

DOGS AND AGGRESSION



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WHERE DO WE START?

- We hear a LOT about dog aggression...
 - Your dog bit me!
 - My dog isn't aggressive-he's protective.
 - THAT dog should be outlawed!
 - Aww...that dog isn't aggressive, he's just shy around people.

But before we get to the good stuff, we have to begin at the beginning....and all things begin with:

BEHAVIOR

- WHAT IS BEHAVIOR?
- Behavior is simply doing something.
- Behavior is how we affect our environment-and each other.

ALL BEHAVIOR is by A-B-C

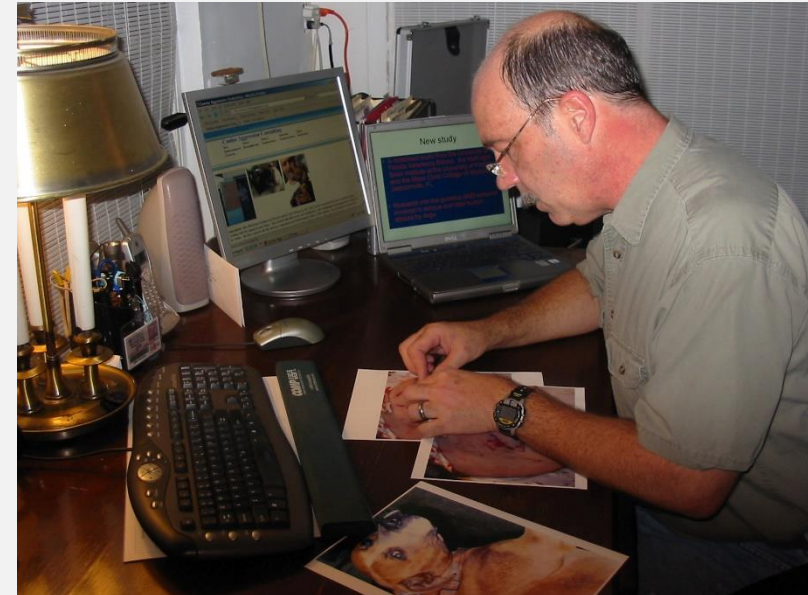
1- Antecedent (what happened first)

2- Behavior (what the organism did)

3- Consequences (did it pay off?)

FOR AN INVESTIGATOR...

- A=Antecedent
- B=Behavior
- C=Consequences
- $A+B=C$
- SO: IF x=Physical evidence
 - y=observed behavior
 - z=what happened and why
- **WE SEARCH FOR Z**



The key is, FIND the problem, not SOLVE the problem - and find the RIGHT problem.

WHAT MAKES A DOG TICK?

- A dog has certain basic needs;
 - Food-proper and sufficient
 - Shelter
 - Social contact
 - Dogs are social beings
 - Dog-dog and human-dog interactions affect mental health
 - Need to be free from harm and fear, pain and discomfort
 - Also includes being free from intimidation or abuse
 - The need to *act like a dog*
 - *They aren't little furry people: they will:*
 - Roll in dead stuff, dig holes, chew, shed, bark, pee on stuff, lick their butts, eat disgusting things, wag a lot, snuggle up, and appreciate you even if you don't deserve it.



Dogs see the world differently, and think like little aliens, but they have the same needs we do.

WHAT IS AGGRESSION?

It is **species specific adaptive behavior** used to:

