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**30  
Minute**

**Dog Training  
Solutions™  
Webinars**

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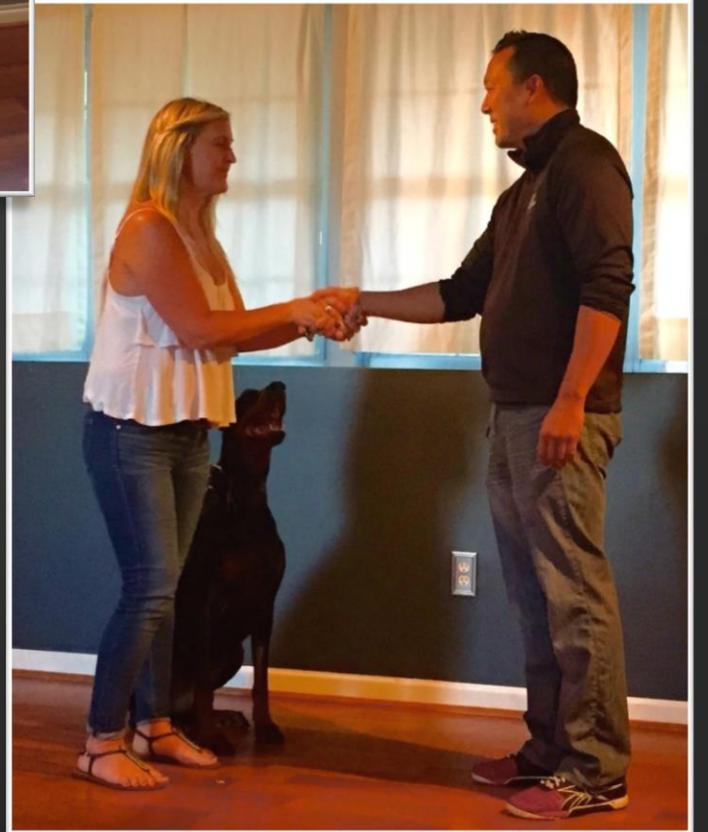
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- ✓ I further understand that due to the nature of working with dogs and the variables involved, the results of these methods cannot be guaranteed.
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# How to Work Aggression Cases A-Z, Part 1



**Presented by Michael Shikashio, CDBC**



# Overview of Part 1

-  **FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE BEFORE TAKING AGGRESSION CASES**
-  **THE INITIAL PHONE CALL**
-  **THE INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLIENT BEFORE MEETING WITH THEM**

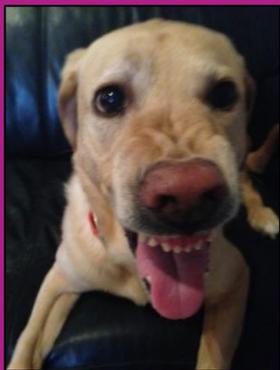
# **Foundation of Knowledge Before Taking Aggression Cases**



