# Sometimes the dog was trained, but the house was not

*Free to pass on*

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# Somebody gave you this

They gave it to you because it was useful to them.

Short, meant to be read in one go and then handed to the next family. Print it, email it, photocopy it — no permission needed, and nothing to sign up for.

It is about one idea. A dog can be trained and a house can still be unmanageable, because the dog was taught and the household was not. What follows is the household part: where he is allowed to be, who does what, and the words everyone uses so he hears one voice instead of five.

If you only have ten minutes, this is the ten minutes.

**IN HERE**

why a trained dog can still be an unmanageable household ◆ the house as a map — where he can be and where he cannot ◆ six systems the whole family runs the same way ◆ the words everyone uses, so he hears one voice

*In my house it was Mum. In yours it could be anyone. Read it that way.*

# Why a trained dog can still be an unmanageable household

Here is the thing nobody warns you about. The dog that breaks a family is almost never an unloved one. It is the dog everyone wanted. The kids begged for him, the parents said yes, the whole house celebrated the day he arrived — and a few months later that same house is tense, tired, and quietly wondering what went wrong. Nobody saw it coming, because the family prepared for the wrong thing entirely. They prepared to love a puppy. They did not prepare to live with one. Sometimes the dog was trained, but the house was not.

A puppy will not live inside your dream of him. He will live inside your actual house, with its school mornings, work calls, tired parents, excited kids, open doors, visitors, food on the floor, accidents, and days when nobody has enough energy left to give. Love decides that you want him. It does not decide who cleans the accident at eleven at night, who controls the door when a delivery arrives, who ends the rough play before someone cries, or how Mum keeps their peace. Those things are not solved by loving harder. They are solved by a system — and a system is the one thing the dream never includes.

A puppy does not wait politely until the family feels ready. He does not wait for the trainer to come, for the parents to have time, for the children to calm down, or for Mum to relax. From his very first minute indoors, he is already learning — from the floor under his feet, the doors, the voices, and above all from whatever happens immediately after he does something.

This matters more than most families realize, because a trainer might visit once or twice a week, while the family lives with the puppy every single hour of every day. Daily life is the real teacher; the formal lessons are a footnote next to it. If the home he lands in is clear and consistent, he learns structure. If it is chaotic and contradictory, he learns chaos just as quickly and just as well. The house is always teaching. The only question is whether it is teaching on purpose.

# The house as a map — where he can be and where he cannot

This is the quiet reason so many puppies start badly. It is not temperament and it is not stubbornness. It is that the puppy arrived into an open house with no idea where anything was supposed to happen, and a house he cannot read is a house he cannot behave in. Before he needs freedom, a puppy needs a map: where he sleeps, where he rests, where the toilet is, where play is allowed and where it is not, which rooms are not his, and which paths must always stay clear. Freedom comes later. The map comes first.

That is why zones matter, and why they are worth deciding deliberately. A zone is not merely a location; it is a message the puppy can actually read. One area means rest. Another means calm company with the family. One spot means the toilet. Certain rooms mean “not yours.” A doorway means stop and wait. The clearer these messages are, the faster the whole house makes sense to him — and a puppy to whom the house makes sense is a calmer animal than one left to guess.

### Example House Zones

| Area | Puppy Access | Why |
|---|---|---|
| Garden | Controlled access | Outdoor freedom still needs rules. |
| Living room | Supervised access | Family space must stay calm. |
| Comfort area for Mum | No access unless invited | Comfort boundaries protect the whole house. |
| Bedrooms | Usually off-limits | Sleep and personal space matter. |
| Kitchen | Limited or no access | Food, feet, and cleaning create risk. |
| Front gate / entry | Adults only | Gates and visitors are not a child’s job. |

So freedom starts small and grows with proof. Begin with controlled space and close supervision, and widen his world step by step as he shows he can handle it. If accidents, chewing, or boundary-breaking start climbing, the freedom comes back down with them. That is not punishment. It is prevention, and it is the single most useful habit a family can keep in the first year.

# Six systems the whole family runs the same way

This is one of the most common and least obvious ways a family makes a puppy harder to raise. It is not that they do too little. It is that they each do something slightly different, and the contradictions pile up until the puppy simply tunes out. A dog cannot follow six teachers giving six versions of the same instruction. What he can follow is a small, shared set of words that every person in the house uses the same way, every single time. That shared set is what this chapter builds.

