

Don't Hate the Mail Man

Recently, I was told by one of my puppy people why their dog hates the mail man. He does not mind the paper person but, he barks a great deal and scares the mail man and any substitute mail person or paper person who comes by.

Well, the reason for not liking new strangers is easy to answer. They are just that, strangers. A dog that was bred to guard will bark at all people it does not recognize. The standard schnauzer will also bark at anyone who shows fear toward them.

I have a man who rents a garage from me who was afraid of my dogs. When in their yard, they can see him, but were not allowed down to meet him for a very long time. Then one day, I was walking a puppy and went down to get the rent from this man, and he realized that my dogs are just like any other. They just sound rather fierce when they bark, even the puppy. I walked each of my dogs down to visit him for a while and he stopped to pet them and talk to them. They still bark at him when he comes to the garage and when he walks up to my house, but they no longer spend hours out there barking at him.

Greeting and being friendly with your dog is one way that a person you don't allow into your home can get to know your dog and stop all the noise. In my experience, that it is a rare occasion when a mail person or paper carrier is willing to be friendly with a barking standard schnauzer.

There is another way to stop this behavior. Find a favorite food of your dog, chicken can be better than treats as they are high in fat. Remember to reduce the amount of dog food you are feeding by the amount of food used for training. (In the case of any of my girls, I think dog food would work fine, since they are all chow hounds and will eat anything.) When the stranger comes around every day, feed your dog the really yummy food and use it to distract them. Do this until the dog is waiting for the treats at the sight of this person. Pretty soon, you can reduce the amount of treats you are sharing with your dog because they will be quietly waiting for the treats.

Now if you have a dog like my older male, you might have a harder time getting them to stop anything for food. He won't take treats unless he is calm, and then half the time he gives them to one of my girls! For him, food is not the motivation, petting is, but that won't stop his mouth from going off.

Author: Diane R Mitchell

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