



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

## Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #10 The Relationship Between Dogs and Wolves...Do Wolf Hybrids Make Good Pets?

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Hi, I'm your host and welcome to the Canine Master radio show. This week we're going to explore dogs and their relationship to wolves. What do they have in common and how they're different? We're also going to explore the controversy of owning wolf hybrids. Do they actually make good pets? We have lots to cover today.

You know, canines are a group of carnivores that include animals like wolves, coyotes, jackals, foxes, wild African dogs, dingoes and of course, our beloved pets, our dogs. And what do dogs have in common with the rest of these carnivores? They have long legs, most of them, except for Dachshunds right? They have deep chest cavities, they have long snouts. These canines size dogs usually have prick ears, and they're really well adapted for running and pursuing prey over long distances, over plains.

They speed up, slow down and you'll see that these animals very often will travel in packs. They have teeth that can slice flesh and rip it apart. They sometimes have bushy tails, but they usually all have tails, unless something's happened to their tails. But generally they all have tails. They also have non retractable claws. You know, they're not cats, they're not in the cat family. And usually on the front paws they'll have these little dew claws, which is that extra toe that we'll see sometimes on dogs. Usually those dew claws in domestic breeds people will remove them. A lot of breeders will remove those dew claws. But all canines have those dew claws in the front of their legs.

Dogs and canines are born blind. Often, the eyes will open about three weeks after birth. They also form social groups or packs, or families, which is now kind of politically correct with a social hierarchy. Canines are usually very territorial. And adults will vocalize by howling to communicate over long distances. Only the young will do yip, yip, yip and bark. Of course, we will see domestic dogs do a lot of barking.

One thing that all canines do, as well as all predatory animals, they follow what we call a predatory sequence. So, when they're hunting they'll eye or give a hard eye, and then, they'll gradually go and start stalking. Once they're stalking and the animal starts to run, they'll chase after it. They'll grab it. They'll bite it, and in most wild canines, they'll dissect it and then, they will consume it.

Dogs are genetically 99 or 98.9 gray wolf. They are descendants from gray wolves. So, yeah, that little chihuahua you have at home is 98.9% gray wolf. But due to human influence they're very different. The human influence is the breeding programs that many people are doing. Dogs have the ability to read human emotions, and that's a little bit different than an adult wolf. Adult wolves don't necessarily look at you in the eye. Adult wolves won't look at your face and see how you're feeling. Dogs amazingly enough do read our emotions.

A lot of dogs have been bred by humans in a very controlled way to display certain characteristics. And to perform different functions, right? So, whether we have a hound or we have a Dachshund that goes to ground and looks for rats, or we have terriers that do that. All dogs, purebreds, generally are bred for specific roles, whether it's hunting, guarding, doing retrieving work, water work, helping us on a boat. These are the kinds of things that people breed dogs to do.

Dogs also are very unique in the fact that they love human companionship. And wolves, no, that's not generally true. I have developed a two-pronged approach to dog training, which is actually heavily derived from understanding how dogs are descendants from gray wolves. They need a pack, structure, and they also have canine instinct. We need to understand dogs' drives and that tells us how to best train them.

But let's be honest here, dogs are not wolves, and not all dogs' instincts you can see in wolves. And I need to make you understand that. Dogs are not wolves, they are different. Dogs have been bred to be more playful and carefree, while wolves, after about five to six months, are much more serious. Dogs initially came to be with us as scavengers. And when I travel around India, I'll see these wild dogs, these street dogs, but they are scavengers. They're hanging around people, waiting for that meal, hanging outside the shops.

And this the way that dogs have been for thousands of years. They really hung out with people. Maybe not as pets, but they hung around them. So, dogs initially came as scavengers, while wolves will actually go down and bring down a deer. They'll actually go through that predatory sequence, and they'll actually grab, dissect and then consume the deer. That's a big difference because we don't see a lot of dogs doing that anymore.

What are the differences between dogs and their wild ancestors? One of the physical differences, let me tell you. Well, dogs, some of them have wrinkly skin. Look at that Sharpei face, cutest darn thing ever, especially when they're puppies. Some of them have those smooshed-in faces, like pugs, and of course we've created breathing problems in bulldogs and things like that. Some of them have floppy ears like the English Springer Spaniels, and the Dachshunds. Some of the eyes are closer together. Some of the eyes are further apart. We see differences in how dogs' faces look, and their physical appearance.

