

Teach An Old Dog A New Trick

Recently I was visiting the home of a person I have known for a long time. When I entered their house her dog began jumping up on me in his usual manner of greeting. I really like this dog. He is a nice big guy and except for his jumping he is usually very well behaved. As I am getting older (and need to have both of my knees replaced) I have become more fragile. It was all I could do to keep myself upright and on my feet. At one point I felt sure he was going to knock me down completely. His owner did nothing to discourage his behavior and made no apologies for his action. This was normal as far as she was concerned.

After the dog calmed down we had a very pleasant evening. Normally I would have forgotten the dog's behavior by the next morning. On this occasion I did not forget.

I started wondering if there wasn't some way of politely telling the dog (and his owner) that his behavior was not acceptable (and that it was actually dangerous in some cases).

A few days later I was talking to my friend Kim Billings (another Animal communicator like myself). Kim has had a good deal of experience with dog training. I have not. I asked her how a person trains a dog to stop jumping. She had a very simple technique.

We both understood why the dog is jumping. He sees a friend and wants to greet them. He wants their attention and jumping is how he shows it.

Kim suggested the next time this happens I should respond by turning my back on the dog. Cross my arms over my chest or fold my arms so I am not making any kind of hand movements or gestures that would encourage the dog. This behavior will confuse the dog. As long as the dog continues with the jumping behavior I should ignore him. I should keep turning away from him as long as he is jumping. Eventually he will quiet down, sit down or even walk away. At that point I will pet him and tell him he is a good dog. We should be fine after that.

I decided to put this to the test. I asked a neighbor with a jumping dog if I could try a new technique I wanted to learn. They were more than happy for me to give my new theory a try. The dog began his jumping greeting as soon as I walked in the yard. I turned away from him. He jumped again. I turned away again. We did this a few times and to my delight he lost interest in jumping. I then petted him and all was once again good between us. I was delighted.

I have since used this method several times and each time it has worked beautifully. It does not seem to be a lasting fix for a dog but it works for me every time I try it. Maybe you really can teach an old dog a new trick. At least it is true for this old dog, me.