**Understanding and ability to read dog body language**



**Recognizing signs of stress, anxiety and fear**



**Knowing when a dog could bite or is about to bite**

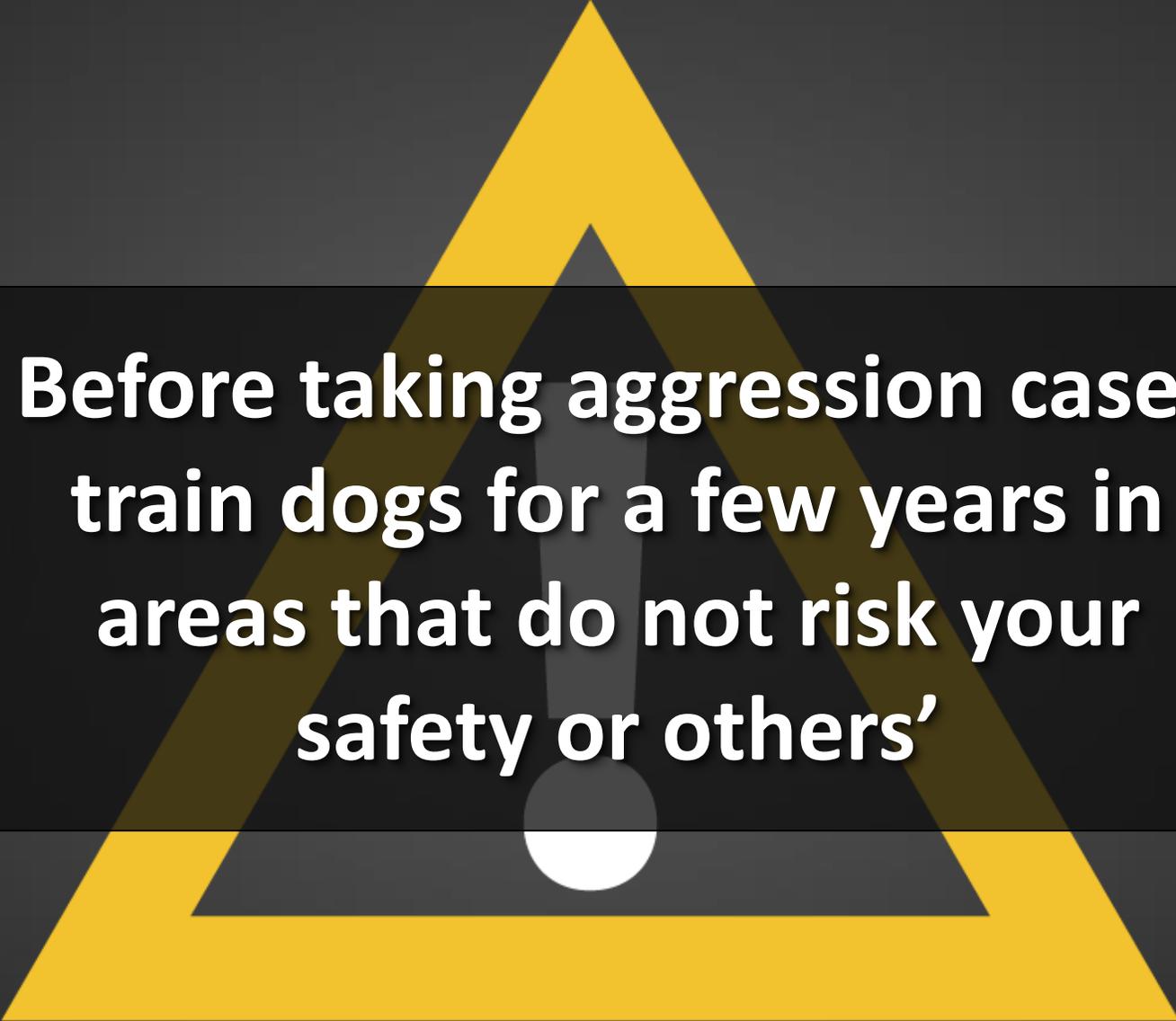


**Learn why dogs do these behaviors**

# **Michael's Serious Recommendation**



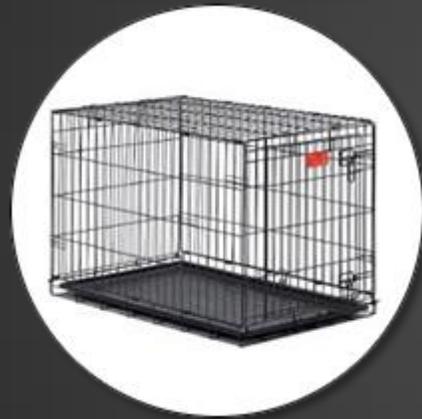
**No. 1**



**Before taking aggression cases  
train dogs for a few years in  
areas that do not risk your  
safety or others'**

# Safety & Management Protocols

How do you set up the environment?



**CRATES**



**MUZZLES**



**BARRIERS**



**Territorial Aggression**  
**Resource Guarding**  
**Leash Aggression**  
**Maternal Aggression**

# The Big “Two”

 Operant Conditioning

 Respondent Conditioning

# How to **CHANGE** the Actual Behavior of the Dog Growling at a Food Bowl

-  Identify a behavior we want to change
-  Identify the antecedent — people approaching the food bowl
-  Change the behavior using a framework based on the principles of behavior science
-  A straightforward plan of counterconditioning can be used with resource guarding to change the behavior

# **Michael's Serious Recommendation**



**No. 2**



**Solid consulting skills are a  
MUST before you take  
aggression cases**



# **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**



# A Strong Contract



Having a strong contract  
adds a layer of protection  
for liability reasons



# **Ethical Considerations**

**Not knowing how to correctly address an aggression problem can have profound ripple effects on the dog, its family and the community.**



## **Emotional Well Being**



**Aggression cases can be emotionally challenging and cause compassion fatigue**



# Being Comfortable

-  You being comfortable working with the aggressive dog is crucial
-  Having fear is not necessarily a bad thing, as some level of fear will keep us cautious
-  Having a debilitating fear of a dog you are working with will skew your decision-making process and affect how you work with the dog



