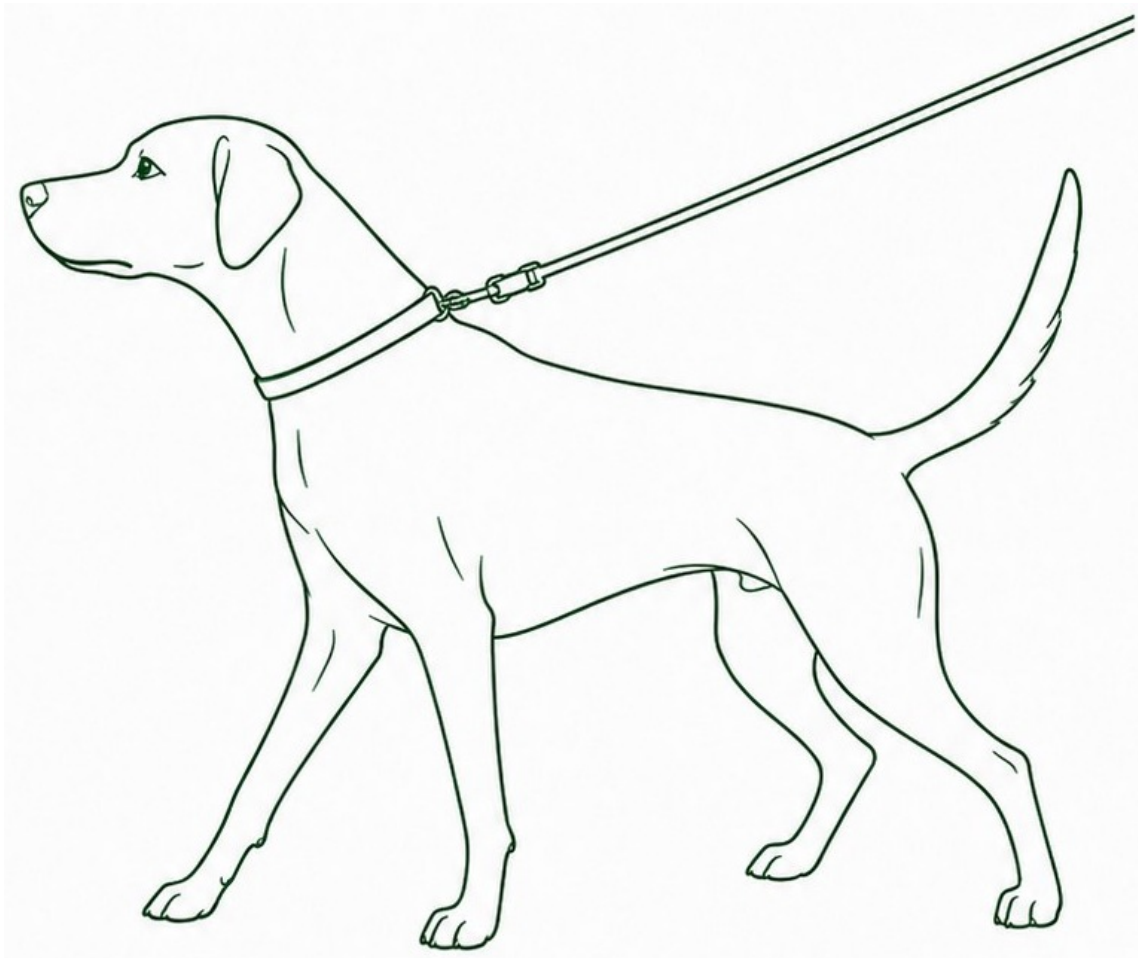


When Your Dog Loses It on the Leash

Arousal, distance, and communication:
understand them—and work with them



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Before you start

This workbook deals with a single situation: meeting another dog, on leash, on a walk. It explains why that meeting goes wrong so often, how you can see it coming in time, and what training looks like when it starts in the right place.

