

Ladder of Aggression

Kendal Shepherd



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How a dog reacts to stress or a threat can be represented as a series of ascending steps on a ladder. These gestures are responses to an escalation of perceived threat only and are NOT expressions of a 'submissive' or 'dominant' state. The choice of strategy (whether to escalate to a bite or not) will depend on the circumstances (time, target, interactions, previous experience) and on the severity of any underlying physical disease. Pain frequently converts a 'flight' response to 'fight'.