Basically, we have bred domesticated dogs to be cute. Dogs are supposed to be looking... We like them to look like puppies. And to maintain that throughout their lives. We take that attribute of a juvenile canine and breed it so it continues. Some are bred, of dogs, are bred to herd and use a hard eye to control a flock. Some hunting dogs are bred to indicate prey.

So, we see Pointers, and some have flushed the prey out, and then that hunter will bring up his gun and shoot the animal responding to the dog. And some dogs are bred to stop within the predatory sequence. And I will tell you, not some dogs are bred to stop within the predatory, most dogs are bred to stop somewhere along that eye, stalk, chase, bite, dissect, consume sequence.

So, let's just look at that for a second. A Pointer, he's caught in that sort of stalk and indicating. A Retriever, like a Lab, is going to go and run after the duck. He's going to grab him but he's not going to dissect and consume him because for a hunter that would be a bad bred working dog Lab. And then, there's the Rat Terriers, or the Jack Russells. They're meant to grab and shake and kill. But one of the things is is that we very rarely see dogs consuming what they grab.

The reason for this is, studies have shown that dogs that consume a prey, it's actually taught by their mother. And this is where it's taught. So, this is a big difference between a dog and a wild canine. Wild canines will consume their prey, where dogs many times just don't know what to do with it. They might bring it to you and say, "Hey, look what I got." Occasionally we will see a dog actually eat an animal but it is quite rare in my experience.

Wolves display more of a flight tendency. They tend to be a little bit, hey, staying away from you. While dogs have been bred to stay right around with us and cuddle with us. There is differences. There are also behavioral differences between dogs and their wild ancestors. Dogs have the ability to, as I said earlier, to really read our emotions. They observe our face. You see this with your own dog. You ever been sad and your dog just instinctively comes up to you and lies down, and knows? I see this all the time.

Dogs have the ability to read our body language. They're really sensitive to body language. I can't tell you that wild canines can't read your body language. But they're more going to read body pressure, where you're bending forward or standing up. But really to read some of our other body language, wolves are just not that tuned into us as much as a dog is. Dogs also really understand our tone of voice much more than a wolf would.

There was a study in Hungary at a university in Budapest, and they took a litter of wolves, and a litter of puppies, and raised them exactly the same as they would the puppies. They raised them together with lots of human interaction. They took these wolf puppies and literally spent a lot of time with them. They bottle fed them. They played with them every day and up until about eight weeks these wolves really responded just like dogs. It was amazing. And at eight weeks the puppies learned to give eye contact to the humans and to get food. And the interesting thing is the puppies would do that, give eye contact, but at eight weeks the wolves started to stop doing that.

The wolf puppies started to become more independent and really didn't have a lot of

interest in the humans anymore. The wolf pups became much more possessive around food and toys. Wolf pups really didn't want to train. They were much more independent, as I said, and really didn't care about having that relationship with humans. And the older they got, the more they acted like just plain old wolves and they weren't dogs.

Dogs are much more socialized than wolves. They are a product of thousands of years of domestication through selective breeding, as I told you before. So, remember, dogs and wolves are very different. And yes, they are similar in certain ways, but in many ways they're very different.

I will tell you, most canines prefer to be in a pack. So, when we look at wolves, wolves will actually prefer to be in a pack, but they actually, depending on food scarcity, they may actually venture off and hunt alone for a period of time. We see this in the winter time. A wolf will actually leave its pack just to find food because it can't stay with a pack to survive. But many times, again, a pack of wolves will be able to coordinate a hunt and a kill, and they become geniuses at it.

But again, you need to see that wolves and dogs are different. Let me just tell you, dogs I think really like to be with us. And dogs like to be in a pack. Packs are made up of family members. Usually it's a mom and a dad, and some brothers and sisters. That's what generally makes up a wolf pack, and we see the same thing with dogs on the streets in India. Like I said, I spend a lot of time studying the street dogs of India and I do that there and I just was in Thailand studying dogs as well in Thailand. And it's interesting the packs that I saw there and the information that I got were that these packs of dogs were actually just extended families.

And in the families we see a similar makeup that we would see with wolves. We see an alpha male, he's really confident and benevolent. He basically determines all interaction, directs the hunt, and then, there's the alpha female and she tends to be right by his side doing the same thing. The alpha female will many times run the roost until the alpha male steps in and says, "Enough is enough." It's pretty funny.

