

There's no such thing as a bad dog

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Dog parks. What wonderful places they are. Dogs can run freely and safely, expending their energies in the company of other canines. It is truly heart-warming to see a bunch of dogs, all shapes and sizes, running, chasing and generally behaving like dogs are meant to behave. But what a pity it is that dog parks allow the entry of humans.

When one dog meets another dog they display a number of signals that allow them to communicate with each other - what they like, don't like and where and what their boundaries are. Through body language, visual observations and sometimes vocalisations, dogs connect with each other, thus establishing a harmonious relationship that allows the players to enjoy themselves and just be dogs.

Then in steps the human. Through a lack of understanding, and their own fears, they see another dog approaching their dog and without waiting for the dogs to continue communicating, by sniffing, licking and so on, they remove their pet, in effect denying either dog its own social time. When the human constantly intervenes their dog learns that another dog is probably dangerous and that strange dogs should be avoided at all costs, which can, for one thing, lead to a fear of other dogs and new experiences.

In a canine social situation if there is a "bully" dog, the other dogs tend not to want to have anything to do with it, thus denying that dog the joy of canine social time. If one dog starts to play too roughly, the dog it is playing with will let it know, through signals that dogs have learnt, and used, for thousands of years.

Fights (between dogs) rarely break out in these environments, and if a skirmish does occur, then they tend to be short-lived.

Please, do not tell me your dog is either too old, or too small or too this or too that, which is "why" you do not let your dog run free. A dog is a dog and a dog is the best creature to communicate with another dog. If a dog is truly the aggressive type you can take it as read its owner hasn't bothered socialising his dog; or the owner is a thug and probably mistreats his dog, so the only thing it has learned is that aggression is the best defence. Not unlike the human race in many respects.

Now, please, show some humanity. Take your dog to the park, and just let it be a dog.

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