



Crate Training

Crate training goes hand in hand with potty training. To expedite potty training your puppy, you will need to get him associating good stuff happens in the crate. The crate will be his little space within your home. It can be a place to chill out and get away from all the chaos or his little apartment while you are away so he does not have the opportunity to chew the furniture and soil the house. It also gets your puppy prepared if he should need to be crated at the vet, groomers or kennel. You do not want his first experience in a crate to be in a new environment with new people and new smells.

Your first step in getting him to enjoy his crate is to let him go in and out on his own. Have your puppy watch you put a Kong partially filled with food in the crate. When he enters the crate tell him, *Crate, Good Boy*. The reward is the Kong. Do not close the door. Repeat this several times throughout the day.

The next step is closing the gate. Do not make a big deal of it. When he enters the crate (with Kong in it), tell him, *Good Boy*, and close the gate. If he shows no signs of distress (e.g., whining, whimpering, barking, head butting), tell him, *Good Boy*, and open the gate. If he does show signs of distress, completely ignore him. Do not tell him No, Quiet or bang on the crate. Even though these are negative reactions from a human perspective, your dog perceives them as attention and any attention is good attention. Once he is quiet for a few seconds tell him, *Good Boy*, and open the crate to let him out.

After several successful repetitions, do not use the Kong initially. Instead, say the cue, *Crate*, and wait for him to enter the crate. Immediately tell him, *Good Boy*, give him the Kong and close the crate gate.

Next level is extending the duration he is in the crate. Provide verbal praise in a soothing voice periodically and releasing him when he is still calm. If it is naptime for your puppy, that is a perfect scenario to practice a longer confinement time in his crate.

Once your puppy is crate trained you will find that he will go in there on his own to take naps or seek some peace and quiet. Crates have come a long way in design and function. No longer are these the cages or dungeons of years ago; these are safe havens for your dog, and some are designed to be attractive furniture pieces in your home.

If you need additional help with crate training, please give me a call.