And then, there's the alpha want-to-be's or the beta dogs. I call them alpha want-to-be's. And they're not cut out to be leaders. We see this. They're really not cut out to do that kind of job. They don't have the required confidence to be a leader. They cause the most fights. So, a lot of the fighting that you'll see within a pack, and we see this with dogs, are beta dogs. They're not the confident, benevolent leaders.

Often a fearful dog is a beta dog. It's very rare that we'll see a fearful alpha dog. As a matter of fact, I don't know if that exist. Alpha dogs need to be trained very differently than beta dogs, and we'll talk about that in a later show. But most of you out there have beta dogs. It's really rare. I'd say within in a year of me training 500 dogs in my private practice, that's not in my group classes, but in my private classes I will see maybe five, what I will call, very alpha dogs. Most of them are just very dominant beta dogs.

So, beta dogs need the most structure. At the bottom of that pack is those omega dogs. The omega dogs, they're usually the ones that are the most picked on and beaten up by

everybody else. And of course, in every pack we need an omega dog and we see that. Why do dogs prefer to be in packs?

Well, there's a reason why. The same reason why wolves prefer to be in packs. They get security. They need the security of a hierarchy and a social structure that makes sense to them. They also, of course, need to reproduce and with wolves it's only the alpha male and the alpha female that reproduce. But with dogs, heck, all of them can reproduce. Wolves will hunt together and dogs will scavenge together for food.

You know, many people ask me my thoughts about owning a wolf or a wolf hybrid dog. Let me tell you, back in the 70s my older brother came back from college and when he drove into our driveway, draped over his shoulders was a dog, or he said it was a wolf, and I later learned it was basically a wolf hybrid. But, it was 13/16ths, first generation wolf hybrid. And when he brought it home it was so cute, but the issues that I went through with that wolf dog, his name was Bear. It was a lot of work raising that wolf hybrid.

And let me tell you something, it was not cracked out to be what everybody thought it would be. Oh, it's so cool to own a wolf hybrid. You know, there's all these things that go along with it. That's so cool. And he would wander around with my dog, Toby, my Doberman Toby, and they would go down to the Wilson Riding Club, which was a club that was close to the house, and hang out by the snack bar. And everybody would ask us, "Is that a wolf?" We of course, my brother, would go, "No, it's not a wolf." Because actually during that time it was very controversial to own a wolf in the state of Connecticut, and I'm pretty sure we weren't allowed to have him.

Eventually, what my brother ended up doing was maybe a year and a half later, he gave the wolf hybrid to a wolf-breeding farm, somebody who was breeding wolves. And he lived there for the rest of his life. We saw pictures of him later on, but it was not a great pet for us. I'll never forget one day he escaped and I tried to get him. I tried to run after him, and no matter where I went he stayed about 15 feet away from me. His flight instinct was remarkable. He always stayed a little bit away from me.

He also had the propensity to dig and make holes in the ground. We had a dry well in our basement, outside the window, and he dug down there, ripped out the dry well. And we had flooding in our basement, which was totally finished for the first time. My father was not a happy camper to say the least. He ripped up every screen door. When he wanted to go outside he was very destructive. We were really not set up to have a wolf hybrid.

And what I will tell you is, is that the wolf hybrid, Bear, he was loving but he was not like my Doberman, or my dog Toby. There was a big difference. Years later at Dog Gone Smart, my canine center, we had somebody drop off a wolf hybrid and wanted us to quarantine the dog before they sent it away to the UK.

Interesting things were happening with this dog. Again, high flight dog. He stayed away from us, and we had a hard time at Dog Gone Smart, at the canine center, really containing this dog. He was a bit destructive. He was not easy to train. And, he wasn't very affectionate with us.

Now, are all wolf hybrids like this? I don't think so. I think that some wolf hybrids can be fine, but it is very controversial. In Europe right now, when I travel to Europe I see a lot of wolf hybrids in Italy when I'm traveling, and I've seen them in Germany and also in Holland. But mostly I see them in Italy. People seem to love them. They think it's really cool to have one. But there are a lot of factors that must be considered.

And at the top of your list is doing your homework and researching responsible breeders before you would ever consider having one. I would say to you that I would be very cautious about getting yourself a wolf hybrid. Let's talk about why they're different.

The makeup of a wolf and a dog, while they're very, very similar, there is a one percentage difference. And it's a genome of that cell that makes up that difference. But those few strands of DNA make a big difference in the dog. And again, I know you guys are all thinking, "Well, dogs are 98.9% wolf." Yeah, but there is a big difference. There really is.