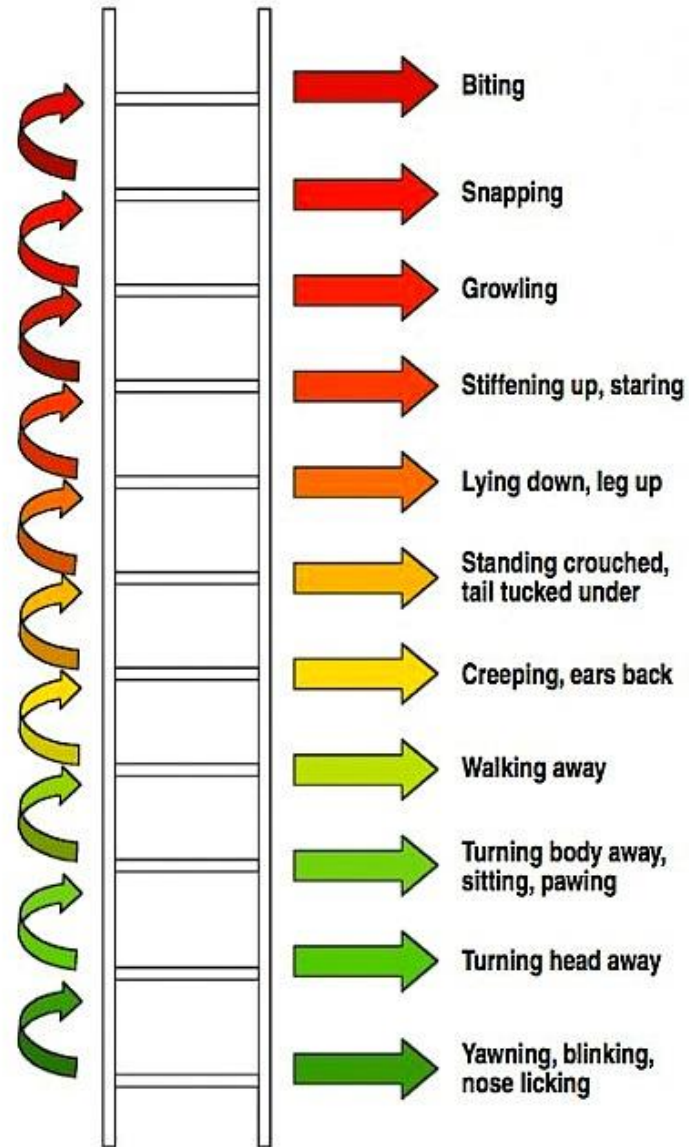
Defend against perceived threat

Establish access to or protect resources

Establish or alter social standing



- All behavior occurs on a spectrum.
- That includes aggression.



HUMANS CAN AGGRAVATE, REDUCE, OR DIRECT AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR



- An organism pursues those behaviors that are reinforced.
- Success breeds success.

AGGRESSION

- **AN AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE:** is a behavior that makes sense to the organism.
- **AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IS NOT A DISORDER THAT NEEDS A “CURE”**

HOW DO HUMANS SEE AGGRESSION?

PERCEPTION

- Bad nature of a breed
- Anger
- Desire to hurt
- Revenge
- Dominance
- Meanness
- Evil

REALITY

- MAKES SENSE TO THE ANIMAL!
- Survival based
- Protect resources
- Get room from danger
- Social interaction/negotiation
- Coping strategy
- Predation
 - *a special case

KINDS OF AGGRESSION

Some authors have a whole list of categories.

I break down aggressive behavior into five basic classes:

Fear/Defense/Pain

Resource Protection (may include predation)

Social Interaction

Human-caused aggression

Medical issues

[Owner Directed or “Dominance” Aggression](#)

[Fear Aggression](#)

[Territorial/Protective Aggression](#)

[Dog-on-Dog Aggression—Related to Dominance](#)

[Dog-on-Dog Aggression— Related to Pack \(Sibling\)](#)

[Dog-on-Dog Aggression—Related to Fear](#)

[Predatory Aggression](#)

[Possessive Aggression](#)

[Aggression Towards Babies or Children](#)

[Redirected Aggression](#)

[Food-Related Aggression](#)

[Play Aggression](#)

[Maternal Aggression](#)

[Health Related Aggression](#)

[Seizure Related Aggression](#)

[Aggression Influenced by Medications](#)

DEFENSE



- An organism acts to eliminate a threat- **perceived or real.**

RESOURCE AGGRESSION:



- Lack of resources may bring an aggressive response.

An animal will use any method needed to secure or protect resources;

Food and water

Shelter

Reproductive access

Obviously a hungry animal will do what it must to eat.