# The All Important First Phone Call!





# What You Need to Do

1. Listen first
2. Ask questions later
3. Show empathy so you can develop a relationship that will foster compliance



**“MAX”**



**A Theoretical Food Bowl  
Aggression Case**

**🐾 Max has bitten both the husband and wife who own him, and inflicted puncture wounds to both of their forearms requiring medical care**

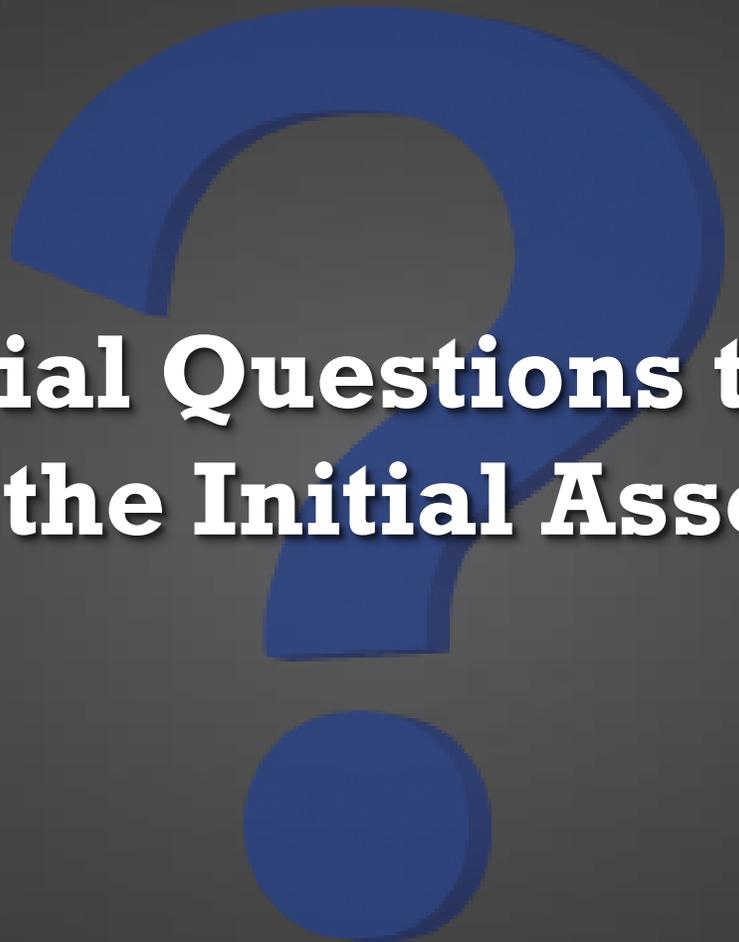
**🐾 Client tells you how distraught they are because their dog is biting them**





*“...that surely is difficult when our own dog is acting aggressively towards us and I hope you are healing well. It is an issue I commonly see and feel confident that I can help you.*”

*My suggestion would be for a two hour behavior consultation done at your home...”*



**Crucial Questions to Ask  
During the Initial Assessment**

**Has your dog ever bitten,  
scratched, nipped, or  
otherwise caused injury to any  
person or any animal?**



**Has **animal control** ever been  
involved with your dog?**

**Is your dog up to date on  
all of his vaccinations?**

1. Can you tell me about the aggressive behavior?
2. What were the circumstances surrounding the aggressive behaviors?
3. Who or what was the behavior directed at?
4. How long has this behavior been occurring?
5. Can you tell me about the dog's overall health?

## The answers to the previous questions help you to determine:

-  An indication of the antecedents or triggers for the dog's presenting behavior
-  How you want to meet the dog
-  The safety measures that need to be in place before you arrive

# Michael's Serious Recommendation



**No. 3**



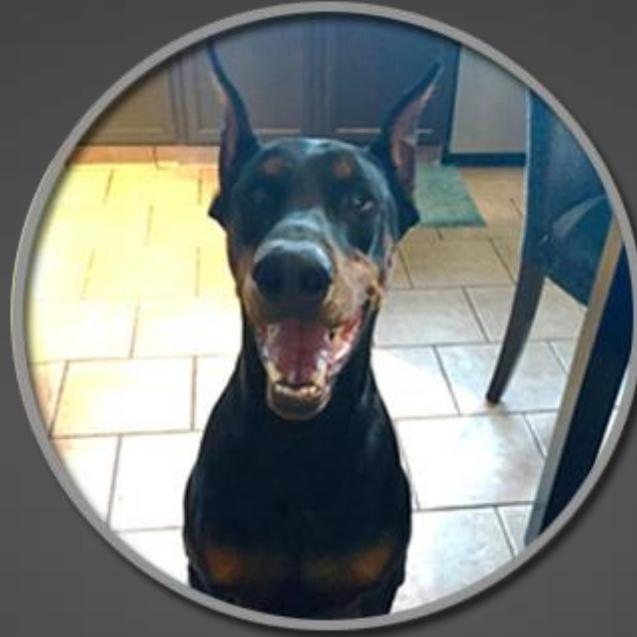
**This is not the time to go into a  
full behavior history with the  
client.**