And before you go out and get yourself a wolf hybrid, thinking that you're doing a cool thing, you really need to make sure that you're set up for it. And the other thing I will tell you is, is that the wolf hybrid Bear that we had was killing everything. He would chase cats and I don't want to tell you what happened to our neighbor's cat. I won't go back to it. Maybe they'll come back to me even 30 years later.

But I will tell you most experts, most canine experts, will agree with me on this that wolf dogs are not the most ideal pet for the inexperienced. There's really no breed standards for wolf dogs. And for lack of a better term, they really are mutts. Usually they're a combination of a Siberian Husky with a wolf, or an Alaskan Malamute with a wolf, or a German Sheppard with a wolf. Then, you get down to F1's, F2's, F3's, F4's. And that is the generation from the first breeding.

So, when you have a wolf that breeds with a German Sheppard those pups would be, I guess, what we would call F1 pups. They're going to have a much higher instinctual response than that puppy being bred with another wolf hybrid, would be an F2. And as we go down, the instinctual part of the wolf would be diminished.

One more thing I just want to let you know. Many people out there saying they have wolf hybrids, they're not. It's interesting. They've done studies, and they found that a lot of these people that are claiming that they have wolf hybrids, they may look like wolves but they're not wolves at all and they don't have any wolf in them. So, if you were going to go out and buy yourself a wolf hybrid and you think you're getting a wolf hybrid, many times it's a scam and you're not getting one at all.

All right, let's talk about the legality of owning a wolf or a wolf hybrid. In many states it's illegal. You need to do the following. If you're thinking of getting a wolf hybrid, and again you better do your homework, you better find out if it's even legal in your state. And, even if it's legal in your state, in some counties within the state it's illegal. And in some cities it's illegal as well. So, you'd better be really, really careful. I'd contact your local animal control officer, or even your state wildlife agency to learn the laws that apply to your situation. It may be the way that the animal is contained, but I will tell you, many states make it illegal.

When it comes to the legal status, the regulations are literally all over the map. And they vary, again, from state to state. And again, whether it's legal or not, wolf dogs pose a significant challenge to the owners, behavioral challenges. So, what happens is many of these people will grab a wolf dog and they'll have one. And then, what they'll do is they'll keep it for eight months, and then, they'll figure out, "Wow, I can't keep this dog. This dog is jumping out, running away." And then, guess what happens? They'll end up chained in the backyard and that's actually a terrible way to keep any wolf because even though it may contain them, it can many time make them very, very aggressive.

Other wolf hybrids are abandoned and some of them are euthanized and a lot of them end up in shelters and wolf sanctuaries. So, there's about 300,000 wolf dogs in the US but the numbers are impossible really to nail down because everybody says they have a wolf hybrid, and like I said before, many of them don't have any wolf in them at all.

Some people will also then say, knowing that they have an illegal pet, some people will deny their pet's heritage. They'll say, "No, my dog doesn't have any wolf in him. He's not a wolf dog." And I had a client several years ago that did have a wolf dog hybrid and she, of course, was in the town of Darien, Connecticut and didn't tell anybody that it had any wolf in it. She denied it. Then, again, the other people that will say, "Oh, my dog's 100% wolf" when it doesn't have any in it at all.

So, more over, the majority of wolf dogs being kept in pets in this country are being surrendered to local shelters and sanctuaries. So, guess what folks? You get the wolf dog pup, you're not ready for it, it looks kind of cool, you're all excited. Then, what do you end up doing? You don't know what you got yourself into and you end up giving that wolf dog away. And that is a disaster as well, because now we ripped up our own family. We've ripped up the emotion of the wolf dog, and now it's sitting in a shelter with the possibility of being euthanized.

Speaking of experts, I'd like to welcome Nancy Brown to the show. Nancy is the president of the Full Moon Farm, located in North Carolina. And she's dedicated to rescuing and placing domestically bred wolves, wolf hybrids, while educating the public. Now, this is going to be a really interesting conversation because Nancy and I don't necessarily see eye to eye on this stuff. I'm going to be really interested to see what Nancy and I are going to talk about here. But it is going to be really interesting to get another perspective from my own.

All right, let's call Nancy.

