The Canine Ladder of Aggression

AGGRESSION RARELY COMES "OUT OF NO WHERE" UNLESS A DOG IS SICK OR IN PAIN. MOST AGGRESSIVE TACTICS ARE A DIRECT RESULT OF NOT READING YOUR DOG AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR COMMUNICATION. DOGS WILL "TELL" YOU THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE WHEN THEY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE AND WHEN WE IGNORE THESE CUES, THE TACTICS BEGIN TO CLIMB THE LADDER.

DOGS WILL TRY VARIOUS TACTICS UNTIL SOMEONE FINALLY "LISTENS" TO THEM. PEOPLE OFTEN WILL RESPOND TO A GROWL, SNAP OR BITE, BUT THEY'VE BEEN GIVING US SO MANY CUES PRIOR TO THAT TO ASK FOR HELP.

Are you watching?
Listening?
Advocating?

LEARNING TO READ AND UNDERSTAND YOUR DOG'S BODY LANGUAGE AND STRESS CUES WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND HOW TO ADVOCATE AND ADJUST TO HELP THEM FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE.

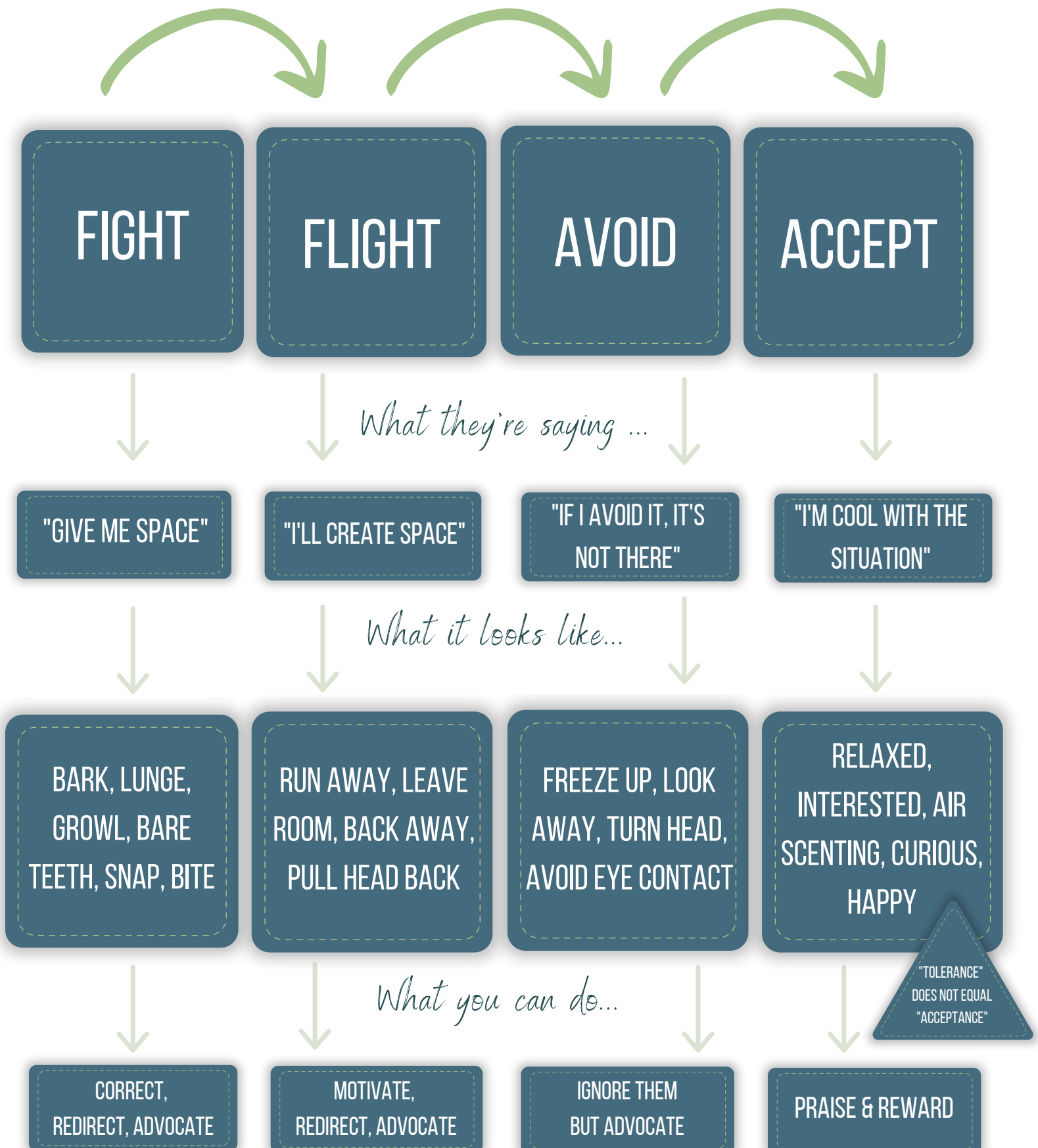| Step	Type
BITE	*fight*
SNAP OR LUNGE	*fight*
GROWL	*fight*
STIFFEN, STARE	*avoidance, body language*
LAYS DOWN, LEG UP	*avoidance, body language*
CROUCHED, TAIL TUCKED	*avoidance, body language*
LOW BODY, EARS BACK	*avoidance, body language*
RUNS AWAY, WALKS AWAY OR BACKS UP	*flight*
TURN BODY AWAY, SITS/GETS SMALLER	*avoidance, body language*
TURNS HEAD AWAY, REMOVES EYE CONTACT	*avoidance*
LICKS LIPS, BLINKS, YAWNS, CLOSES MOUTH, TENSES UP, HACKLES UP	*body language*

HAPPYTAILS
LEARNING CENTER FOR DOGS

It starts by reading their body language

Stress / Fear Responses

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FIGHT	FLIGHT	AVOID	ACCEPT

What they're saying ...

