

Puppy ABC



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CONGRATULATIONS, you have got yourself a puppy. As you selected it from a responsible breeder, you can be sure that so far it has been well taken care of. The parents have been chosen with careful consideration and planning.

In this book, we will go through some issues that you will face together with your puppy during its first six months. You will be familiarized with the puppy's way of thinking and some dog-wise activities. The purpose of this puppy book is that your common journey will start well and you will be able to enjoy a long and pleasant life together.

In the latter part of this book, you will find some advice for training the basic manners so you can train your puppy to become a well-behaving adult. If you carry out the program carefully, your everyday life will be easier in many ways and you will avoid already in advance many problem behaviors of adult dogs.

Hopefully you will have the possibility to read the book now, because soon you will be responsible for the well-being of a living animal. Should you find anything unclear, do not hesitate to ask your puppy's breeder for explanation. With this preface, both the author of this book and the breeder of your dog together wish you and your puppy all the best for your future common life!

A CAREFULLY CONSIDERED CHANGE OF LIFE

From now on, you and your dog's breeder will have a common goal: a happy dog which will bring a lot of joy for you and your family.

Since your puppy's birth, the breeder's wish has been to find it a good owner, with whom it could live a good life. Now you have taken the first step and you have been given the keys of your puppy's life. Are you sure you have carefully considered this change of your life? Your common journey can last for 15 years.

In addition to joy, your dog will also give you trouble and worries. It can become ill, or there may be things in its temperament or behavior that can annoy you and limit your life. Remember to take also these negative matters into account and think out whether you have the resources and will to commit yourself to a life that is not mere sunshine.

It is a regularly noticed fact that a puppy which has been taken without careful consideration must also leave the house based on an equally quick decision. As a reverse phenomenon to puppy fever becomes hypothermia reaction, which leads to giving the puppy away. This kind of "get a dog – give it away – get a new one – give it away again" rollercoaster is not fair towards the puppy, because it becomes attached to its owner. Therefore,

the breeder of your puppy recommends that even though your puppy is now as cute as it can ever be, you should look much further to the future when getting a puppy. The breeder wishes to find the puppy an owner who truly wants to give it both their home and heart for all of its life, not only for its sweet puppy time.

So, are you now purchasing a life-companion, with which you are going to share its puppy time, adulthood, and golden old age? In a dog, you will get a friend, with which you can experience the world. Hopefully, after your years together, you can be happy and proud of the foot and paw prints you left side by side on the roads and paths, and of the good memories you have of those years.





READY TO LEAVE - OR NOT?

A puppy is usually ready to leave for its new home at the age of 7–8 weeks. There are breeds, however, which are not yet ready to meet the challenges

of the new home then, so the puppies move to their new homes closer to the age of 12 weeks. Such breeds are for example some toy dogs and sighthounds. A puppy of less than 7 weeks must never be given to a new home.

When leaving for the new home, a breed-specific age that takes the puppy's stage of development into account is a good point in time for both the puppy and its new home to have the great change in life. At that age, the puppy's imprinting on people is strong, which means that it is ready to form firm and enduring ties to its new owners. Moreover, the puppy is then mature to have more stimulating life than the one it could get at the breeder's as one in a litter. That is why for example eight weeks is a good age for many breeds to leave for the new home – they are motorically developed, active and strive for new experiences. The puppy's life as part of the litter may offer it playmates and company for puppy-wrestling, but it would get fewer totally new experiences than what its new family is able to introduce.

Dog age can be compared with human age by multiplying it by seven. Thus, a six-month-old puppy compares with a child of approximately 3.5 years and a one-year-old puppy with a seven-year-old child.

Even though puppies look physically adult already relatively early, their mental development is still incomplete for a long time. Compared with people, the motoric of puppies develops quickly.

Different breeds mature with different pace: small breeds more quickly than big ones and bitches earlier than dogs. In small-sized breeds, bitches are adult on average at the age of 2 years and dogs at 3 years, in middle-sized breeds the corresponding ages are 2.5 and 3.5 years, and in large breeds 3 and 4. Here, the age of adulthood means the phase of development after which the dog's temperament does not significantly change



any more through mental maturing. Surely the world trains dogs for all their lives, but after maturing the fundamental temperament given in the birth does not develop from inside any more. Instead, the changes in the temperament are caused by the surrounding environment.

THE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN LAID - DON'T DRILL INTO CONCRETE

You have selected your dog and breed carefully and found a responsible breeder. You have got the puppy from good circumstances, where your dog has had the possibility to grow up and become a balanced puppy ready to leave for its new home.