**Nancy:** Hello, Full Moon Farm.

**Chris:** Nancy?

**Nancy:** Yes.

**Chris:** Is this Nancy Brown from Full Moon Farm?

**Nancy:** Yes, it is.

**Chris:** Hi, welcome to our show.

**Nancy:** I'm glad to be here.

**Chris:** Oh, I'm so happy. You know, we really wanted to get a perspective about your feeling on wolf and wolf dog hybrids. Can you tell me a little bit of some of the ways in which the wolf dog is misunderstood in this country and around the world?

**Nancy:** I'd be happy to, and thank you so much for asking. Wolf dogs, as they're now known, we've got the hybrid label. And that's two fold. Wolves and dogs were deemed the same species in 1993. So, therefore hybridization doesn't occur. USDA considers them domestic animals and calls them hybrids because it's like fighting a dinosaur trying to get the USDA to change anything. But they're affectionately known as wolf dogs by the owners that have them and the rescues that rescue them and people who love them, let me rephrase that. That's primarily people who love them.

If people were still crossing a wolf to a dog, then the hybrid label might be a little bit more appropriate. But the out crossing of a wolf to a dog hasn't been done in generations, especially using wild caught stock.

**Chris:** Got it, so that in genetics we call like an F1 or an F2, does that not pertain anymore to wolf dogs?

**Nancy:** Well, your F1's, your F2's... Your F1's primarily are a captive bred wolf, who's lived its life in captivity. Who is tractable, trainable and basically tame, can walk on a leash, has respect and boundaries, but taxonomically is still considered a wolf. Totally different than if you are taking an animal out of the wild and expecting them to behave differently.

So, if you've got a wolf that's been bred in captivity, and some lines go back to a fur farm in the 1940s. They are pretty much tractable, trainable, and tame. Different than an animal caught in the wild. So, people who have pure wolves, and there are a few that have pure wolves in captivity that use them in breeding programs, are breeding them to a high content wolf dog or to a wolf dog and not a dog.

**Chris:** Okay. So, my question is, genetically, what's the difference between a wolf in the wild and a wolf that's been in a captive breeding program for 40 years of generations? You're saying that there's a difference in those pups that would be produced?

**Nancy:** Not genetically, but there would be a difference in personality. Are you familiar with the Belyaev fox experiment?

**Chris:** Sure.

**Nancy:** Where they domesticated the foxes in Russia?

**Chris:** Yep, I'm very familiar with that.



**Nancy:** Okay. Well, the Davidson line of wolf dogs are about as close as you're going to get to the Belyaev fox experiment that's non scientifically done. Your Davidson line is one of the longest lines in captivity and they are, personality wise, totally different than if you're going to go pluck an animal out of the wild. Conditioned response, it's evolutionary behavior.

**Chris:** Do we see that the ears start to become floppy and-

**Nancy:** No.

**Chris:** We don't. So, in the fox experiment, actually they started to physically start to change. But not in the wolf experiment that you're discussing?

**Nancy:** It was really a true experiment. It was not done scientifically.

**Chris:** I got it.

**Nancy:** It was done conditioned, response. The breeding of those animals was not done to perpetuate behavior. It happened evolutionary. Human induced, you know? Wolves in the wild, they want nothing to do with humans. Wolves in captivity depend on humans. They're totally different than a wild animal.

And just like any animal can go feral, look at the feral cat colonies we have and if you take a hunting dog and out and turn him lose because he doesn't hunt anymore, he's going to go feral. Any animal can go feral. Wild animals, to me and this is non scientific because I'm not a scientific person, I'm an emotional person who happens to have 20 plus years working with these animals.

But the wolf dogs of today don't deserve the myth of the wolf dogs of yesterday. Does that make sense? 85% of the wolf dogs out there, well in my facility and having handled more than 500 since 1994, probably closer to 600. 85% of them are a product of a wolf dog to wolf dog breeding or a wolf dog to dog breeding, three, four, five generations removed from the pure wolf. They are capable of living in a house with cats and kids. And doing just fine if they are raised by a responsible owner.

**Chris:** But do you think that anybody can get a wolf dog? Do you think that anybody-

**Nancy:** I don't think anybody should have a Border Collie or a Jack Russel Terrier.

**Chris:** No, no. Yes, well there you go. But I'm saying if I am a person looking at a wolf dog, and a lot of people on this program will go, maybe, go and start to research this. Do you think that... What kind of person should own a wolf dog? Tell me what do you think is the background that you look for when you go to place a wolf dog from your sanctuary into a home. What makes a person a responsible owner?