FOOD

- In 1976, a 6-day-old girl was left alone on the floor of an unfurnished apartment with a German Shepherd Dog while her mother was out. The dog killed the infant. The mother admitted to not feeding the dog for at least six days.



REPRODUCTIVE ACCESS

S.F. Mom Pleads Not Guilty In Son's Pit Bull Death

Family Dog Killed Her 12-Year-Old Son

(CBS 5) *SAN FRANCISCO* The mother of a 12-year-old boy fatally mauled by a family pit bull has been indicted by a San Francisco grand jury on a charge of felony child endangerment resulting in death.

Maureen Faibish pleaded not guilty at her arraignment and was released on her own recognizance.

The grand jury indictment comes nearly one year after Faibish's son Nicholas was killed by one of the family's two pit bull dogs in their Sunset District home.

Investigators believe the male dog, Rex attacked Nicholas during a time when Rex's female partner was in heat. Maureen Faibish told police she locked Nicholas in a basement room to protect him from the pit bulls while she was away running errands.

At the time, the district attorney was outraged. "We're not in the business of vilifying parents. But in this city, we are also not in the business of allowing children to be placed in situations where they are killed when it's completely preventable," said Kamala Harris.

The family had both dogs since they were puppies and Faibish said neither had exhibited any violent behavior before the attack. The dogs were not neutered, and Faibish's husband had been away for weeks on business. Animal experts says those facts may have contributed to the attack.

Faibish's next court appearance is scheduled for June 5. Her attorney is asking for a gag order in the case.

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TERRITORIAL AGGRESSION



- Chaining can encourage aggressive displays

SOCIALIZATION ISSUES



This dog DOES NOT
NEED A HUG!

- Lack of socialization may result in a fear response to novel circumstances-which can lead to a bite.

FEAR BITING

- A poorly socialized dog may respond to a perceived threat with force.



SOCIAL INTERACTION

- Dogs are gregarious, social beings.
- Establishing social position depends on social negotiation.
- That negotiation is mainly conducted through body cues.
- But may be settled through **ritualized combat**.



DELIBERATE AGGRESSION



- Some aggressive behavior is **deliberately developed and encouraged** by human action.

UNINTENDED BUT HUMAN CAUSED AGGRESSION

- Poor dog training skills and uninformed owners can unintentionally create dangerous situations;

**THIS
INCLUDES
AVERSIVE
TRAINING
METHODS!!!**



WHAT IS A DOG ATTACK?

DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK...

Generally three classes of incidents:

- Pre-bite behaviors:

- Growl
- Snarl
- Air snap
- Muzzle punch

- Non-bites:

Scratches, bruises, red marks

And bites.



