

****In all these things, remember that you must not get frustrated or angry...remain calm but firm. The pup's reactions will feed off your own, so calm is the word for the day. A dog that is calm submissive is a dog that can learn quickly and learn it well. If you feel yourself tensing up, stand up or sit up straight, take a deep breath, relax and calm yourself before you go any further.****

When you get your pup, do a leash session when you get them home....don't wait. This lets them know you are the pack leader, you own the land and you now own them. Use a slip leash for better and quicker results, as when they pull against it, they get a correction you don't even have to give as it tightens on their neck. You can heighten that effect by giving a quick tug and release as you give a verbal correction(a sound is easier than a word, so choose a sound you can say loudly and quickly....I use AT!!!! I try not to use words like no or down or quit, as the brain has to search for the word and there's a time lag. One word/sound for all corrections is easiest and quickest...and a pup needs a quick correction to connect the sound with the action. As the leash tightens with the tug and they hear the sound, they get the idea that the sound is a negative and they learn to listen for that. Don't overuse the sound like most folks do with telling a dog to sit over and over....clearly the dog stopped listening to that word after the first "sit" if they are not sitting by the second repetition.

I keep training sessions on any one task to under 15-20 min. for puppies. Don't want their attention to wander too much. I like Cesar Millan's method of leash training the best and it gets quick results....you can find them on YT. Most of the dogs/puppies I've trained with it have got the leash walk down by the second session and that's various breeds.

Don't be alarmed if the first time your pup gets a leash on them they buck and scream like a wild horse. Let them take a fit...wait until they stop rolling on the ground... and then keep walking. Don't stop or end the leash training until they are no longer pulling against the leash and are walking beside you without pulling or yipping. First lesson done. Lots of praise, petting, sweet voice as they finally stop pulling on the leash. It all sounds worse than it is and no one is hurting the dog....its not even hurting itself, it's just throwing a fit.

A few days of leash training with positive results should have a pup stopping when you stop~preferably sitting down when you stop...show him how to sit, give praise/treat when he does it~and moving when you move. Don't allow sniffing and lingering...just walk away from him and expect him to follow. Turn, stop, go, reverse....he's not getting it if he doesn't follow all these changes quickly and easily. Remember to give good sweet voice when he's moving along with no tension on the leash, correction word when he pulls or tries to lead~quick tug and release if he persists past the command. Give him clear instructions on all things and they will learn more quickly. Remember they are a baby, be

patient but firm, lots of loving for the good stuff...you want them to like going for the walk.

As I do leash training, I apply the leash with the word, "collar" and require they stand or sit still for this. This comes in handy later on when you want to apply or remove collar and/or leash when they are excited about it. Hard to do either with a squirming, excited puppy/dog. Get used to saying that word each time you apply the collar or leash and they will learn it well. Most of the time I'm applying these at the same place on the land, so I'll point at that place also. After they learn this, all I have to do is say, "collar" and point and they will stand on that spot and wait.

Advanced leash training includes the command of "heel up" but I won't cover that here.

After the pup is responding to your correction word on a consistent basis(if you are doing things right, that's usually by the second day of leash training as well as additional training on jumping up, biting, pawing...things such as that are being trained on each time you interact. I just give a light jab in the neck with the correction word for these unwanted behaviors...if the jab doesn't work, just flip them over quickly with a harsher sounding correction~learn about escalation), then you can move on to chicken training. If you want them to be consistent in their responses for any one thing, you must be consistent with corrections for that....letting them get by with something and then other times trying to correct for it just confuses the dog. Start out as you intend to go along...if you don't want a dog that jumps up, paws, or mouths your hands, correct it every time it happens until it no longer happens. Being inconsistent sets your pup up for failure.

Select as calm chicken as you can get and truss its legs with a soft rope like a sisal baling twine or something similar. Do not catch the chicken in front of the pup...they are great mimics and anything you do to the chickens in front of them, they may repeat later. Never chase your chickens in front of your LGDs...they will think this great fun and try to help you. Never a good thing.

Sit the pup next to you and put the chicken on your lap. The bird may cry out or flap...if this gets the pup's attention, a soft jab in the neck and the correction word needs to happen. The ultimate goal is that the pup remains calm no matter what the chicken does. That means no tension in the body, ears down, nose not quivering, nothing. Just a calm dog sitting next to a calm owner with an excited chicken. Pet the pup for calm behavior, sweet voice applications aplenty. Pet the chicken and say, "MY CHICKEN" in a firm voice. The pup may want to sniff the chicken...I let them for a second but if the sniffing starts to yield tension in the pup's body, I give the correction and jab. He may sniff casually and then no more.

