age. Most of the behavior issues we see of aggression or shyness are due to lack of proper socialization. It doesn't benefit your pup to go to a park & have bigger dogs jump on him ... keep him safe & teach him you will keep him safe.

Crying/Whining - often a pup will be lonely for his littermates. If they cry, try leaving on some music or a TV to create the noise they are used to hearing or you could just talk to them soothingly. Remember that they are used to a routine and the noise of their littermates. You now have to become that replacement & there will be an adjustment period. You could try tuckering them out by playing, then potty, then some loving, then kennel for a sleep. Leave some soothing music on or a TV on low. Leaving the room sometimes helps since they are likely to settle in if they don't see you.

House training - though most puppies have a strong instinct to not soil where they eat or sleep, some have spent their early life in kennel environments that don't encourage proper behaviors... so crate training is great for this. Make sure the puppy has enough room but not too much where they will be tempted to soil in the crate. Also puppies need to potty every few hours, or when picked up, after eating, after playing or after waking up. They eat **4-6 times a day up to 3 months old** & 2 times a day by 6 mo. old; so managing a specific routine of eating/water access & playing is important. Assign a word when you open the door to take them out like "do you want to go out" or "potty outside?", then with them on leash, **RUN** to the area you wish them to go & assign a different word when they are pottying... like "in the back" or "potty", "do your business", or "good boy go" etc. If he sniffs in the house he may be looking for a spot. If he makes a mistake, verbally say "ut oh" or something like that & take him out to his spot & ask for him to go again. Try to clean up the mess when he isn't there watching... it's a funny thing, but when you clean up their mess they find it rewarding & give you another present...So let him watch cleaning up in the yard but not in the house!

Chewing - your pup will teethe a lot up to 6 months old; so have safe toys or chew bones for him to massage those gums. Spend a lot of time taking from him what he shouldn't chew & hand him & praise him for what he should chew. Crate training is great for this issue. So are commercially available sprays like "bitter apple".

Biting - never let your puppy mouth or bite in any way. It's cute at first, but not when it happens to the grandkids or a neighbor's kids. Most pups will bite/nip for the first 2-3 months. They teethe for up to 6 months. Be firm with a "no biting" command & put him into the kennel with a toy, or you can blow gently into their face like a gust of wind & give the command. Also helpful is bitter apple on your hands. It doesn't smell or stain & they will quickly decide biting isn't so fun.

Coming home or leaving - don't make a big deal out of either. Ignore the pup 5-10 minutes before leaving & just leave. When coming home, walk in & ignore them or speak quietly like "hi boy". If you jazz them up for either event you may end up with anxiety chewing or barking etc. Teach them it's no big deal & it's like any other part of the day. Same thing for dog walks or dog rides... don't get them all jazzed before going or you'll have your hands full in the car trying to keep them calm or heeling down the driveway.

Ear Taping - some breeds still crop the ears & dock the tails. This tradition is rooted in the function of the breed. If you have a pup that needs ears taped until they are ready to stand on their own (5 months to 10 months of age depending on the type of cut) try to have the breeder train you or your vet. It's really not too difficult (though a bit unnerving at first) & the dogs actually enjoy the process if you are prepared. There are a few methods that are tried & true... like using popsicle/craft sticks or cardboard tampons. Once you understand the process from your vet or breeder, to make it a pleasant experience for you both... prep your table with the tape cut to length & the sticks or tampons pre-taped before getting the dog that way the puppy is only sitting still to remove the tape & a quick reapply. Depending on the humidity where you live or how "rascally" your pup, usually you change the bandages every 2-5 days or if you notice any odor.