"GIVE ME SPACE"	"I'LL CREATE SPACE"	"IF I AVOID IT, IT'S NOT THERE"	"I'M COOL WITH THE SITUATION"

What it looks like...

BARK, LUNGE, GROWL, BARE TEETH, SNAP, BITE	RUN AWAY, LEAVE ROOM, BACK AWAY, PULL HEAD BACK	FREEZE UP, LOOK AWAY, TURN HEAD, AVOID EYE CONTACT	RELAXED, INTERESTED, AIR SCENTING, CURIOUS, HAPPY

"TOLERANCE" DOES NOT EQUAL "ACCEPTANCE"

What you can do...

CORRECT, REDIRECT, ADVOCATE	MOTIVATE, REDIRECT, ADVOCATE	IGNORE THEM BUT ADVOCATE	PRAISE & REWARD

Added Pressure

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MAKING EYE CONTACT

MOVING INTO THEIR SPACE
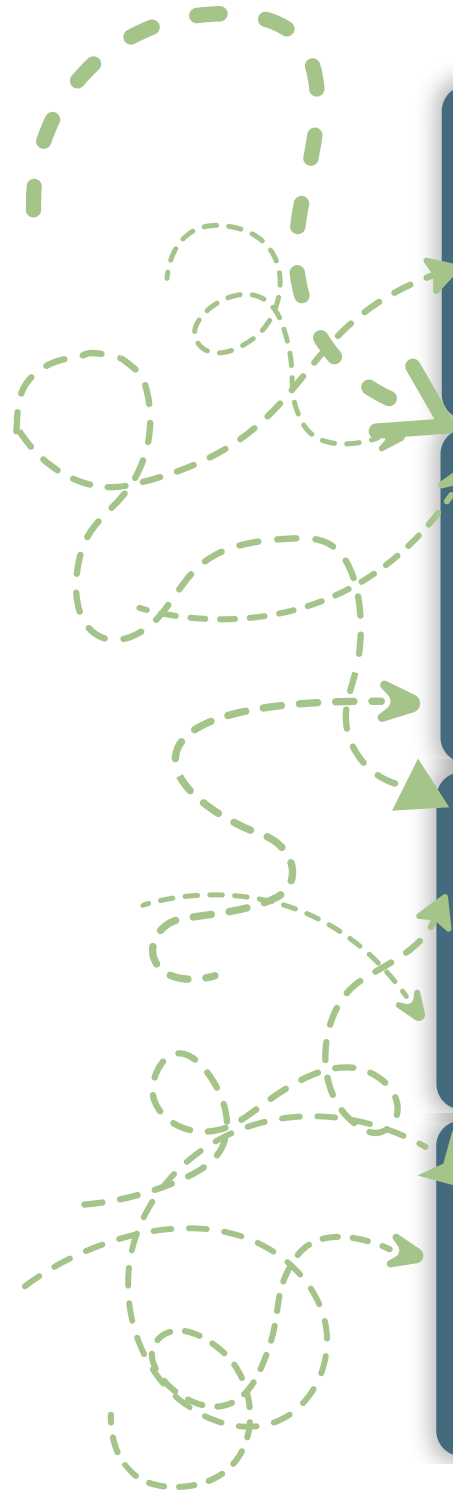
PUTTING YOUR HAND OUT

TOWERING OVER THEM

PETTING FROM ABOVE

TALKING TO THEM

What the pressure leads to...

FIGHT

FLIGHT

AVOIDANCE

ACCEPTANCE

"TOLERANCE"
DOES NOT EQUAL
"ACCEPTANCE"

What you can do...

MOTIVATE

REDIRECT

ADVOCATE

REWARD

Ways to Advocate

♥ HEAD ON A SWIVEL: TURN AROUND, MOVE AWAY, CREATE SPACE

♥ AVOID EYE CONTACT, DON'T ENGAGE

♥ EDUCATE FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS, CHILDREN'S FRIENDS

♥ SAY NO THANK YOU. "AWW, THANK YOU FOR ASKING TO PET, I APPRECIATE IT, BUT NOT TODAY."

♥ USE YOUR CRATE (AND SEPARATE)

♥ STEP IN FRONT OF YOUR DOG TO CREATE A BARRIER

♥ LEAVE YOUR DOG HOME IF THEY DON'T ENJOY BEING OUT

♥ SET THE RULES UP FRONT (IE. AVOID EYE CONTACT, IGNORE)

♥ RELEASE THE GUILT

HAPPYTAILS
LEARNING CENTER FOR DOGS