When he is calm, you are calm, the chicken is calm it's time for the next phase. Put the chicken on the ground out in front of you both...it will likely flap, squawk and try to move away....correct any overt attention from the pup at this behavior. The correct response to your correction is for the pup to look away from the chicken or duck its head while doing the same. Let the pup walk around the chicken and watch how he behaves when the bird gets excited....any perking of the ears, prolonged staring or tension in the body gets a verbal correction, which should make the pup break concentration on the bird and get his mind off it. If not, go back to square one on chicken training. I've never had to do that yet, but I'd recommend it if this happens...it means something you've done wasn't absorbed by the pup.

As often as you can remember, when you correct the pup for any excited behavior towards the chicken, follow it with MY CHICKEN. Some people use "NOT YOURS" or "LEAVE IT". Any of those works. It's a more specific command than the AT sound and indicates this thing, in particular, is not to be touched. It's yours and not his. No matter what it does or sound it makes, it's never to be touched.

Then, when the pup is at his most calm, just walk away from the bird and the pup and leave them alone together....move away but watch the pup. Give the command if he tries to approach the chicken. Good response of moving away from it? Good. Move out of the pup's sight but watch out a window, around a corner, etc. and any move towards the chicken, even a casual stroll past it, yell loudly, "MY CHICKEN!!!!". This gives the pup the idea that, even when you are not around, the chicken is off limits. The desired response to that is a ducking of the head and moving away from the bird.

Next phase....have the pup lie on its side and relax, petting him until he calms but make it understood that he is to continue lying on his side. Any tension in the legs in this submissive pose indicates he is not calm. If he struggles and tries to get up, give correction word and hold him there, when he relaxes you can pet and praise him for being calm~slow, long strokes are best. Then lay the chicken across his neck. He may lay calmly or he may try to get up....don't let him, even if the bird is making a fuss. Show him that you want him to lie calmly with the bird on his neck. This may seem silly but it also shows him that the bird can touch him, even while he's in a submissive position, and he is not to react. His eyes may roll towards the bird and he may look terrified of it all, but in all things remain calm, expect him to be calm and the bird usually is calm as well. You know you've done well if the pup lies calmly while the chicken rests on his neck for a number of seconds.

Go let your bird go and watch the pup as it runs away...the pup should not show any increased interest in the behavior or the chicken. Then let the pup remain free in the free range flock as you chore

around, keep an eye on him as you do so....pups learn when they run to you that the chickens scatter. This is fun. Later they like to run through a crowd of chickens just to see them run...when they do that, give a verbal correction immediately. Every single time. If you see the pup doing what I call the slow herding move...a casual walking around a group or a single chicken, making it move away while the pup continues to follow~gived a verbal correction. They are not allowed to herd them, no matter how slowly... they aren't allowed to lunge at, yip at, run at, or otherwise react to the chickens.

This monitoring portion all sounds time consuming but it's not. It's sort of like how you train your children...it's all done as you do other things. The pup will follow you around as you do chores and that's a good time to notice their behaviors towards the chickens, ducks, etc.

Now, you'll never know if you can trust him unless you trust him. So, his time unsupervised with the free range flock gets longer and longer each day....listen to your birds. If it sounds like they are being chased, pay attention. It could just be chickens fighting one another but check it out...this lets the pup know you are on guard. This also lets him know he should be on guard and be checking out the increased excitement of the chickens...not in a way that will get him excited, but in a calm way. Just checking. All clear? Fine. As you were.

I've had dogs rock steady on chickens at 2 mo. of age and onward, never harming a bird all their lives unto ripe old age and death. Various breeds, so this is not breed specific. All it really takes is a dog that respects you, respects the things that are yours and the training should help this to happen. The leash training establishes your leadership. The chicken training establishes that these are yours.

Don't trust anyone selling you a pup or dog who says they've "been exposed" to poultry, sheep, goats, etc. or even those who say they've been working with said livestock. Do your own training when they get to your land, as the dog may not see your livestock the same as those they've been guarding. Monitor and note increased excitement around your stock...if you see it, you need to do some training. I lost my best duck in trusting those phrases. I then had to train the dog on my birds~and the lambs, for that matter~ and he's never harmed a single one since. He's on guard full time with the sheep at 1 yr of age, no older dog to assist.

Also, don't believe the myth that is stated like gospel that these LGDs can't be trusted around livestock on their own until after the magical age of 2 yrs. It's ridiculous and not a bit true. Imagine it, if you will...the dog wakes up on its 2nd birthday, looks at the calendar and realizes it is now time to be trustworthy around stock. I've yet to have a pup I've trained harm any stock and I start when they hit

my land, no matter the age~usually at 2 mo. of age. I also expect them to work at guarding said stock when their training is complete.

I hope this helps! Any questions for clarification are welcome.