

CALMING SIGNALS FOR DOGS

Turid Rugaas

The Key To Understanding

The following overview, in Turid's own words, gives the essence of her theory on calming signals.

"Dogs, being flock animals, have a language for communication with each other. Canine language in general consists of a large variety of signals using body, face, ears, tail, sounds, movement, and expression. The dog's innate ability to signal is easily lost or reinforced through life's experience. If we study the signals dogs use with each other and use them ourselves, we increase our ability to communicate with our dogs. Most noteworthy of all canine signals are the calming signals which are used to maintain a healthy social hierarchy and resolution of conflict within the flock. These are skills which, when carried over to our own interactions with dogs can be highly beneficial to our relationship. Dogs have the ability to calm themselves in the face of a shock (fearful or stressful situation) and to calm each other as well. As an example let's consider the manner in which dogs meet each other. Dogs which are worried in a social situation can communicate concepts such as: 'I know you are the boss around here and I won't make trouble'. Furthermore, the boss dog is very apt to want the worried dog to realize that no trouble is intended. 'Don't worry, I'm in charge around here and I mean you no harm.' Dogs which do not signal properly can be the cause of problems." Turid Rugaas

YAWNING – when your dog is not tired.

HEAD TURN – Also, Turning away, blinking, and averting eyes

SNIFF THE GROUND

SITTING OR LYING DOWN

MOVING SLOW – dog slows down when he sees a dog in the distance.

LIP LICKING

BODY SHAKE

LIFTING A PAW

Some signs of aggression – stiff body, wide eyes, ears pinned close to head, lips drawn back, growl, snarl, sometimes when “hackles” are up (not always), some tail wags (we will continue to discuss)

You Tube Links to Calming Signals:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lj7BWxC6iVs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgnLgHFRJu4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWSW9oiRhME>

Reading Dog Body Language:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00_9JPltXHI