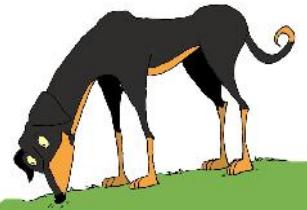


Sniffing: You may notice your dog sniffing when an obedience class drags on too long. Or to clearly make another dog aware of its peaceful intentions.



Head turning or looking away: Shows that a dog is feeling uncomfortable, such as when a child comes up too close or when someone looks the dog in the eyes a bit too directly. Also sends a strong calming signal when approaching other dogs close by or at a distance. Can, however, express a certain level of stress.



Scratching: Often used when the owner puts pressure on the dog to carry out an order. As if the dog were saying "What do you want now? I don't feel like it!"



Nose licking: Sometimes the very first calming signal used in an uncomfortable or stressful situation. The dog licks its nose in rapid succession. This signal can be difficult to catch as it happens fast!

Learning to Speak "Dog"

Calming Signals



Shaking: Not all dogs use this signal. One interpretation is that shaking is a dog's way of saying, "OK, I got the message" after being reprimanded by its owner or put in its place by another dog.



Sitting: A clear calming signal used in stressful situations or to defuse a conflict, such as when meeting other dogs or when the dog's owner is upset. The dog may even turn its entire body away before sitting.



Tail wagging: This one is often misinterpreted because it can mean so many things, from happiness or eagerness to please (when the tail is low) to a show of force in the early stages of a conflict with another dog.



Lifting one paw: This is a strong calming signal, often expressed when the dog is standing completely still. Such as after hearing an unfamiliar noise, when faced with a new or confusing situation, or when stressed by another dog. Not to be confused with the pointing position used by bird and game dogs.



Yawning: Used repeatedly when a dog is uncomfortable (when reprimanded by its owner or another dog) or in a stressful situation (like being stared at or disturbed by a child while resting on its dog bed). Some dogs also shake when using this signal.



Play bow: One of the clearest ways a dog expresses its peaceful intentions.