These are the six systems the family uses every day.

| System | Main Words | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Potty System | POTTY, GOOD BOY | Teach toilet place and timing |
| 2. Rest System | BOX, GOOD BOY | Teach sleep, reset, and safe containment |
| 3. Calm System | PLACE, GOOD BOY | Teach calm near family |
| 4. Play System | GO PLAY, ALL DONE | Start and end play clearly |
| 5. Safety System | SAFE, WAIT, BOX NOW | Protect Mum, doors, guests, and risky moments |
| 6. Control System | LEAVE IT, DROP IT, COME | Stop unsafe choices and bring the puppy back |

The family does not need to teach all words perfectly in one week. But the family should use the same meanings from day one.

So the family uses few words, says them calmly, and stands behind them. If the puppy is too excited to listen, the answer is to create distance or reset, not to pile on more words. If he does not understand, he is guided, not lectured. And when several people start talking at once, one person takes the moment and the others go quiet. The single most useful rule in this whole chapter is also the simplest: one puppy, one moment, one voice.

# The words everyone uses, so he hears one voice

*Same words. Same meaning. Every time.*

| Word | Meaning | Family Rule |
|---|---|---|
| GOOD BOY | That exact action was right; reward is coming | Say it exactly when the right behaviour happens. Do not say it randomly |
| POTTY | Go to the toilet, in the right place | Use at the potty area only. Same place, same word, same timing |
| BOX | Go to your safe resting place and settle | Safety, rest, reset. Routine, not punishment |
| PLACE | Be near the family, calmly | Calm near people. Reward calm lying and settling |
| GO PLAY | Play starts now | Play is allowed now |
| ALL DONE | Play or activity is finished | Stop clearly, then calm. The toy disappears |
| SAFE | Control the puppy first; someone needs space | Dad leads, kids respond. Mum can move |
| BOX NOW | Urgent safety command | No debate. No delay. Secure immediately |
| LEAVE IT | Do not touch that | Best before the puppy grabs it |
| DROP IT | Release what is in your mouth | Trade if safe |
| COME | Come to me | Use in safe, easy settings first |
| WAIT | Pause before moving | Use at doors, food, movement, gates later |

The children's rule is: Say it once. Help him win. Call Dad if unsure.

# Why this exists

I am not a dog trainer. I am not a vet, not a breeder, not a professional from the dog industry.

That may be exactly why this helps. None of it was written from theory or from a training room. It came out of real family failure and real household pressure.

I raised dogs before I had a family. I loved them, and I believed I knew what I was doing. Then, a few months after I married, my dog died, and I grieved him more than anyone who has never loved a dog would understand.

Years later I brought a dog into my family, and it failed. My wife had a real fear of dogs. My children loved the puppy and kept breaking the rules without meaning to. He learned one thing from me, another from the children, and something else again from the house. I rehomed him.

A few years later I thought the problem had been timing. The children were older. We were ready. We were not. Same failure — taller children, a different name, the same pattern.

A few years after that, it happened again.

Three dogs. Koudy, Milo and Snoopy. All three went on to families who could give them what mine could not. My children still see them.

Love was there. Experience was there. It failed anyway.

So I stopped asking why the dog had failed and started asking better questions. What repeated across all three? Where did it break? Who carried the risk, and who carried the daily routine? Who was being pushed into discomfort? What did the puppy learn from us without our noticing?

The answer was simple and uncomfortable. Love was present. A system was not.

**Sometimes the dog was trained, but the house was not.**

So I built one — on paper, for my own children, before the fourth dog arrived.

