# Nonverbal Communication

## Definition

## Types

## General Rules

## K9 Communication

## Reading the Dog

Definition

## Communication without language (i.e., words).

## The purpose is to communicate with conspecifics (& others-ex. alarm calls). Note that dogs (properly socialized) view humans as conspecifics.

## Information typically contains an emotional component.

Types

## Visual - Includes postures, facial expressions, & movements in general.

## Auditory - Includes pitch, loudness, timing, & duration.

## Olfactory - Often employs *pheromones* (chemical substances secreted by animals that have communication value).

## Tactile - Involves the body parts used & forceful/gentle.

## Note - For a given species, one modality may play a more dominant role than others. Exs.: Humans- vision K9’s- olfaction Rodents- tactile

General Rules

# 1 - Posture Size

## Posture size is typically related to the dominance/submission. Demo of guy walking down the street.

# 2 - Sociability

## The more social the species, the more subtle are the gradations in postures.

## Less social species have more *stereotyped postures* (occur in the same manner each time they are performed).

## Species Comparison

## Sociability is defined by the amount of close physical contact & communal involvement in such activities as hunting, feeding, sleeping, & resting.

## More social species show more subtle intensity gradations of postures & more successive & simultaneous combinations.

# 3 - Cuteness

## Babies are cute. Elicits nurturing (or *epimeletic* *behavior*).

## All share certain characteristics:

### Large rounded head shape

### Protruding forehead

### Large eyes

### Eyes below midline of head

K9 Communication

# Visual

## Note this issue is complicated in dogs as a result of:

## Selection for conformation (e.g., wild K9’s have pointy ears exclusively). This would include selection for cuteness (*brachycephalis*).

## Cosmetic surgery (e.g., cropped ears & tails).

## Body Postures

## Darwin’s Book

### *The Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals (1872)*.

### Contained picture of a dog when aggressive & when friendly.

### If he hadn’t gained fame for his theory of evolution, he would have still gained fame from this work.

## Hackles & Raised Paw

### Hackles (or Piloerection) - Due to arousal of the sympathetic division of the ANS.

## An element of fear &/or anger is often present.

## Makes the dog look bigger.

## Possibly directs attack to those areas (which would be biologically adaptive).

## Raised Paw - Indicates submission, tension, &/or excitement.

## Play Bow - Lowered shoulders with pawing. Indicates desire to play.

## Changes with Emotion - Complicating factor here is breed differences.

## Submission

## Face - Issues & Behaviors

## Stare - threat or invite to play (depending on posture & relationship).

## Gaze/head Avoidance - fearful, submissive.

## Yawning - tension.

### Release of tension

### Some argue that it may serve as a *cut-off signal* that suggests willingness to end things peacefully (a temporary truce).

## Teeth - generally, the more they show, the more fear.

## Lip-Licking - a licking intention signal communicating submission &/or friendliness.

## Smile - There actually is an expression some dogs show in greeting that folks refer to as a “*smile*”. Some mistake it for a threat because the lips curl & teeth show.

## Continuums

## Tail Wagging & Position - Some generalizations:

### High & slow - dominance.

### Fast circles - play/excitement.

### Low & fast - greeting, affection.

## Overall examples

# Auditory - Issues & Behaviors

## Whines - Excitement, distress & care soliciting.

## Yelps & Screams - Pain, fear or submission.

## Growls - Threat, warning for aggression, & play.

## Clacking, Teeth Chattering, or Snapping - Defensive warning, excitement, play.

## Barks

### Obedience

### Excitement

### Territoriality/Warning

### Frustration

### Play

## Howls

### “*Pep-Up*” - before hunt

### Make Contact from a Distance

### Territorial Claim

### Communal Vocal Display

## *This underestimates the variety (ex. sigh) & variations in intensity of the vocalizations. Breed is also a factor.*

# Olfactory

## General Comments

## Use *pheromones* (chemical substances secreted by animals that have communication value).

## Glands Involved:

### *Anal*, *Perianal*, or *Circumanal* Sacs

### *Inter-digital* or *Paw*

### *Caudal* or tail

### *Perioral* (corners of the mouth)

## These glands (& urine) contain pheromones.

## Also have other glands, including:

### *Sebaceous* - long lasting oily secretions.

### *Sudoriferous* - shorter lived water secretions.

#### *Eccrine* - sweat glands on the feet.

#### *Apocrine* - more widely distributed.

## Marking - Can probably tell:

## Who (individual & species)

## When

## How often

## Gender (& intact or neutered/spayed)

## How close to estrous (if intact female)

## Age

## What they have been eating (for feces)

## And ??

## Rolling

## Many K9’s will roll in (or urinate/defecate upon) strong smelling substances.

## The rolling may:

### Decrease novelty of the substance through *habituation* (decreased responding as a result of repeated presentation of a stimulus).

### Attract attention from conspecifics (e.g., cologne or perfume).

### Decrease aggression from conspecifics.

### Appears to me that K9’s inherently like strong odors. While humans like looking at pictures (eye candy), K9’s like odors (nose candy).

# Tactile

## Licking

## Is the way the mom takes care of the pups (stimulating urination & defecation, cleaning, tending cuts & bruises).

## Thus, grows into an affectionate and/or submissive gesture analogous to kissing.

## Licking/Nipping the Face/Jowl Area

## Performed as puppies to get adults to regurgitate & grows into a friendly and/or submissive greeting.

## Inguinal Presentation - Presentation of the anogenital region is a friendly or submissive gesture common in greetings.

### Can be a nuisance when introducing the dog to guests.

### Can get in the way of putting on a leash.

### Can be used to get the dog to stand still.

## *T’ing* Up

### Dominant tries to orient perpendicular to subordinate who should show inguinal presentation.

### Can include head &/or paw over the back. This indicates escalating aggression if no play is occurring.

## Muzzle Biting

## An inhibited bite over the jaw is a reprimand or dominance gesture.

## Nosing

## Pushing of the snout against another K9 or handler is a friendly/submissive gesture.

## May stem from rooting reflex.

## Hip Slamming or “Body Checking”

## Used during play & aggression to break the hold of a conspecific. May also be used as a friendly gesture when running (called *bumping*). When taken by surprise, bumping can be a nuisance.

## Petting

## When it is done vigorously, it excites the dog. Calm petting has the opposite effect.

## Play - The more universal signals (Beckoff, 1977) include:

### Play Bow

### Pawing with a Front Foot

### Twisting Jumps

### Open Mouthed Panting

### Tail Wagging (or spinning)

Reading the Dog

## Mackenzie’s (1996) describes 7 steps.

## He presents these in the order they should be looked at.

## I have modified this slightly & personally believe there is a “*gestalt*” here.

## Each step represents a continuum.

## Energy Level - how animated is the dog.

## Body Axis - leaning toward or away, T’ing up.

## Stride - bold strides vs. slinking.

## Muscle Tone - from stiffness to relaxed fluid movements to tremors.

## Head & Neck - high vs. low (prey puts head low though) & hackles.

## Face - eye contact, amount of lip retraction, ear position, pupil dilation.

## Tail - excitement, confidence, friendliness.