The breeder of your dog has, on their part, given your puppy the best possible starting point for its future life. The puppy has felt secure when growing up with its dam. Its basic hygiene has been taken care of and it has got high-quality food. It has got sufficiently exercise and rest in peace.

It has also got just enough stimuli without any stress. Your puppy has got only positive experiences of people.

These early circumstances of the puppy's life have great importance on its future mental growth. They show especially in the puppy's attitude towards people. The temperament of your dog starts developing early, and especially the basis of its self-confidence builds on the experiences it has got at the breeder's.

The breeder has made an effort to support your puppy's development during its first weeks, because they know how strongly lack of self-confidence would impact its future life. From now on, it is your task to continue the good work started by your dog's breeder.

The co-operation and interaction of you and your dog start building up immediately from the moment when the puppy arrives at your home. As a puppy owner, try to be the support and safeguard your puppy needs especially in all scary and stressful situations. Purposefully guard your puppy from impertinent attacks and threats. This is most important during the first year of your dog's life, but is of course recommended for its whole life. Your dog will get nothing positive for its growth and development if it has to experience physical or psychological strain and deal with the resulting fear. Fear is not a good growing companion.

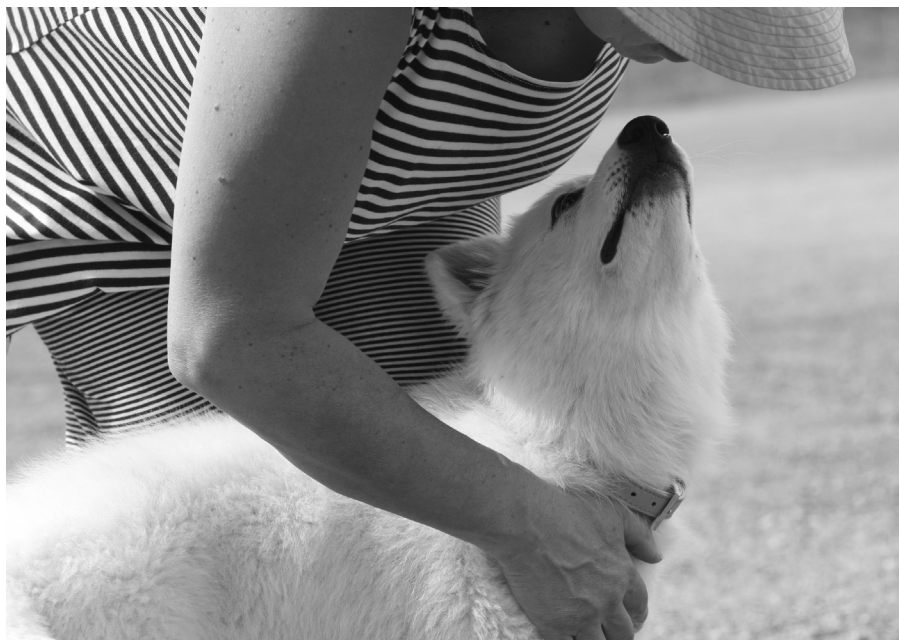
As an adult, your dog may be able – depending on its breed and temperament – to defend itself and, when the going gets tough, also you. A puppy, however, is totally incapable of this. At the moment, you are the bodyguard of your puppy.

Unpleasant events during the early development phase of a puppy usually make the puppy develop itself ways to cope with such situations. In dogs' world, the most typical way is to defend itself by attacking. Attack is the best form of defense: bite or become bitten. Your dog cannot call 911 and ask for help, so it has to solve the problem by its own dog-wise means. And exactly these means may later develop into many kinds of problem behavior.

The aggressive behavior of adult dogs is significantly more often caused by the dog's fear and its attempts to manage the fear and solve the frightening situation than its incomparably strong temperament. Vice versa: a self-confident, balanced dog hardly ever needs to resort to aggression, while a fearful dog resorts to it quite often. Aggressive behavior in adulthood is a rather common consequence of unbalanced circumstances and events in the dog's youth – these unpleasant experiences follow the dog for the rest of its life. Therefore, as a puppy owner, your task is to make sure that your puppy does not need to encounter these factors that expose to problems.

For the above reasons, you should bend over backwards to give your dog a possibility to grow and live in balanced circumstances. With your own actions and choices, you can secure that the dog-mates your dog meets are without exception friendly and that people treat it appropriately. Say clearly and aloud the rules of the game: how the other people should be and behave with your dog. Always stick to these rules and never let anyone act against them for any reason. If your rules are not followed, simply go away with your dog and in the future avoid meeting such people. You do not have to expose your dog to circumstances which are not in favor of it.

As a puppy owner, try to offer your dog only good and full dog's life. Spend a lot of time with it in the nature and let it fulfil itself in ways that



are typical to its species. Always remember that from the dog's standpoint, less experiences is better than bad experiences.

