

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

### YOUR PERSONAL HOME SECURITY SYSTEM

#### Does this sound familiar?

*“Two days ago we had an distressing occurrence with our TM named Dorje. My sister called wanting to return some borrowed keys. We weren’t going to be home so I told her to leave them in the porch mailbox. We weren’t going to be gone for long so we left Dorje out in the backyard since he knows my sister. When my sister arrived she saw that Dorje was fast asleep and, not wanting to disturb him, she let herself into the yard quietly. I guess she somehow startled Dorje because he woke up and bit her! There is a slight puncture wound and bruises on her leg. We’re so upset. How could Dorje have done such a thing?! While she didn’t report the bite, my sister refuses to visit with us again. She says that our TM is vicious but he’s not! He’s just the sweetest thing and he’s a great dog. Any suggestions?”*



#### This Breeder’s Opinion

I hope that your sister is doing okay. A dog bite can be a nasty thing. I do have some advice with management techniques but firstly, I think it would be very helpful if you went back to review the document entitled The Guardian Character. In it I made the analogy between a personal home security system and a Tibetan Mastiff. Secondly, it’s going to be difficult for me to help you if you don’t understand that, as a TM owner, you are always responsible for the training strategies that you need to put in place for a guardian breed. Those strategies help to ensure your TM’s safety and the safety of those around him.

#### Thaddeus Munch Here’s a tip!

**“Owners can’t expect that Tibetan Mastiffs will always be able to understand the difference between friends and trespassers when left home alone. A guardian breed will guard. That’s the work we do.”**

#### Unsupervised dogs are not safe

You should always think twice about leaving any dog out in the yard unsupervised. Without you there he is completely out of your care and control. Even within a very secure fenced-in area a dog could easily get bored or anxious and find a way to escape. While you may not be gone for long, it wouldn’t take much for your TM to get out of the yard if he wanted to. You really do need to reconsider bringing him with you, crating him or somehow keeping him contained safely within your home where he cannot be destructive. Better to employ these options than potentially having him roam the neighbourhood, lost or hit by a car.

#### Don’t leave your TM “activated”

Because you weren’t at home, we’re back to the security alarm comparison again. You left him alone and “activated.” You left it up to your TM to be “in charge.” of guarding his yard and his territory. You should never underestimate how seriously he takes his guarding duties.

#### Don’t tread softly around a Tibetan Mastiff

Just for future reference, I want to say an extra word or two about trying to “sneak” by a guardian breed. It hardly ever works and it usually causes a lot of chaos. I’ve seen first-hand how some Tibetan Mastiffs feel they have to put on an extra “show” of territorial behaviour because someone tried to slip past them. All that quiet creeping about puts TMs on very high alert. The element of surprise can also exaggerate a startled reaction should any dog be caught off-guard or napping. It is far better to call out to the dog so he knows who is there, what is going on and your intentions. At least that way, if a Tibetan Mastiff is going to take exception, there is usually a warning growl that gives a person the chance to change direction.

In this case, however, it might not have made any difference if your dog saw your sister approaching and it hasn't been my experience that it makes any difference if a TM has met someone previously. Many owners want to believe that their dog is going to be naturally perceptive about people. They seem to place a false sense of security in the belief that just because they have welcomed people in their yards and homes in the past, that their unsupervised dogs will also graciously receive guests. Be they strangers or friends, the bottom line is that your dog was bred to protect against intruders and trespassers. And if you're not there, there isn't anyone to tell him any different.

You're not going to get an argument out of me if you insist that your dog is just the sweetest thing. I've had enough TMs to know how devoted they can be. It's very important to note that your TM's inability to understand the nuances of a situation and the resulting bite does not make your dog a bad or vicious one. Nevertheless it does need to be pointed out that your choices are setting your dog up for failure. To ensure he succeeds as a discerning guardian, you are going to have to re-think your strategy in the future when it comes to this kind of scenario. Sweet boy or no, your TM is going to depend on his own methods to keep people out of his yard if you allow him to make his own choices.

### Encouraging Behavioural Failures

An owner is setting his Tibetan Mastiff up to fail if:

- ✗ he does not think of the safety of his dog or take precautions to protect others should he leave his dog unsupervised.
- ✗ he expects his Tibetan Mastiff to be anything but a guardian breed.
- ✗ he expects that people can tiptoe around a TM
- ✗ he allows his dog to make his own guarding decisions.

### Alternative Strategies That Encourage a Win-Win Situation

To help ensure that your Tibetan Mastiff is safe and finds himself in positive situations, here are some alternative strategies when it come to leaving him alone.

- ✓ Many people depend on crate-training to help with potty-training for younger puppies but the crate can be a lifelong everyday tool that you use to ensure your adult Tibetan Mastiff's safety. If you are only going to be gone for an hour or so, give your TM a tasty snack or treat in his crate and use crate-training to your advantage.
- ✓ Designate a safe room for your Tibetan Mastiff and train him early. A mud room or basement area may be a place where a TM can rest and relax while you are gone from home. Give him safe and yummy treats/toys to play with and that hour will just fly by.
- ✓ If your Tibetan Mastiff must remain outside while you are away, set up a safe holding kennel in your yard. A holding kennel offers added protection against escape and should someone need to enter your yard, there is the added benefit of having your dog contained. Some people are able to set up such kennels in their garage or basement for added safety.
- ✓ If you are able, it is always a good idea to take your Tibetan Mastiff with you. These dogs need short socializing sessions