It is not a collection of exercises. If all you want to know is what to do tomorrow, skip ahead to Part IV. If you want to understand why that works and why other things don't, read from the beginning—it takes longer and it will carry you further.

What this workbook says is based on research. To keep the text readable, the sources are not scattered through it but collected at the end of each part under “Where the knowledge comes from.” If you don't need them, skip them. If you want to look more closely, you'll find everything there.

And one more thing up front: a dog who blows up on the leash is not a bad dog—and you are not a bad owner.

Part I • Why my dog suddenly can't be reached

The question this part is about:

Why can my dog do everything at home—and nothing outside?

1. The moment it tips over

You're walking along a path you know. Up ahead, maybe eighty meters away, someone comes around the corner. With a dog.

What happens next runs in a fixed order, and you know it by heart.

You see the other dog first. Your dog doesn't yet—or at least he acts like he doesn't. You shorten the leash. Not much, just a little, so you've got a grip on whatever comes next. You walk faster. Maybe you talk to your dog, in that tone somewhere between encouraging and pleading. *It's okay. Look here. Hey.*

And then he lifts his head.

From here it goes fast. His body stiffens. His eyes lock on. Maybe a short tug, maybe a sound. And then he's gone—not physically, he's on the leash after all, but inside. You can say whatever you want. You can hold the best treat in the world. He won't take it. He doesn't even hear you.

Twenty seconds later the other dog has passed. Your dog shakes himself off, sniffs somewhere, walks on as if nothing happened. And you walk on with a feeling there's no good word for. Something between anger, embarrassment, and helplessness.



At home he can do all of it

This is the part that confuses people most. In the kitchen he sits before you've finished saying it. In the yard he comes the first time you call. At the training field, with dogs he knows—no problem. But on the sidewalk, thirty meters from a strange dog, none of it is left.

The obvious explanation goes like this: he doesn't *want* to. He knows exactly what he's supposed to do and decides against it. He's testing you.

That explanation is wrong. Not a little off, but fundamentally wrong.

**A dog who doesn't respond isn't automatically deciding against you.
He may simply no longer be able to decide anything at all.**

The second explanation is wrong too

It goes: he's just aggressive. Or dominant. Something in him is broken, and it needs to be fixed.

That doesn't fit most of the dogs who lose it in this situation either. The great majority of these dogs are friendly, sociable, and unremarkable in everyday life. They don't suddenly turn into different animals.

They are in a state in which certain things stop working.

What feels right often works in the wrong direction

This isn't about blame—it's the starting point of this workbook. Almost everything that instinctively feels right—a shorter leash, walking faster, getting louder, luring with food, talking to your dog—either does nothing in this moment or works in the wrong direction.

Not because you're doing something wrong. But because the situation works differently than it looks.

2. What is really going on

The answer in one sentence, before it gets explained:

**It isn't disobedience. Your dog is in a state
in which he can no longer think well.
And that state changes—sometimes within a minute.**

At first that sounds reassuring. It isn't. It's a fairly uncomfortable statement, because it means the problem can't be solved with more consistency. Or with better treats, more practice sessions, or a firmer attitude.

Why cues fail

A dog who has learned a cue hasn't simply stored a piece of information he can call up at any time. He has learned to do a specific thing in a specific situation. How reliably he does it depends on the state he's in at that moment.

When a dog gets excited, his perception changes. He takes in less—more precisely: he takes in a smaller slice, and that slice is aimed at whatever is exciting him. Everything else fades.

Your voice is part of *everything else*.

Worksheet 2 • Early signs—what does my dog show?

Check off what you observe in your dog, and the order in which it appears. Every dog has his own sequence.

Sign	seen	order	at what distance
Ears go back			
Head turns away			
Body stiffens			
Gaze gets stuck			
Weight shifts			
Stops sniffing			
Lip licking			
Yawning			
Panting without exertion			
Other:			
Other:			

This is the end of the preview.

When Your Dog Loses It on the Leash

The complete workbook has 33 pages and 6 worksheets to print out. You get it as a PDF right after purchase.

€9.90, one-time payment, no subscription.

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