All the positive situations you and your dog experience together are valuable capital for your dog's future adulthood. Your dog learns to be confident about different things that belong to life. Your puppy learns that you don't take it to places which are not safe. With you, all strange things of our society – hustle and bustle in cities, marketplaces, elevators, animals and machines in the country – become familiar.

YOU LIVE IN THREE TIMES, YOUR PUPPY IN JUST ONE

Your dog lives strongly in time – only in the current moment. It experiences all the events absolutely in real time.

For you dog, all things and events are concrete and actual. When it for example chases a ball, it lives completely in the trance of play. Each and every second is full of joy and strong feelings. While playing, it does not worry that the ball may break to pieces or someone may steal the ball, nor fret about the bigger ball of the dog next door.

Through your thinking, you are able to live simultaneously in three different times: past, present and future. Your dog lives only in the present. It's a great skill!

Your dog deals with the world in a much more concrete way than you: it tastes it with its mouth, and feels it with its paws. Based on experiences, it learns that this certain action either benefits it or not, is worth doing or not, is pleasant or unpleasant. Through these extreme experiences, it learns to select in the future only such things that are beneficial to it, i.e. that lead to something nice. The benefit can be something material, such as food, or for example play, strengthened basic security or your acceptance. Your dog also learns to avoid things that



lead to something unpleasant: falling to icy water, getting hedgehog spines in its palate or your disfavor.

Try to create a confidential relationship with your puppy. As a result, your puppy will be eager to do things to gain your acceptance and to avoid things you don't accept. If there is no relationship or your dog loses its confidence in you, your acceptance has no meaning.

IN THE SPIRIT OF FAIR PLAY

Without exception, always treat your dog justly and fairly. Your dog deserves to get good treatment and care on each and every day of its life. This promise of responsibility is a prerequisite for your freedom to get a dog, and for your getting one. Freedom and choice lead to responsibility.

Set yourself a goal of staying patient and calm – they are your special virtues during the sometimes trying phase with a fooling puppy.

Like people, also dogs feel emotions, both positive and negative. If you want your relationship with your puppy to become strong, you will not succeed with perpetual forbidding, punishments and frequent scolding. Instead, try to support your puppy's growth and the development of your relationship positively with guidance and praising, and by giving treats for correct behavior. Mere pointing of forbidden things is not the right way, because it only makes your dog unwilling to co-operate.

Supporting your puppy's growth does not mean that your puppy should not be taught also some boundaries. It cannot tell allowed from forbidden unless you separately teach it each and every one of them. The boundaries

are made clear always (and every single time) exactly at the moment when the puppy crosses the borderline between allowed and forbidden. Your intervention should be guiding, determined, and clear. For example, if you have decided that your puppy must not climb on the couch, define a clear limit value after which you intervene in the action.

Your threshold for intervention may be that it is not allowed to set front paws on the couch. So, your dog may stand next to the couch or lean on it while sleeping, but climbing against it is not allowed: say with an indifferent tone for example WHOP and move the paws down. Repeat this without becoming frustrated and angry for hundred times in a row and on hundred successive days if necessary. Do not punish the dog, do not hurt it. On the other hand, do not give it treats or praise it eagerly when it does not try to climb on the couch. The puppy understands the everyday boundaries best, if you are systematic and methodical – you keep calm, but are unswerving as regards firm boundaries.

Thus, teaching boundaries is a kind of patient battle, in which the puppy's wrong actions are stopped and made unprofitable for the dog. Before long, the behavior and urge will die out.

Teaching everyday boundaries is essentially different from such training, in which the puppy is trained for example to sit on command. The approaches of these two are almost opposite: when training the dog, correct actions are rewarded and incorrect ignored. Everyday rules, instead, are created by preventing the forbidden action until it dies out. Dying out will not take place, if the puppy can every now and then do the forbidden action. This kind of an action only becomes stronger. A good example of this is begging treats at dinner table. Even if the dog gets food at the

Puppy ABC is not just a book.
It is a tool for a breeder to provide the
puppy buyer with good instructions.

For a puppy, its first months in the new home are very important. During that time, the basis of the behavior is created for the rest of the dog's life.

This crucial time period begins as soon as the puppy arrives at its new home. Therefore, it is worth the effort if the breeder invests time in advising and instructing the puppy buyer. One solution is to give them this Puppy ABC book.

The target group of this Puppy ABC book is puppy buyers. Those people, who will be living with the puppy. The book approaches the topic from the breeder's point of view – the emphasis is on the good care of the dog before and after it moves to its new home.

The book binds together two important periods of a puppy's life.

