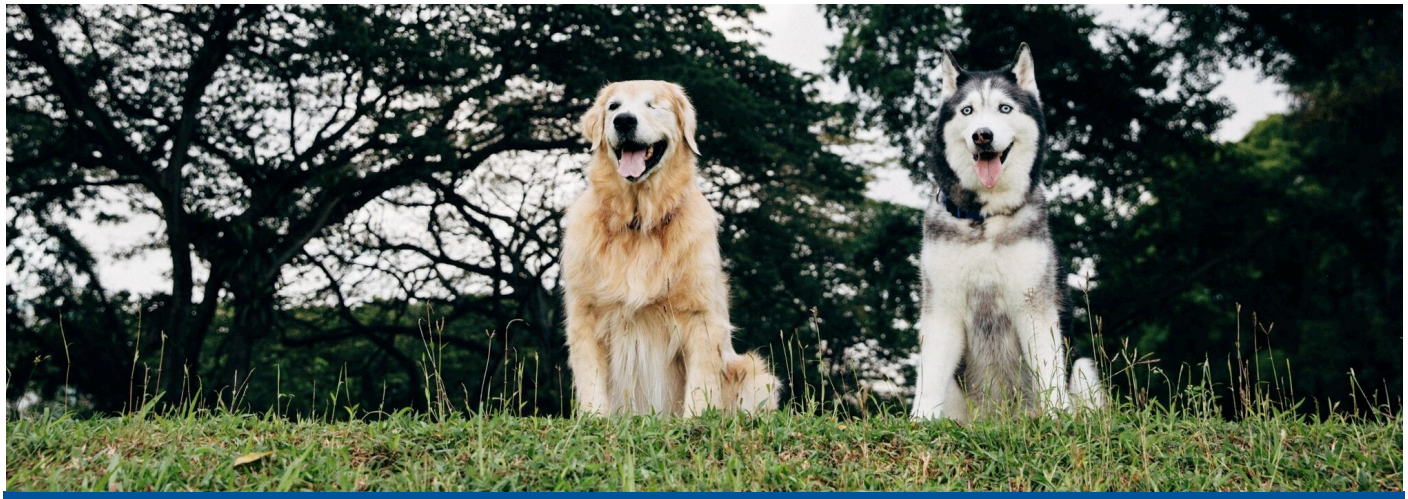


We continually update our skills and knowledge so that we stay current with the best practices that can help you and your dog.

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Issue 41

A World of Dogs: The Human-Dog Bond



You're not imagining it. Your dog really does understand what you're feeling. Dogs can't read our minds, no, but when it often seems like they do, it's because of a special connection between our two species that's increasingly well understood. Dogs seem to be able to attune to our emotions. Eye-track studies of dogs have shown that they read human faces for emotional cues in the same way we ourselves do. No other species does this, not even chimps. Scientists speculate that this skill has evolved in dogs to enable them to communicate with us on an emotional level, to better understand us. Which makes sense. When you rely on humans for your survival, there's obvious biological advantage to reading their moods for signs of intentions, impending danger, etc.



The same goes for barking. Wolves rarely bark, and when they do, it's to warn other pack members. Dogs, on the other hand, possess an impressive vocal repertoire that spans yowls, yelps, grumbles, whines, acoustic sighs, and many types of barks, suggesting another trait dogs may have developed exclusively to strengthen their teamwork with humans. This goes beyond

Dog quotes

"You can tell by the kindness of a dog how a human should be."
– **Captain Beefheart**

cont.

… The human-dog bond

utilitarian purposes like herding and protecting our livestock. Arguably, dogs have learned to speak a second language specifically to support their bond with us.

And the connection goes both ways: Some of us seem to be able to interpret barks. In experiments in which researchers played recordings of dog barks to dog guardians, they were capable of distinguishing between request barking, anxious barking, territorial barking, and other kinds, without seeing the dog's body language or the situation. We use the tonality, frequency, and interval of barks to decode the message.

So, the science backs us up: We do indeed have a special bond with dogs. It's so strong that we mostly take it for granted and lump dogs in with the rest of the family — because they are family. But dogs are not human. They are remarkable, adaptive creatures that have evolved in partnership with us in a way no other species has. And that's pretty special.



Tips & Tools: Snakebite

Prevention. Beware of areas that have undergrowth, brush, or shrubs where snakes can hide. Ditto spilled birdseed or fruit; food attracts rodents, which attract snakes. On walks, keep your dog on leash and steer clear of long grasses, bushes, or rocks.

What to look for. Swelling, bleeding, intense pain, shortness of breath, and weakness are all telltale signs of snakebites.

In case of a bite. Stay calm. If possible, keep the bitten area below heart level. Immediately seek veterinary care. Don't delay to apply ice or a tourniquet. Call ahead to the vet and make your way there quickly.





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