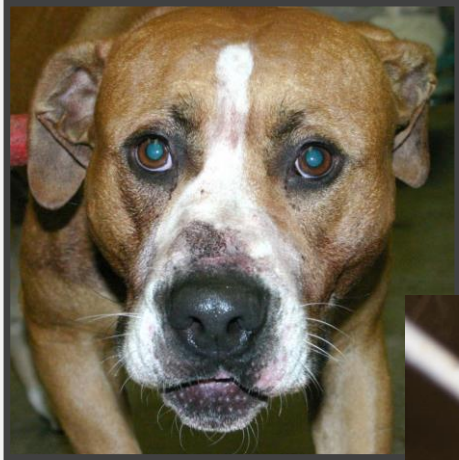
More about this on Friday

THERE ARE MANY VICTIMS OF DOG ATTACKS

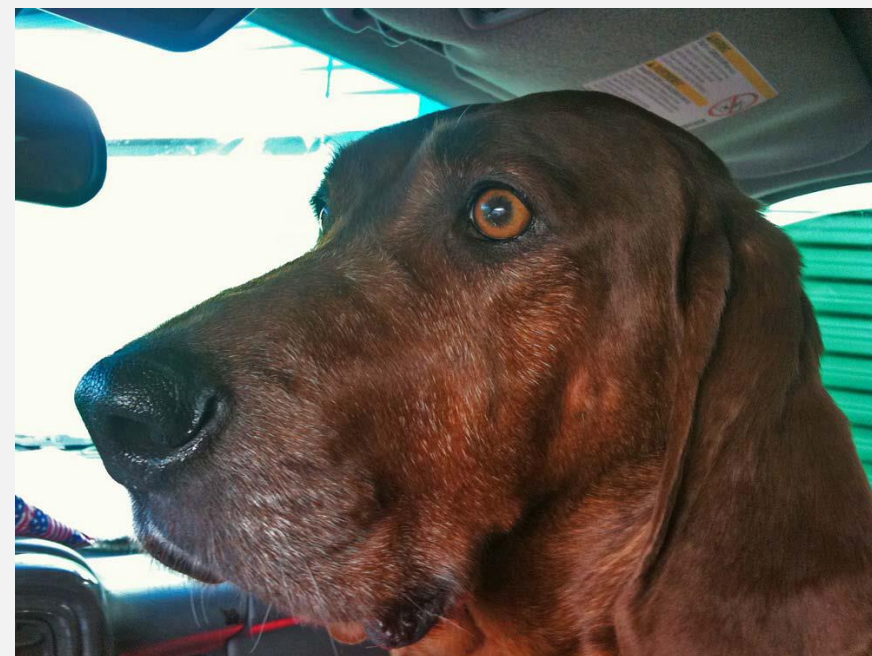
- The actual victim
- The victim's family
- The owner (if not the victim) and family
- The DOG
- Other dogs in the family
- The community-losing feelings of security
- Other dogs in the community

HOW DO WE PREDICT ATTACKS? WHAT ARE DANGEROUS DOGS?

- Remember my friends from the first session?



THEY ALL HAVE DIFFERENT “LOOKS”



THIS LEADS US TO....

- Allegations that we can assess BEHAVIOR by APPEARANCE or perceived BREED.



BREED BEHAVIOR

WHAT IS A BREED?

“...A **genetically closed population** of animals that share many physical and behavioral traits.”

- Some breeds DO have tendencies that must be recognized.



St. Bernards.....drool!

HISTORY OF APPEARANCE VS BEHAVIOR

Planche 41.

Forme générale de la tête vue de profil.



