****Four on the Floor

One of the most important things about teaching our dogs how to greet people appropriately is managing the situations so they do not have the opportunity to rehearse unwanted behavior. We cannot allow them to practice jumping on people because the behavior will only get stronger. So, using leashes, space, baby gates, doors, and our instructions to visitors/strangers are extremely important in this work to start.

The other aspect of teaching appropriate greeting is that we MUST teach the dog what TO do when greeting people. Whether that is sit, go to a mat, or go to a crate, they need to know what behaviors are going to be rewarded so that they know what behaviors get what they want (if jumping no longer gets them what they want, what does?).

So here are some tips on teaching four on the floor:

**\*Do not set your dog up to fail—**if you think they are going to jump up, prevent them by using a leash, gate, door, etc.

**\*Cue a specific known behavior—**teach Fido that the only way he’s allowed to get pet is if he “sits” (for example). If he never gets what he wants without sitting, he’ll reliably choose to sit—but you have to be consistent about not rewarding him non-sits.

**\*Reward what you want—**take moments to just click/treat your dog making good decisions when you come home. Reward by dropping treats on the floor so your dog stays on the ground and learns the FLOOR is more rewarding than the legs of a visitor.

**\*If your dog makes a mistake, don’t reward it**—if Fido jumps up at some point, don’t engage with him at all. No, “Off!” “Down!” or pushing him off. Very casually leave and disengage from the dog. If they are persistent use a door/gate to send a clear message. If they are on leash you can remove them from the situation for a few moments.

**\*Practice your dog learning to sit when excited—**play the “Go Wild and Sit!” game. Get your dog riled up and excited during play then stop and cue a sit. Teach him to respond to your cues even if he’s very excited.

**\*Be clear with visitors/strangers**—make sure you clearly instruct people how to interact with the dog. If you suspect the person will ignore your instructions not to pet until the dog is sitting (for example), don’t let the person pet your dog. While they may not mind the dog jumping up, they don’t have to live wit him long term so they need to follow the rules. If they can’t not reward the jumps, keep Fido safely away.