**Nancy:** Well, that's a very, very good question. And I don't do adoptions anymore and that's because of North Carolina regulations. If I'm going to do adoptions they want me to keep my animals on concrete or eight inches of gravel. And that's just not fair to them. So, I

decline doing adoptions. I will do a facility to facility transfer if I have an animal that comes in that's pet quality.

What I would look for when an animal owner, a wolf dog owner perspective is good canine savvy. Understanding that you have a highly intelligent animal that you have to be smarter than they are. The majority of the animals that come into rescue were owned by someone who shouldn't have owned a Chia Pet.

**Chris:** Right, right. And wolves have much bigger brains than dogs do. Does that make a wolf smarter than a dog in your experience?

**Nancy:** You have to get into smart, defining smart or defining pets. And there's such a broad spectrum. I think the biggest thing with wolf dogs, my dear, is one size does not fit all. If you can start out with a low content Husky mutt, both parents being wolf dogs, little Husky, little Malamute, little German Sheppard, little wolf in there. Basically start out there. That would be like an eight cylinder car. A dog is a four cylinder car.

Your mid contents and your high contents can often be like 12 cylinder cars. It's about responsible ownership and being able to understand the animal. I would suggest for anyone wanting to explore being owned by a wolf dog, instead of owning a wolf dog, because they do kind of... They require a bit more attention than your average Labrador but then again, so does a Border Collie, so does a high intensity animal with a job. Volunteer at a sanctuary or a rescue. Learn your dog breeds.

The dog breed that's in there is as important as any type of wolf content. Husky's are usually pretty amiable and get along with others. Malamutes have a tendency to be same sex aggressive or other animal aggressive. Learn your dog breeds. That helps tremendously.

If there's no facility near you to volunteer at, contact a facility and they can point you to responsible owners. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of responsible owners across this country and Canada that would love the opportunity to train someone.

**Chris:** Sure. Let me just tell you, I was talking about earlier in the show. During the 1970s my older brother brought home a wolf, at that point was 13/16ths wolf, and I don't know how he got that. But he brought this dog home that looked mostly like a wolf. And I raised that dog for a year, and I will tell you the adventures of... And I was probably in my teens. I was like 16 or 17, having come from a dog family and raised above the kennel house with 60 Dachshunds and Blood Hounds downstairs. I had a lot of dog experience.

And I will tell you this dog gave me a run for my money. It was not the easiest animal that I'd ever worked with. The interesting thing is years later, I've had some experience training a few wolf dogs, and they have not been as easy to train as some of your other breeds. I can't tell, as an aggression specialist, I deal with dogs with major behavioral problems. I welcome the opportunities to work with wolf dogs, but they are not as easy to train. They have much higher flight in much of my experience.

And people talk about their being destructive. Well, any high drive working dog, and I raised Dobermans, and I work them, and have worked them in Schutzhund. So, I'm always looking

for a high drive dog. I understand that many people shouldn't own those dogs. They don't make great pets, and they're great working dogs.

**Nancy:** Correct.

**Chris:** So, what I'm looking at here is that I look at a wolf dog, what I generally say to people is unless you have the time and the experience of working with a high drive dog, and a bigger dog necessarily. I mean, I'm sure you can get wolf dogs that are smaller, but in general what I've seen, they're not small dogs. I would say make sure you have a lot of experience working with more of the working dogs than just having a family companion pet like a Cavalier King Charles or something.

**Nancy:** That is a very good point, yes. And again, that goes hand in hand with knowing your dog breeds. Now, it's not one size fits all with wolf dogs. That's the biggest thing to remember. Regarding content, regarding behavior, regarding training. If you have an animal that was pulled and bottle fed from 12 days old, that dog is going to have a bond with you. That animal is going to have a bond with you that is unbreakable.

**Chris:** Yep.

**Nancy:** But if you're getting an animal, if your brother brought home an animal that was already nine months old that had been bopped around to three different people, and had no concept and no boundaries, no concept of training, no respect and no boundaries; that animal is going to be very difficult. I also like to say, "Oh, wolf dogs make great watch dogs." Wrong. They'll make a great watch dog if you want a dog to watch from under the kitchen table while the burglar steals everything.

**Chris:** Yes.

**Nancy:** They are all about self-preservation. They are one event learners, which means if you're walking towards an enclosure to meet an animal and you trip and fall into that fence, they're going to hate you forever. There will be absolutely nothing you can do to that animal to ever get him to trust you.

