

Resource guarding is a behavior that occurs because of underlying fear and anxiety. When a dog shows aggression it is their way of communicating stress and discomfort. When you see these signs of aggression and anxiety in your dog, simply back away and reassess. The goal is to teach your dog that when you approach them when they have something they like, or when you try to take that thing they like, that MORE good things happen for them.

- If your dog has something they shouldn't, ask them if they want a treat and trade them with something very high value.
- If your dog has something that they are allowed to have, approach them from a safe distance and toss them more treats. This will teach your dog that your approach equals more good things.
- If your dog has something they are allowed to have, approach from a safe distance, toss treats AWAY from your dog and the object, then immediately walk away. This will aid in the future when we need to safely take things away from your dog.
- If your dog has something that they shouldn't have but that is NOT dangerous to their health or well-being (i.e. tissue paper, food, etc.), let them keep it. Getting that object is not worth giving your dog attention over, or reinforcing their fear by taking it from them.
- Remember to never scold or punish your dog in any way if they have stolen something or if they are showing aggression over an object. Because this is a fear based issue, punishment will only worsen the problem.
- Only allow your dog to have food, bones, and any high-value item that he guards or becomes aggressive over, in the crate, separate room, or when left alone outside. Never remove a bowl or toy from the crate while your dog is in the crate. Have your dog first come out of the crate and go outside or into another room before removing the toy, bone, or food bowl. When your dog is in the crate with an object that he guards, toss high-value treats such as cheese, hot dogs, lunch meat, etc. into his crate. This way he learns that people coming by him when he has his favorite object it is not being taken from him, but instead their presence means good things. This will help him to trust the family and be less anxious.
- When a dog guards their sleeping area or bed, it is best to just leave them alone, but you can also toss treats when you walk by them (from a distance) when they are lying in their bed for a couple of seconds, 3 seconds max, and then stop and give the dog a break. This gives them the choice to either walk away or ask for more attention. This will help build their confidence and trust.