



Problems with fireworks?

How to help your dog during the 'firework season'

Well, here it is again the season of fireworks, petrified dogs hiding under sofa's, behind door, in cupboards or barking, spinning, scratching, digging holes in carpets and stressed beyond belief.

It does not have to be like that this year.

Maybe you would like me to write that again?

It does not have to be like that this year.

If you follow the method that I developed and teach, Canine Conversation, you will have an understanding of what you need to do to show leadership when any noise affects the behaviour of your dog.

If you don't follow the method or have just began the process and need help, just follow the guidelines below and although without following the method they will not eradicate the problem and treat the cause (the fact that the dog believes it is a leader in a world it cannot understand) they will help to ease the symptoms.

If your dog shows any adverse reaction to fireworks:-

- Don't stress yourself. ***This is so important***
- Don't reassure your dog.
- Constantly talking or watching your dogs every move will cause it to be more stressed. ***It now has you as well as the fireworks to cope with.***
- If possible ignore your dog's behaviour and don't make eye contact.
- If your dog is barking, digging, scratching or any other adverse behaviour (and you are able to do so safely) take the dog by the collar and hold it against your knee/leg.

If you are unable to take your dog by the collar, for whatever reason, place a slip lead around its neck and bring it towards your body and hold it there until it calms. This will stop the digging, barking etc. *Still don't look at the dog or say anything.* Be the calm, relaxed leader your dog needs. *Hold the dog until it relaxes and then, without a word, release your hold.* This is just the same as holding a frightened child but without words or eye contact.

- If your dog is panting, pacing, unsettled but not showing any unacceptable or adverse behaviour ignore your dog, no eye contact, no words of reassurance and make yourself comfortable in a very relaxed pose watching TV or reading a book . *Be the calm, relaxed leader your dog needs you to be.*
- If your dog is happier in a different room leave it there.
- If your dog is looking for a smaller space to hide in (a safe den) then provide it with one. This could be the downstairs cloakroom, utility room or any other smaller space.
- Above all remain calm, really calm, your dog can tell if you're pretending.
- In some cases, where your dog is used to sleeping in a crate, invite the dog to go in the crate, cover it over and let it be.

Gill Tuxworth 2012