

Copper, 9 y o Dalmatian

Contributed by Teresa Hyde
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by Teresa Hyde

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I have been trying to phase out all negative training both for my two dogs & in classes I teach in basic obedience. It can be tricky to break the habit of jerking on the leash to 'correct' a dog but we're getting there.

Anyway Copper is dog aggressive. I think he will always be dog aggressive, but he is now far more controlled & less reactive around other dogs. For a long time I was very strict about keeping him muzzled off our property but as he relaxed so did I.

In November we attended a specialty show. He was perfectly calm & displayed no sign of aggression. His muzzle was off while we were in the ring & even when the dog in front of us was about turned & stood face to face with Copper a matter of inches from his nose, he didn't bat an eyelash. Unfortunately later he was outside the ring while I showed his dam. My husband holding Copper is not quite a vigilant as I am. When someone ran their female Dal straight at them, Copper reacted by grabbing a mouthful of her dog by the shoulder & driving her back. Luckily her skin wasn't broken. The owner is a friend & blamed herself for pushing Copper too far.

Since then Copper has been a bit toey walking past dogs in the street. Since there are many in my area that ignore the leash laws, I have gone back to keeping him muzzled at all times when out.

I am pleased with his behaviour at dog training club. We started back last week. He was very calm in class & on a loose lead with no lunging. Needed some luring to keep him focussed at times. But when as a class we formed a circle then heeled the dogs into the centre & halted, he was fine. He even tolerated a small dog sniffing his front leg - quite astonishing since he sees small dogs as prey. Well, that is how I am interpreting his behavior.

I will be keeping him muzzled in class for some time yet, but my ultimate goal is have him working without it.

Cheers,

Teresa

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