**Chris:** They have memories of steel.

**Nancy:** They have memories of steel.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Nancy:** And when dogs... We talk about dogs being dumbed down. Is that a term that you've ever talked with out to your people?

**Chris:** No, I haven't actually.

**Nancy:** Okay, the scientific term, dogs have been bred deliberately and dumbed down to obey. They are like children. They want to obey, they want to please.

**Chris:** Exactly.

**Nancy:** Wolf dogs can range from that mentality, they want to please, lower content animals, to a teenager type personality, you can't make me, I'm going to test you. That would be your mid content animals. And your high content animals and your pure wolves are like 40 year old men. You can't make them do anything.

**Chris:** Right. That's what I have seen. I guess, I have seen, in my experience, I have dealt with mostly high content animals and those have not been the easiest dogs to work with. I had one boy whose mother had bought him, and he had done the research and he was like 12 years old, 13 years old. She bought this wolf dog and it was really the wrong match. It was a disaster. The boy didn't spend enough time with it. The wolf dog had no structure at all, and it wouldn't even follow any structure. And it became a really big behavioral problem for them.

**Nancy:** Okay, and that leads me into another question. Yes, that can happen. It depends on the nurture versus nature of the animal. You can nurture an animal when it is in its infancy and bring out the best traits of that animal. Now, one other thing that really needs to be discussed, sir, is misrepresentation.

**Chris:** I hear that all the time.

**Nancy:** It is rampant.

**Chris:** Right, everybody says they have a wolf dog and many of them don't. We were talking about that on the show before.

**Nancy:** Yeah, just because somebody says it's so doesn't make it true.

**Chris:** Sure.

**Nancy:** And I use an example when people come out for an event or if I'm doing education. I'm real close to the preservation here in western North Carolina. And some of the stores had a wonderful shirt on display. It's a black shirt with a red face on the front of a Brave, of a Native American Brave, Indian Brave, whichever nomenclature you prefer to use. And it say, "I'm part white, but can't prove it."

The same thing with wolf dogs. Just because somebody says it's so does not make it true.

**Chris:** I totally know that happens all the time. I can't tell you how many times I hear somebody saying they have a wolf dog and I'm looking at the dog going, "There's no wolf in that dog." I mean, sure they're 98.9 wolves, gray wolves. But there's not been a close breeding program in many, many, many, many generations.

**Nancy:** Well, there are some good breeders out there. I happen to have friends that are very good breeders, responsible breeders and I'm proud of that. I am one of the few rescues that is pro responsible ownership, pro responsible breeding. Let's be smarter than the animal.

I'm also, in this sense, to not make a lot of people happy because they fear government involvement or whatever, however you want to put it. But I am pro permit and pro education.

**Chris:** I love that.

**Nancy:** We have to have a license to drive our car. I want people to be able to prove that they're smart enough to own a dog. That they're not going to chain their dog out in the backyard, whether it's a wolf dog, a Labradoodle, a Hound dog, and treat animals with a little bit more respect. But I'm not animal rights, where they deserve to be the status of a child.

**Chris:** No. Oh, no I'm with you on that.

**Nancy:** I have eight-foot fences, not because my dogs are dangerous. I have eight foot fences because people are dangerous. And they mean my animals harm. And people fear what they don't know. So, the opportunity to do education such as this, and explain to people that the myth you've heard, Little Red Riding Hood lied. I'll tell the story of the three little wolves and the big bad pig. A wolf in the wild is going to be very, very fearful. They're not going to be aggressive. They're going to run in the opposite direction.

Wolves and wolf dogs in captivity, it all depends on how they are raised. And if they're owned by a troglodyte who has them on a chain in the backyard, then you're going to end up with an animal that's a hot mess.

**Chris:** Oh sure.

**Nancy:** If they're owned by... If it's a mid content owned by a responsible owner and they take them out for walks, they teach them interactions with other animals and they're in tune to that animal. People and wolf dogs can have a bond where they can read each other. My animals feed off of my energy.

We're doing a parade this weekend, and if I get a little bit antsy they all start pacing and they know, okay, mama's upset. So, I have to really keep it in check and make sure that my handlers are in tune with the animal that they are handling. I'm not taking out any animal that's going to be dangerous. But I also am taking out an animal that's going to be entirely, completely aware of its surroundings. And that's one thing that people are not aware of their surroundings, where animals are.

