

The Perfect Puppy

By Gwen Bailey

This fourth excerpt deals with the importance of socialization.

The Perfect Puppy (完璧な子犬)の著者、グエン・ベイリー氏は、英国「ブルークロス動物福祉団体」代表の動物行動学者で、「ペット・ビヘイビア・カウンセラーズ協会」(ペットの行動に関して助言する会)所属カウンセラーです。このベストセラーからの抜粋を、数回にわたって、ニュースレターでご紹介します。今回は、その第4回目です。

人間との関わり

子犬の前に現れる人間たちは、体の大きさ、年齢、性格の違いなど実に様々です。毎日会う人、家を定期的に訪れる人たちなどには子犬はすぐに馴れますが、そうでない人々に意識的に会わせることも大事です。人間は自分が成長する間に自然に様々なタイプの人々に出会いますが、子犬のためにわざわざそうしてやらなければならないということにはなかなか気がつかないものです。

どんな人にも会っても100パーセント大丈夫だという犬に育てようと思うなら、実際

にあらゆる種類の人間に会わせることが必要になります。つまり、めがねをかけている人、ひげを生やしている人、変わった服装の人、制服を着ている人、帽子やヘルメットをかぶっている人、鞆を持っている人、袋を持っている人、車椅子の人、歩くのに障害のある人、杖を使っている人、また、様々な人種の人々などです。

これらの人々に会う場所も、自宅や日頃行きつけの場所に限らず、あまり行かない公園や、街の中、通りやほかの人の家などに広げることが必要です。また、走っている人、サッカーをしている人、自転車に乗っている人など、ありとあらゆる人間の行動を想定しなければなりません。

様々なスポーツをしているあらゆる種類の人間というだけではまだ十分ではありません。人

間というのは、特に愛犬家たちにありがちですが、立ち止まって、犬をじっと見て近づいてくるという動作をとります。それが、親しみを表す行動だということを学習していなければ、これは犬にとってとても怖い動作です。目をかっと見開いて口中の歯を全部見せて笑っている人間、、、それは怖くない人なんだよ、ということは子犬には教えてもらわないと分からないのですから。



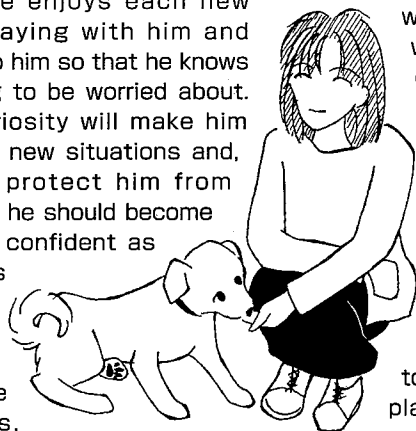
この学習をするまでは、子犬がおびえているようであれば、近寄ってくる人に目をそらしてもらうようお願いすればいいでしょう。または、そういう人々に飼主が話しかけて子犬から注意をそらすこともできるでしょう。そうすれば子犬のプレッシャーを和らげることができ、子犬もリラックスできます。落ち着いてしまえば、子犬は元々好奇心が旺盛なのですから、自分からすすんでその人に近寄って行く

Gwen Bailey is the Blue Cross Animal Welfare Society's Animal Behaviourist and a member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors. This is the fourth excerpt from her best selling book, The Perfect Puppy.

How to socialize successfully

The secret to good socialization is to try to look at the world from your puppy's point of view. Try to imagine what it is like to be that small and vulnerable and to have such a limited knowledge. Do not overwhelm him with too much all at once but start with brief encounters and slowly build up until he is experiencing more and more. Ensure that he enjoys each new experience, playing with him and talking happily to him so that he knows there is nothing to be worried about. His natural curiosity will make him what to explore new situations and, providing you protect him from becoming afraid, he should become more and more confident as he gains experience.

Humans
Humans come
in all shapes,



sizes, ages and types of character. Your dog will rapidly get used to people he sees every day or who regularly visit your house, but he will be unfamiliar with others unless you take care to expose him to them. It is easy to forget this because we have been familiarized with many different types of people as we have grown up.

If you want your dog to be 100 percent confident of all humans, you will need to introduce him to all sorts of people. This includes those wearing glasses, beards, unusual clothing, uniforms, hats, motor-cycle helmets, carrying bags or sacks, people in wheel-chairs, people who walk with a limp or who carry a walking stick, and people of different races.

Exposure to people needs to be both at home, on your own territory, and off territory in parks, towns, on the street, and in other people's homes. Your puppy needs to get used to people running or jogging, playing football, riding bikes and all the other strange

activities that humans engage in !

Familiarizing your puppy with all sorts of people doing all sorts of activities is still not enough. People, especially dog lovers, are prone to stopping, looking at your dog and approaching. For a dog that has not learned that such approaches are friendly, such behaviour can be very frightening. Puppies need to learn that a human approaching with wide open eyes and displaying a full set of teeth in a smile is nothing to be afraid of ! Familiarizing your puppy with this aspect of human behaviour is very important.

Until your puppy has learned this lesson, ask people to look away if they are frightening him by staring at him, even if they are doing it unintentionally, or distract their attention from him by speaking to them. This takes the pressure off the puppy and allows him to relax. Given time, your puppy's natural curiosity will encourage him to come forward and make friends.

Humans are also prone to touching unfamiliar dogs, especially if they own dogs themselves. Handling exercises to do with your own puppy will be