# Back to Max



-  Max has only behaved in an aggressive manner around his food bowl
-  Only when the clients approach or walk by the bowl when he is eating in the kitchen
-  He hasn't bitten anyone else
-  Has growled at visitors a few times when they approached him while he was eating

**However...**



**Max is friendly with people and other dogs  
at home and outside his home in all other instances**

# Max's Antecedents

**1.** When people approach Max while he's eating out of his food bowl

**OR**

**2.** When people breach a certain critical distance while he's eating out of his food bowl



# Should you refer client to a vet?



It is not ethical or legal to recommend medical advice to a client



Experience in aggression cases will allow you to learn what behaviors would indicate a veterinary exam is necessary



At times it's a fine line to know when some cases truly have no underlying medical causes - or the client may have limited funds for a vet visit



# **Michael IMMEDIATELY refers Client to a Vet when...**



**Sudden changes in behavior patterns**



**Indications of pain/discomfort such as limping, excessive licking of areas, whining, pacing, drooling**



**Neurological indicators such as head tremors, seizures, sleep issues, movement abnormalities**



**Changes in appearance such as weight gain/loss, hair loss**



# What About Max?

-  Max is a very healthy dog
-  Weighs about 80 lbs. (normal for an adult Doberman)
-  His behavior has gotten slowly but progressively worse since he was a puppy
-  He was recently at the vet for his yearly physical and everything checked out OK



*Therefore, in Max's case an immediate vet visit will NOT be necessary.*

# The Importance of the Initial Assessment



The answers you get to the questions in the Initial Assessment tell you when you should refer out to another behavior consultant or veterinary behaviorist

# **Michael's Serious Recommendation**



**No. 4**



**Don't take aggression cases to LEARN  
how to treat aggression cases.**

# Initial Instructions

- 1.** Tell the client exactly how you want to meet their dog for the first time
- 2.** Give very direct instructions for how you want the environment set up