**Chris:** Sure, well I think that's with dogs as well. I think we always need to be in tune with our own dogs and with the surroundings. I think with any, if you're a good leader to your dog, you're going to find that your dog's going to take your lead. And if you're calm and sort of you've got it together, your dogs are going to be that way. I guess the same thing with a wolf. A wolf is going to follow your lead and read off of you.

And if you're the kind of person that is highly agitated and not a stable person, you're probably not going to be a great leader for wolf dog or a wolf itself.

**Nancy:** And I know you like the term leader. It's just gotten so many bad raps.

**Chris:** Oh, it certainly has. Absolutely.

**Nancy:** It instills this whole alpha, dominance, that we're trying desperately to get away from, and there is a respect that should happen between animal and owner. And the animal of any breed. And a respect for each other's capacity.

**Chris:** Absolutely.

**Nancy:** If any of your people or your listeners are interested, there is a Facebook group, Wolf Dogz, W-O-L-F D-O-G-Z on Facebook. It has to be approved for membership, but we've got discussions going on right now about primary containment, what's big wire, what's needed for a wolf dog. What is your training method? And you know, I use the universal mommy "ahh, ahh".

**Chris:** Yeah sure, the guttural tone.

**Nancy:** And it gets longer and louder and they respect that.

**Chris:** It's a distinctual sound. Absolutely.

**Nancy:** And the whole alpha rolling and all of that dominance-

**Chris:** It's terrible.

**Nancy:** It's terrible. Positive reinforcement goes so far.

**Chris:** Yep.

**Nancy:** And with high contents, there are ambassador animals out there have six dog hairs in them that are wonderful in any situation in any circumstance but they've been bottle fed, they've been hand raised. They have complete and utter trust in their handlers.

**Chris:** Yeah. I will tell you Nancy, the one thing I will tell you is that this idea of leadership is politically incorrect but it really shouldn't be. Dogs like to be led, just like mostly humans like to be led. I think this whole thing of this dominance, this idea of dominating your dog and making them submit to you, this can give bad, bad, bad advice going out there where people are doing some terrible things, such as the alpha roll.

But I also think that being a benevolent leader to your dog and what does that mean? What does it mean to be a leader to your dog? It's not hurting your dog, it's not threatening your dog. You know, this is where we get into many people will be all positive, all positive, everything. No corrections at all. I see trainers going that way. Then, I see trainers going the compulsion way from the old days, where we put a choke collar and a prong collar and yank and crank on our dogs into submission.

I think that the pendulum is swinging. I think it's more towards the middle now. I'm hoping it's going to be more towards the middle in where we can use a positive motivational approach, but we also need to realize that dogs do have instinct. And so do your wolf dogs as well.

**Nancy:** Exactly. And I guess I don't like to think of it as leadership because of the bastardization of the word over the last 10 years.

**Chris:** I agree.

**Nancy:** But I like it as a team. It's a team. And if you're out hiking with your animal, somebody has to be in charge or somebody has to be "the leader" throughout hiking.

**Chris:** Or, where's the hunt going? Where are we traveling today?

**Nancy:** And that, you know, it's a partnership but it's a win/win partnership. There's no bad guy, but each has to work and operate on their own strengths.

**Chris:** I got it. Well, listen Nancy, unfortunately we're running out of time for today. But I really, really applaud your dedication to these animals, and for giving them a place where they can be understood and appreciated and all the work that you're doing. It's fabulous. And for more information on Nancy and what she's doing go to [fullmoonfarm.org](http://fullmoonfarm.org). That's F-U-L-L M-O-O-N, farm.org.

Nancy, thank you so much today for being on the show.

**Nancy:** All right, thank you and we're going to do real good things with this.

**Chris:** Wonderful. You take care Nancy.

Well, that's it for today and that is it for today, and I really hope you found our show to be pretty interesting. I would love to hear your comments and also, have you join the conversation. You can always email me at [chris@caninemaster.com](mailto:chris@caninemaster.com) and be sure to visit [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com) and click on Ask the Canine Master and leave your questions for me. I'm going to do my best to get back to you. I may even have you call into the show with your questions.

Send me your videos and your photos, so I can see what's going on with your dog and I can help you solve the issues. Good-bye for now. See you next time on Canine Master Radio, where I will continue to help you master the relationship with your dog.