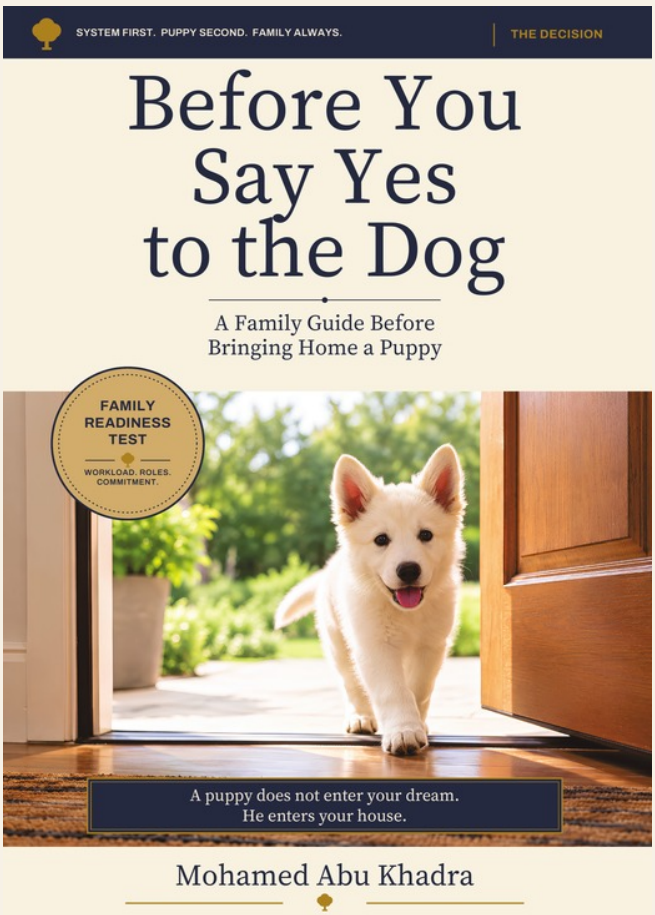
He stayed. His name is Oden.

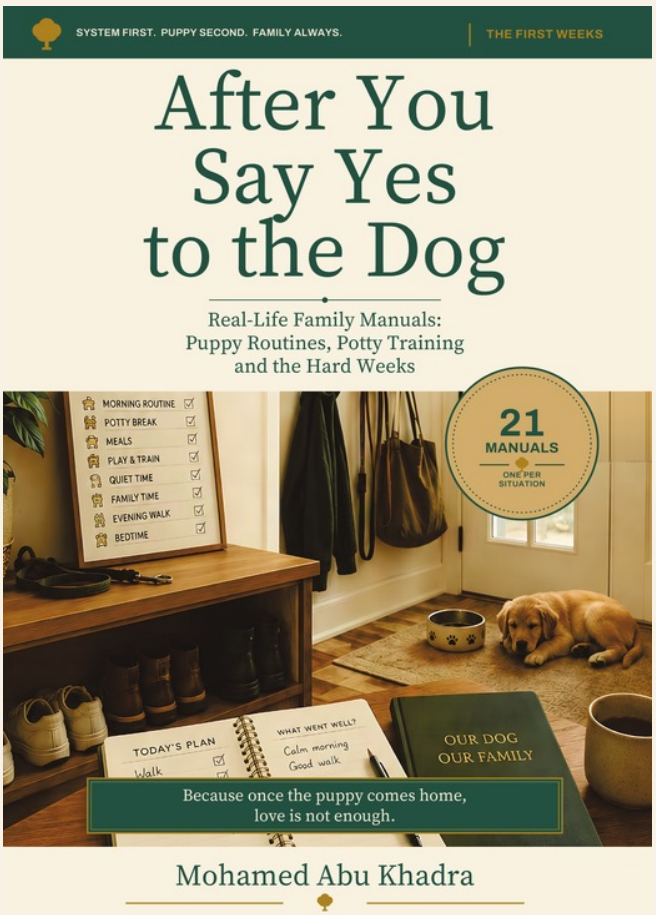
These pages are part of that system. I am doing the thing I wished someone had done for me.

*Somebody gave you this. If it was useful, it is free to pass on — and everything else is at mohamedabukhadra.com.*

I wrote this for my family. Then I shared it with the people I thought might get something from it. Use it, ignore it, or write back and tell me how to make it better. Up to you.

# The two books

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Large-breed dogs can grow into strong, powerful animals. Adult supervision, safe handling, suitable training, and professional support are the responsibility of the family. Children should never be responsible for dangerous decisions, emergency handling, strong leash control, unknown objects, medical situations, unsafe behaviour, or bite-risk scenarios.

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**When safety is unclear: Separate. Call. Go.**

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