# Environment Set-up Example

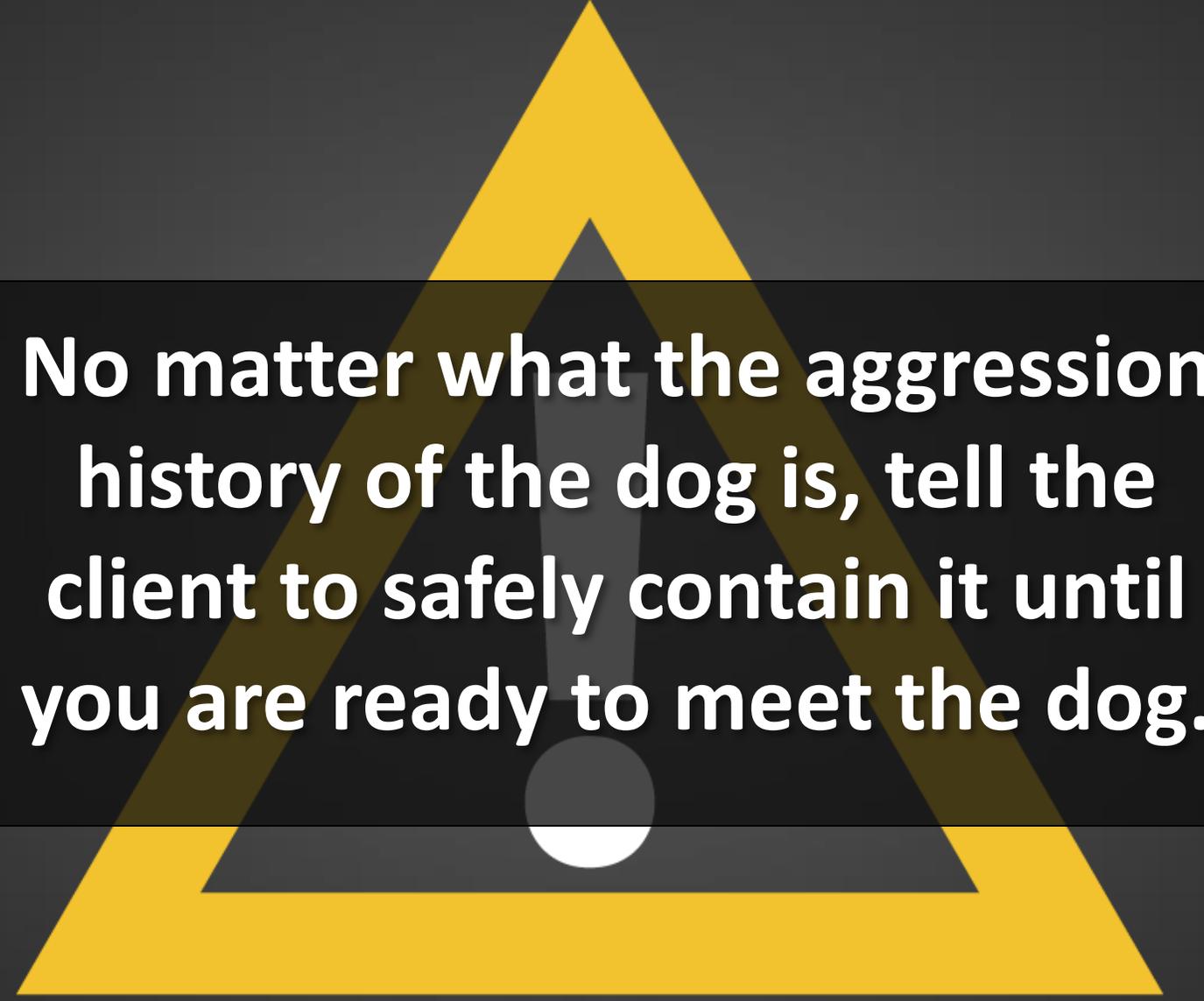


**“Please have Max in his crate in a room with the door shut before I arrive. Please also have any food items put securely away and out of Max’s reach. I will call you just before I arrive to remind you.”**

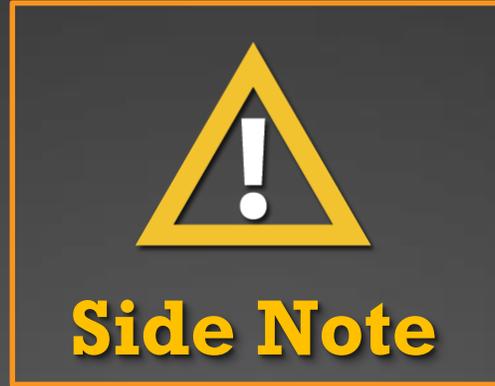
# **Michael's Serious Recommendation**



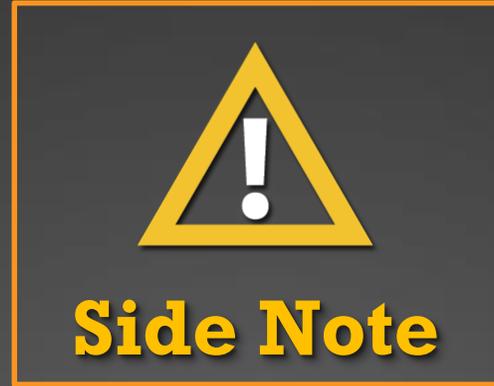
**No. 5**



**No matter what the aggression history of the dog is, tell the client to safely contain it until you are ready to meet the dog.**



**Most clients will reach out to shake your hand and if the dog is not contained, in some instances this will be enough to set the stage for an aggressive response from the dog.**



**In separation anxiety cases I will either have someone in another room with the dog, or have the dog crated in the same room as the client if the dog is OK with that set-up.**

# Things to Consider while Setting up Max's Environment

The association with just being in the area of the bowl can, in rare cases, be an antecedent for the aggression.



*Even when there is no food in the bowl*



*Even if the bowl is taken away*





I find it much easier to sit down with a client and go over contracts and history without worrying about the dog at the same time.

# Part 2

- 🐾 The day of arrival for the consult
- 🐾 Observing Max for the first time
- 🐾 Prognosis in aggression cases (using Max as an example)
- 🐾 Safety and management protocols you need to put into place before a behavior modification plan is put into effect



**SEE YOU IN PART 2!**

**THANK YOU**

**FOR JOINING US!**



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