



Understanding Reactivity

A SHORT GUIDE FOR DOG OWNERS

Reactivity is very misunderstood. Often, it is the result of a dog whose alarm system is firing too early, too intensely, and at things deemed a higher value than you. A harmonious, walk-proof relationship is dependent on clear expectations, clear guidance, habit, and repetition.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Reactivity can develop for a number of reasons. It may stem from fear, frustration at being unable to greet, over-arousal from the environment, or simply become a learned habit when reinforced over time. There are countless causes, and reactivity does not always stem from aggression. However, aggression cases should always be handled with proper guidance. Every dog is different, which is why it should be properly understood and addressed through a bespoke approach suitable for the individual dog and the underlying cause.

THREE THINGS TO TRY THIS WEEK

- 1 Start with calm, standing still.** If they can't sit calmly with a dog walking past, they certainly won't be able to stay calm on the move. Ask for calm with minimum requirements before you move on to the next stage.
- 2 Step 1 was probably chaos. If sitting was too difficult, they do not truly understand the sit.** Practice at home: ask them to sit, and if they move, get up, or lie down, guide them back to the sit position and mark "sit." Walk away. If they move, repeat. Repeat until they can sit for 5 seconds, then 10, then 15... you get the gist, reward if they sit (and hold)! Progress this by asking for a sit and then adding distractions, and once perfected, move to the outside world.
- 3 Manage the entire walk.** From the absolute beginning, we don't go anywhere without calm. Sometimes we don't have time to wait, so instead of waiting for calm, turn the movement into an exercise, the same exit, the same way, every single time, like teaching a dance. If you cannot control the walk, the walk is likely too long. We look for short bursts of success.

"Real progress, one to one, with real-world proof."

07555 174 530 · @ROVEDOGTRAINING · Mason@Rovedogtraining.com