

Article 11

Sometimes dogs need time and space to themselves.

Dear Gus,

Our 14-month-old German shepherd has always been "shy". She typically will leave "the pack" (my wife, our older dog, and myself) and lay down by herself in another room. This is very different than the behavior of our older dog, which always stays with us, so we are concerned. Should we take any actions to encourage her to stay with us?

Fred D,
Orange

Fred, based on your description of your dog, I don't see this as a problem, although this is a bit antisocial on her part. If she never rejoined the family (or as you say, pack), was seeking out hiding places or constantly withdrawing, this would indicate a major problem with her socialization. But the occasional need for time apart can be a healthy thing for your dog. I personally own five large dogs, and if all five of them were constantly underfoot, we would all be going bananas!

Dogs, like people, can be introverts or extroverts. It sounds as though your dog is on the introvert side, and needs some time and space alone to recharge and rest. So I would ignore this issue unless it increases significantly. Give her positive feedback when she does stay with the pack, and let her have her space when she needs it. I'm sure she will thank you in her own way for "the pause that refreshes". I hope this helps!

Gus Marnel of Milford is the owner of K-9 Communications and a member of the Professional Dog Trainers Association.

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