

In last year's issue of *Greater Cincinnati Pet Pages*, I wrote an article about a subject that has been the single most asked question from my clients of cat households. I attempted to solve the problem of "Why doesn't my cat use the litter box?" This year's subject is a lot more complicated and difficult to solve. "Why does my dog bark so much?"

Let me first tell you that I am NOT a dog trainer. I AM an Animal Communicator. I am not saying that one is very different than the other. They can often accomplish the same thing but in a different manner.

My first thought was to ask for advice from another animal communicator who has quite a bit of experience with training dogs. I phoned my good friend, Kim Billings and asked her the question, "How do you stop a dog from barking so much?" She gave me several wonderful suggestions.

Her first suggestion was something I would never have thought of on my own. If a dog is barking because it is actually seeing something that stimulates him to bark, simply remove the image that is tempting him to bark. In other words, if your dog sits at the door or window and barks at everything he sees, change the view. You can cover the window with curtains, blinds, or some other easy way that will keep the dog from seeing out the door or window.

If he is activated to bark at sounds he is hearing outside of the house you can attempt to keep noise to a minimum by closing windows, playing music in the house or other means of distracting his attention from outdoor noises. You can try moving his bed to a location in the house that is farther away from the street noise or the view that is causing him to bark.

In my communication work with animals, I would also suggest that you follow the techniques we have discussed in previous issues of the Pet Pages. Visualize your dog acting in the manner you want her to act, NOT the bad "barking" behavior that you are actually experiencing. Remember to use all positive commands "I want you to stop Barking, NO Barking." Do not use negative commands like "Don't bark or why won't you stop barking?" When we use words like "don't" and "won't," we are actually visualizing the behavior that we DO NOT want from our pet. If you need to review why these terms are different you can go to the Greater Cincinnati Pet Pages web site and re-read some of my former articles. You can read the Pet Pages at www.greatercincinnati.petpages.com - click on Past Articles, then Pet Communication. You will be especially interested in reading articles from 2010, 2013, and 2016.

Always visualize the animal doing what you WANT him to do, NOT what you don't want him to do. Most animals want to please us. They read our thoughts constantly. If you think about the BAD behavior, the animal believes that if you are thinking about it, you want them to do it. See it in your thoughts the way you WANT the animal to act, NOT the bad way he are acting. Practice these communication skills and try a few of the simple ideas of distracting your dog's attention from the sight or sound that is causing the barking. You may be delighted with the results.