1. Tête à prognathisme moyen.



2. Type d'Européen prognathe.



3. Prognathisme limité aux os de la base du nez (prognathisme nasal).



4. Prognathisme accentué avec prééminence du menton.



5. Type d'orthognathe.



6. Profil fronto-nasal rectiligne.



7. Tête en bonnet à poils (acrocéphale).

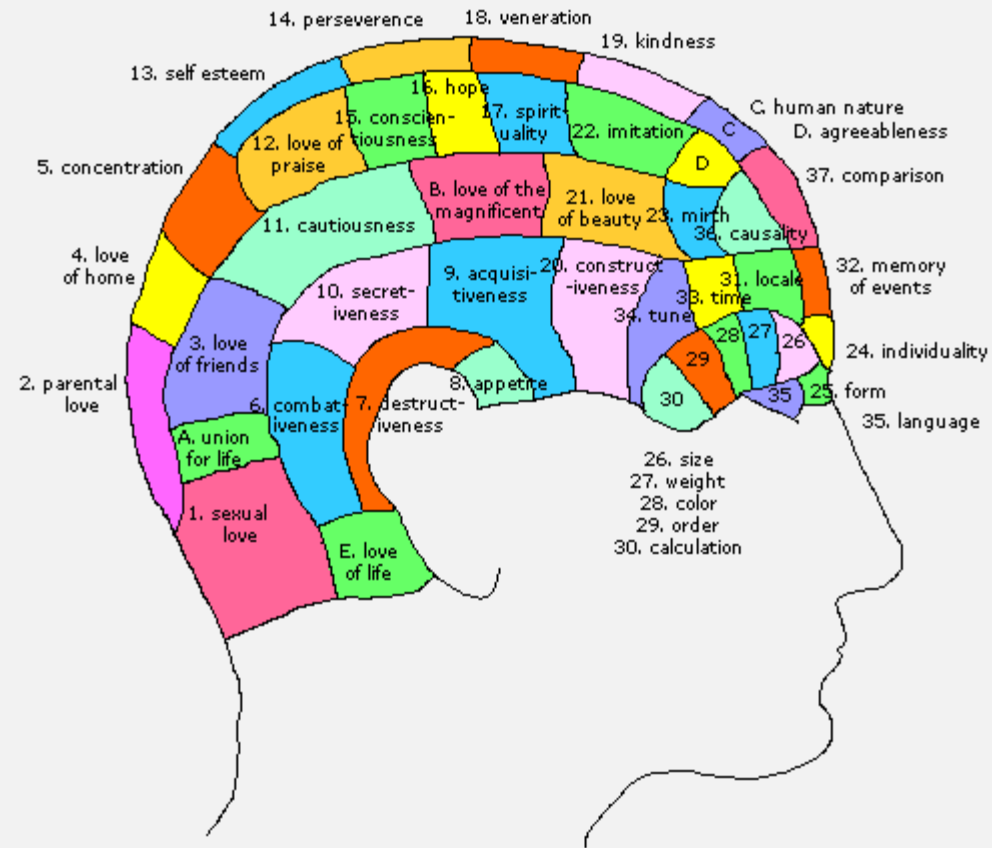


8. Tête en carène (scaphocéphale).



9. Tête en besace (cymbocéphale).

PHRENOLOGY. PSEUDOSCIENCE.



BEHAVIORAL PREDICTIONS ANYONE?



APPEARANCE VS BEHAVIOR

- Anthropometry shows us that appearance cannot reliably predict behavior!
- Does Stephen Hawking look brilliant?



Look familiar?

Planche 41.

Forme générale de la tête vue de profil.



1. Nègre à prognathisme moyen.



2. Type d'Européen prognathe.



3. Prognathisme limité aux os de la base du nez (prognathisme nasal).



4. Prognathisme accentué avec prééminence du menton.



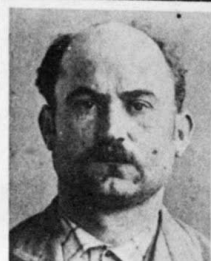
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11



12



13



14



16



17



18



19



21



22



23



24

MYTHS OF DOG BREED CHARACTERISTICS

- Locking jaws-certain dogs never release
- Super bite strength
- Inherently good/bad breeds



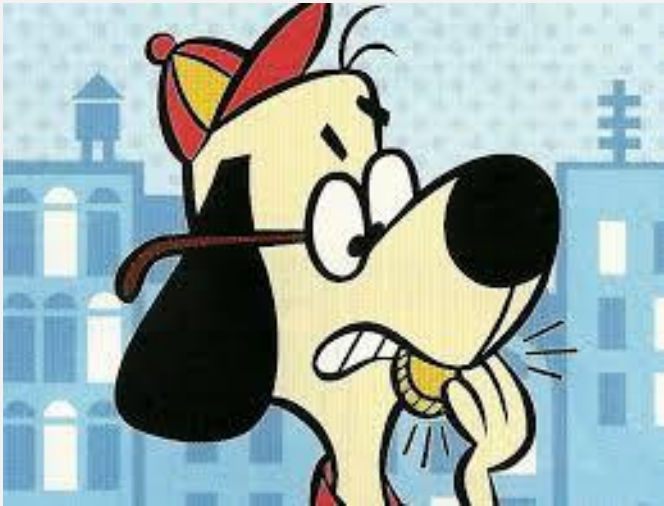
LOCKING JAWS?



SMOOTHLY ARTICULATED



BITE FORCE



When Dr. Brady Barr measured the bite force of various animals for a National Geographic program, a hyena again was measured at 1000 pounds of force. A lion's bite force measured 691, a shark 669, and a Rottweiler 328 pounds of force. A German shepherd came in at 238, and a pit bull's bite was measured at 235 pounds of force.

