

The Story of Guido

by Bruce Butcher

There once was a young dog named Guido... actually he was an adult Italian Greyhound named Guido. His person called me to help her with a housetraining situation. At the time, I was just beginning to utilize this communicator ability in my business as a dog behavioral consultant. Prior to arriving at the client's home, I would contact the animal telepathically to get a sense of what was happening from its perspective. Guido showed me a new capability to view as if looking through his eyes. During our conversation, he showed me portions of the inside of his house, the people living with him, their physical builds and approximate age. All of these things were confirmed during my visit a short time later. The images that came to me appeared in my mind's eye as I connected with this little dog. I was a little confused at first until I realized that all the scenes I was seeing were from a point of view about a foot off the floor -- just his height! But there is more. Guido also had a unique way of seeing his world.

The chief complaint his person had with Guido concerned his peeing in the house. Guido was living in a new house and was 1 ½ years old. It was time to resolve this situation. The conversation that follows shows that we do not always see behaviors for what they truly are.

Guido, your person has asked me to come and visit you. (I mentally send him a picture of myself.) Would you be interested in speaking with me? **O.K.** *Guido's voice is upbeat and positive.*

Your person wants you to pee outside. **Well, why?** *Guido had just revealed his motivation for urinating in the home; he hadn't gotten the idea that the location was important. Despite her best efforts, his person hadn't yet been able to make that connection with him.*

Guido, what can you tell me about urinating in the basement? **I can be alone while I am doing it.**

And what about going on the carpet at the top of the stairs? **It's soft on my feet.**

Anything else about this you want me to know? **I get very nervous in this new house -- I can help settle things by protecting the house.** *Guido shows me marking furniture and stereo speakers throughout the house with his urine. He felt that urinating on these items was "protecting" his people's belongings. He felt that his contribution helped everyone to recognize: The property and territory is occupied.*

Can I ask you some other questions about your life? **O.K.**

Guido, show me what you like. *I see a picture in my mind's eye of this little guy on a walk, absolutely strutting his stuff and wearing a wide black leather collar with shining*

studs. He says he is happy but likes to be paraded around and shown off. The next image is of him sitting on a couch with his person petting him as the two watch TV.

What is happening that you would like to be different? **When she comes home, she lets me out but she is in such a rush. I look forward to her coming home, but I would like her to focus on me for a while. Also, she carries me around, especially when it is time to go to bed (in the crate). I'm a man, put me down; I'll walk on my own! I also get overwhelmed at dog school by all the activity and noises.**

Guido, your first person (the breeder) put you in a pet store rather than in the show ring. Do you know why? **Because I am so active and my eyes bug out too much.**

Can you tell me why you and your current person are together? *After much talking and activity Guido became calm enough to answer but I knew we had reached the limit of his attention span.* **I am here to teach her to slow her life down and to help her get habits and structure into her life... I love my mom.**

Thank you for talking with me Guido. I'll see you later today, before the sun goes away. **O.K.**

This little guy was quite a character. His name fit him perfectly. He thought of himself as very handsome and wanted to show himself to people so they could admire his good looks. His housetraining problem resulted from him not realizing that location was the most important thing to his person. In addition, some of his urinating (marking behavior) was motivated by wanting to help define ownership and thereby bring order to the new territory. I find it very rare that an animal is motivated to seek revenge against people -- animals seem to be above vengeance. Nevertheless, revenge remains one of the most commonly held motivations we humans assign to explain behavioral problems in animals. In a very innocent way, Guido has confirmed that the only true and valid explanation has to come from the animal itself.