

My Dog is fixed? What Is With All This Humping?

The following information was taken from a presentation given by a wildlife biologist who informed us that the whole wolf model is falling apart under research. Not only do dogs not fit into the wolf social hierarchy model, neither do wolves! Apparently the previous wolf research was less than valid, because the wolves were elusive, and therefore studied only at den sites in the spring, when the testosterone level of the males was at an all time low. So much so, that they are not even fertile.

The other research was in artificial enclosures where the wolves could not get away from one another. It seems that wolves live in family groups. A mating pair and their off spring. The offspring habitually defer to the adults until they are sexually mature (two years or so) and then they begin to not defer. The resulting social pressure causes the mature youngsters to disperse and look for mates to form new family groups. The dominance behaviors and submissive behaviors of the wolves do not reflect a static ranking which is permanent (as previously believed). There was even a case where a submissively behaving female was driven from the pack only to return and be driven out several more times. Ultimately, she returned, killed her sister (the "Alpha" female) and took her place. So much for that theory.

Anyway, dogs are descendants of wolves, not wolves. They are not predators, but opportunistic scavengers. They filled an economic niche formed when humans began to form villages. They do not live in family groups. Once the offspring are weaned, the family disperses. The young only stay with Mom until they no longer need to be guided to safety or food. Once they can do that on their own, they are solitary. They gather at resource sites (garbage dumps) and then disperse. Wolves do this too. They do not even stay together constantly. Wolf young sometimes even return to visit after they disperse sometimes (to mixed reception apparently.)

Okay, that was the Reader's digest version. In short, they are tossing the whole dominance theory and rank reduction stuff to the wind. The most recent thought is that "humping" is simply a social behavior motor pattern that dogs have. It is nature's way of letting them "practice" for sex. All it means is that the dog is excited or in an aroused state (hyper). Females do it too. Some females get a "shot" of testosterone from their brothers during the birth process if they are born between two males. It is a testosterone facilitated behavior motor pattern. Dogs do not understand rank because they don't relate to the experiences of others. They are self aware but not other aware. They can't understand "you lose and I win." All they relate to is present (this feels good) and past (this was reinforcing before).

The way to handle it is the same way you always handle it when two dogs are getting aroused. You split them up. If you are concerned that one dog is getting annoyed and can't defend himself, step between them and separate them with your body the way the bitch would have when they were puppies. Of course, that is only if you can't call the humper off. (If you are dealing with a non-defensive dog then your safety is not an issue here.) If the humping dog can't calm down on his own and is bothering the other dogs, crate him or pull him aside and wait until his arousal level lowers. If the "humper" isn't particularly bothering the other dogs-let 'em go for it. I realize this is absolutely contrary to conventional wisdom, but allot of Third Way stuff is. Take it or leave it! *This information is provided from research studied by: Chris Bach's "The Third Way"*
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