COMPARING....

- "Bite force is linked to the size of an animal," explained [Kent Vliet](#), a University of Florida zoologist who headed up the study. "Since the report was published, we measured the bite of a wild gator, even bigger than Hercules at 13 1/2 feet in length missing the end of his tail. He bit down with a force of 2,960 pounds."
- To put the record measurement into perspective, hyenas, which are bone-crushing mammals, have a bite force of 1,000 pounds, slightly more than the 940 recorded for lions. Dusky sharks manage 330 pounds of force, and a common dog, the Labrador, bites with 125 pounds of force. Humans surprisingly beat out the pet dog, and measured in at 170 pounds of force.



WHO BITES MORE OFTEN?

- "There are several reasons why it is not possible to calculate a bite rate for a breed or to compare rates between breeds. First, the breed of the biting dog may not be accurately recorded, and mixed-breed dogs are commonly described as if they were purebreds. Second, the actual number of bites that occur in a community is not known, especially if they did not result in serious injury. Third, the number of dogs of a particular breed or combination of breeds in a community is not known, because it is rare for all dogs in a community to be licensed, and existing licensing data is then incomplete. [Source: [AVMA Task Force on Canine Aggression](#)]

WHY STATISTICS LOOK BAD? LIKELIHOOD OF REPORTING?

- **Size of dog**
- **Age of victim**
- **Relationship of victim and owner**
- **Circumstances of bite**
- **Severity of bite**



IS IT THE OWNERS, MAYBE?

The Personality Characteristics and Antisocial Behaviors of Owners of Vicious Dogs

[Abstract](#) | [Word Stems](#) | [Keywords](#) | [Association](#) | [Citation](#) | [Get this Document](#) | [Similar Titles](#)

Abstract:

Many insurance companies refuse to issue homeowners insurance to owners of specific breeds of dogs considered "vicious." This study examined whether vicious dog owners were different on antisocial behaviors and personality dimensions. A total of 869 college students completed an online questionnaire assessing type of dog owned, criminal behaviors, attitudes towards animal abuse, psychopathy, and personality. The sample was divided into four groups: vicious dog owners, large dog owners, small dog owners, and controls. Findings revealed vicious dog owners reported significantly more criminal behaviors, and were higher in sensation seeking and primary psychopathy compared to all other groups.

Ragatz, L. L., Fremouw, W. , Thomas, T. , Mccoy, K. and Schwartz, R. , 2009-03-04 "The Personality Characteristics and Antisocial Behaviors of Owners of Vicious Dogs" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychology - Law Society, TBA, San Antonio, TX <Not Available>. 2011-03-11 from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p295184_index.html

GENETICS

- According to Dr. Kristopher Irizarry of Western University of Health Sciences, California:
 - There are 6 alleles that control canine appearance
 - There are 19 pairs of alleles that control canine behavior
- **AND THEY ARE INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER!**

WHAT IS A DANGEROUS DOG?

- **A dog that has shown specific, defined behaviors:**
 - **Bites:** either a number of low level bites, or a single high-level bite, unprovoked.
 - **Threatening behaviors specifically defined, based on the **reasonable person test**, on more than a single occasion in a specified time frame.**

- **What is a low/high-level bite? Tune in Thursday.**

DEFINE THE PROBLEM
THEN
LOOK FOR A SOLUTION.

For every complex
problem there is an
answer that is clear,
simple, and wrong.



QuoteHD.com

H. L. Mencken
American journalist
(1880-1956)

DOES YOUR STATUTE ADDRESS THE STATED PURPOSE?

- Does it control loose dogs?
- Does it address lack of training?
- Does it protect the public?
- If not...



EFFECTIVE DANGEROUS DOG LAWS

- Should be **behaviorally based (based on ACTION)**
 - Quantifiable
 - Consistent
 - Clear requirements-and clear penalties
 - Hold *humans* responsible for *human* actions.