



TOO CUTE TO TEENWOLF; WHAT HAPPENED TO MY DOG?!

Glasgow Dog Training By Dog Behaviourist
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In this series of blogs, Gillian, who is one of the Glasgow Dog Trainer Team, will share with you her experience of raising and dealing with a large, intact male dog through adolescence.

Dan Coyle wrote “struggle is not an option, it is a biological requirement” and I read it at the time sagely nodding along. How odd for it to fall completely out of my head the minute my dog’s adolescence struck.



Strike it did. One minute we were off lead together on the beaches, in woodland, mountains and dells, every creature in the world his friend and me the centre of it. Days later the following text exchange with my Trainer took place.

Me: “Quillan ran off and attacked another dog. Sat by the River Kelvin and can’t stop crying”

John: “why is he crying?” (not a trace of irony from the man)

Whilst no harm occurred in either animal (the whole thing bluster), that day marked the beginning of a period that has really

challenged, saddened, frustrated, and isolated us both at times.

It didn’t get better quickly either. Despite reassurance that all of my prep work in puppyhood was making this much easier than it could’ve been, and having the support of an excellent, experienced trainer on top of his game, it has been so tough. It’s helped me hugely with empathising when looking at clients with troubled/reactive/adolescent dogs, and gives me the confidence to know they will get through it.

Here is what it looked like – in the following installments I’ll detail what I did to address each issue, and what I think we did in puppyhood that helped prep for the success we are finally enjoying together.



So – Bye bye to that lovely connection and recall...heelloo selective hearing and disappearing.

The testosterone surges and dear lord, the humping.

His little husky sing song changed to back chat and barking. LOUDLY, and everywhere.

His puppy license expired – his high school jock behaviour with other dogs was no longer tolerated, which led to conflict with most other dogs – he didn't seem to learn from this.

He forgot many of his previous skills – settling, various behaviours he usually offered generously, tricks, loose lead walking; all gone.

He became much more socially selective and less tolerant of people and dogs.

He aggressed towards most dogs on lead, even at distance, lunging, growling, barking.

His preferred play style changed and he also became physically rougher with me in play.

The most valuable sentence I heard during this period, which I repeat like a mantra on the bad days we sometimes still have is "Your dog is not giving you a hard time. Your dog is having a hard time". Keep it and use it. It's authentic and it grounded me each time.

There's so much we can do with empathy and gentleness that will yield the results you want at the end, whilst crucially; not making it worse, breaking your trust in each other or damaging your relationship. Kindness will win. Thanks for reading.

Source: Glasgow Dog Trainer Blog

<https://glasgowdogtrainer.wordpress.com/2017/06/06/too-cute-to-teenwolf-what-happened-to-my-dog/>