**Q. My young dog has started to chew things, we thought he would grow out of this, but it seems to be getting worse, what should we do? Telling him off just makes him fearful of us?**

A. I am glad you have asked; these behaviours can develop quite quickly into more inappropriate behaviour and possibly aggression. You haven’t mentioned if he is stealing objects too, some dogs escalate their behaviour when they have been told off, grabbing items and running off with them. They often guard the valued possession and sometimes the area or object they are hiding under or behind, they may not even bother with the munching at this stage! Try to assess the whole situation, remember the ABC of his behaviour. A – When does the behaviour occur, what happens immediately before hand? So where are you, where is your dog, at what time of day is it, has he just eaten, have people left or arrived? Think of each situation and try to identify a pattern. B – What is the behaviour? Is he chewing, suckling and chewing or shredding, or throwing in the air and chewing, is he swallowing any chewed bits (ingesting). If he is partial to eating the odd piece of chewed item like ‘underwear’ for example, take great care this may cause a dangerous internal blockage and can lead to a hefty veterinary fee. Just look on Google for the weird things that dogs have ingested. C – What happens immediately after? Does he settle if the item is removed, or does he charge around for something else, does he hide? You mentioned he is becoming afraid of you, is he starting to defend himself, does he growl or show any teeth? This must be avoided so ‘telling him off’ should be stopped or this will get worse. When you can establish the ABC, this will help determine the drive and then the motivation behind his behaviour, this is of course unless he is very young and teething or has toothache, remember you always need to assess the possibility for any medical conditions first. Once the drive is established you can then deal with the problem in the most effective way. For now, the best approach is to redirect the drive and reduce the motivational need by offering an alternative and appropriate chew item, such as a frozen Kong filled with scrummy fish paste, already prepared for the occasion! Always try swapping for a higher valued item, you will be viewed as a provider not a taker. This can help achieve a healthier human/dog relationship. Management and prevention is key. No, you are not giving in to him and he will not learn to chew items to get a reward - unless he is driven by a need to seek your attention, if so, this is a different behavioural problem, sorry!

**Q. My older dog has started to bark more for no reason than we can tell, does this mean he is getting more territorial?**

A. You haven’t mentioned your dog’s breed or age, so I will assume he is in his later years? Different breeds age earlier than others, for example a terrier aged 9 may still be considered middle aged but in a giant breed, this could be considered old. Like humans the aging process in dogs means ‘wear and tear’ on the body. When hearing becomes impaired it can change the confidence levels in some dogs. You often find there is an increase in vocalisation as dogs become hard of hearing, this is not necessarily associated with territorial behaviour, I understand how annoying barking can be, but try not to tell him off as his confidence may lessen even more. Do you own more than one dog? If so this could be the trigger. Who barks first? Most likely the younger dog and your older boy joins in, look up alleleomimetic behaviour for more information.

**Q. Can I stop my young bitch from jumping up on people when she is off lead, out on a walk?**

A. Yes you can but you need to teach her what she needs to do instead. So, when seeing a person in the distance she needs to look to you for a command. I would suggest teaching her to come to you for a game or something equally as fun, like finding a treat you have dropped for her – then maintain her interest in you. I assume she jumps up at people as she loves the interaction not because she wants to bite them! Retraining takes time, you will need to undue what she has already learned and then change her response. So, you will be counterconditioning her. Remember she must see the person, and then this is the trigger to look at you. If you see the person and ask her to look at you she doesn’t link this with other person just your command! Start slowly, practice when on a long lead. Reward, reward, reward for any ‘looking away from the person to you’ and then build your continued success from this point.