

Puppy_is_Biting_to_Get_Her_Way.txt

(Question)

When our 3-month old puppy gets wound up and wants to play she will bite. Any recommendations? I'm going through a lot of band-aids, as she is not responding to verbal commands like "No Bite" or if I holler "OUCH!" We are very concerned about this behavior. If we can't get her under control when she is small, my wife is scared she could be in danger when our puppy is grown.

(Answer)

There are two things a dog should never be allowed to do, bite a person and steal things from a person's hands.

Your puppy is being in bossy. In this type of situation a command is not appropriate. A command is used to tell her to do something. In this case, the proper word is "No!" and you need to back it up with negative reinforcement. In other words, you need to physically reprimand her (a smack in the face/head) while saying "No!" and make it count. It must hurt a little. Then give her a brief time out in her crate. She needs to know her teeth will never be tolerated on you.

Puppies are just like kids in that they have to learn to control their own behavior. It's part of maturing. A mistake people often make is to "nag" at their dog. They give too little of a correction, over and over. It would be better for you to accidentally give too firm of a correction one time and never have to reprimand her again, than to give her too little of a correction repeatedly. I'm not saying you should be abusive, nor am I saying you should harm her physically. But she must be made to understand her teeth do not belong on people - period.

It would've been best if the first time she did it you immediately smacked her in the head with a "No!" because now she's gotten away with it. It will probably take more than one correction to get her to understand the behavior will no longer be tolerated. But you can turn it around. Be firm and consistent.

I should add that this type of behavior doesn't normally turn into something dangerous. Right now her teeth are like razor blades, so it doesn't take any real pressure to cut your skin. I'd be very surprised if she ever really bit you when she gets older. That said, she won't grow out of this behavior. She'll continue to put her teeth on you, so long as she's getting the response from you she wants. This is a very easy thing to nip in the butt right now, while you are bigger and stronger than she is. Make sure your wife doesn't tolerate it either, because your puppy is smart enough to know she can use her teeth to get her way with your wife, but not with you. Also, this isn't unusual behavior for a smart little dominant bitch.