

Speak English Now Podcast

Episode #370

How Dogs Communicate Emotions Without Words

Hi! I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode of the Speak English Now podcast—the podcast that helps you speak English fluently, with no grammar and no textbooks.

Today, I want to talk about dogs again.

If you've been listening to the podcast for a while, you already know this isn't the first time I've brought up dogs.

Dogs are one of those topics we can come back to again and again, because each time we look at them from a different angle, we discover something new. Let's start!

There is something quietly remarkable about dogs.

We live with them. We walk beside them. We talk to them every day.

And yet, most of the time, we don't fully realize **how deeply connected they are to us.**

Not in a poetic or symbolic way.
But in a **real, biological, measurable way.**

For a long time, people believed dogs were simply animals that learned commands.

Sit. Stay. Come.

But modern science tells a very different story.

Dogs are not just good at learning rules.
They are **experts at reading humans.**

They are specialists in connection.

HOW DOGS REALLY UNDERSTAND US

Dogs do not understand language the same way humans do. They don't think in grammar rules or sentences.

Instead, they read **patterns**.

They observe:

- our posture
- our facial expressions
- our movement
- our tone of voice
- the tension or relaxation in our body

When you enter a room, your dog already knows a lot about you.

Are you calm?

Are you stressed?

Are you angry?

Are you relaxed?

Long before you speak, your body is already communicating.

That's why dogs often react **before** we say anything.

We think, "How did my dog know?"

But for the dog, the information was already there.

Studies show that dogs can understand many spoken words—sometimes more than one hundred.

But even more interesting is this:

Dogs often respond **faster to gestures than to words**.

If you point, your dog understands.

If your shoulders tighten, your dog notices.

If your breathing changes, your dog feels it.

Dogs don't listen only with their ears.

They listen with their **entire body**.



WHY COMMUNICATION WITH DOGS FEELS NATURAL

This is why communication with dogs feels so natural and effortless.

You don't need perfect language.
You don't need complex explanations.

What dogs need is:

- consistency
- clarity
- emotional calm

Dogs learn through repetition and association.
They connect experiences with emotions.

If something feels safe, predictable, and positive, they learn quickly.
If something feels chaotic or threatening, learning stops.

This is why routine matters so much to dogs.

For humans, routine can feel boring.
For dogs, routine feels **safe**.

Routine tells them:
"This world makes sense."
"I know what happens next."
"I don't need to worry."

Routine creates emotional security.

◆ EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT: NOT JUST A METAPHOR

Dogs don't just live with humans.
They form **real emotional bonds**.

Scientists have compared the bond between a dog and a human to the bond between a child and a caregiver.

This explains many things:

- why dogs miss us when we leave
- why reunions feel intense
- why presence feels calming

When a dog trusts you, it's not just obedience.
It's attachment.

And this bond is not imaginary.

When humans and dogs make eye contact, something very specific happens.

Both release **oxytocin**.

Oxytocin is the hormone of:

- trust
- safety
- bonding

It's the same hormone involved in bonding between parents and children.

So every calm look, every quiet moment together, strengthens the relationship **chemically**.

The bond is real.

The body confirms it.

◆ WHY DOGS CALM US DOWN

This also explains why dogs reduce stress so effectively.

Being near a dog can:

- lower heart rate
- reduce anxiety
- stabilize emotions

Therapy dogs are not effective because they are cute.

They are effective because they influence the **nervous system**.

Dogs bring regulation.

They slow us down.

They help our bodies feel safe.

In a world full of noise and speed, dogs naturally return us to balance.

◆ EMOTIONAL MIRRORING

Dogs are extremely sensitive to human emotions.

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They don't understand emotions as ideas.
They understand them as signals.

Stress hormones.
Changes in breathing.
Movement.
Energy.

When you are anxious, your dog becomes alert.
When you are calm, your dog relaxes.

This is called emotional mirroring.

Dogs don't just live with us.
They synchronize with us.

That's why calm leadership matters so much.

You don't need to dominate a dog.
You need to regulate yourself.

Your nervous system becomes their compass.

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Let's start!

Mark has a dog named Rocky, and Rocky usually follows him everywhere, even into rooms where he is clearly not invited.

Does Mark have a dog or a dinosaur?

A dog. Mark has a dog.

What's the dog's name? Is it Nona?

No, no. His dog's name is Rocky.

Does Rocky usually stay far away from Mark?

No, he doesn't. He usually follows Mark everywhere.

One morning, Mark wakes up late, spills coffee on his shirt, and remembers that he has a very important meeting at work.

Does Mark wake up early?

No, no. Mark wakes up late.

Does he spill coffee on his shirt or on the table?

He spills coffee on his shirt.

Does Mark have an important meeting or a free day?

He has a very important meeting.

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Because of all this, Mark feels extremely stressed, but he looks in the mirror and says, “I’m fine. Everything is fine.”

Does Mark feel relaxed or extremely stressed?

He feels extremely stressed.

Does he say, “I’m stressed,” or “I’m fine”?

He says, “I’m fine.”

Is everything actually fine?

No, everything is clearly not fine.

At that moment, Rocky stops walking, sits directly in front of Mark, and blocks the door.

Does Rocky keep walking normally?

No, he stops.

Does Rocky sit in front of Mark or behind the couch?

He doesn’t sit behind the couch. He sits in front of Mark.

Does Rocky block the door on purpose?

Yes, he blocks the door on purpose.

Rocky looks at Mark very seriously and refuses to move, as if he is saying, “We are not leaving like this.”

Does Rocky look playful and silly?

No, Rocky looks serious.

Does Rocky move when Mark tells him to?

No, he refuses to move.

Does Rocky seem to notice Mark’s stress?

Yes, he clearly notices it.

Finally, Mark sighs, sits down, and says, “Okay... I’m stressed. I’m very stressed.”

Does Mark keep pretending?

No, he stops pretending.

Does Mark finally tell the truth?

Yes, he tells the truth.

Does Rocky look surprised?

No, Rocky is not surprised at all.

Only then does Rocky stand up, calmly walk away from the door, and allow Mark to leave.

Does Rocky move before Mark admits the truth?

No, he doesn't. He moves after Mark admits the truth.

Did Rocky understand Mark before he said anything?

Yes. Rocky understood everything before Mark said a single word.

All right. That's the end of the story. Listen to this mini-story many times to improve your speaking! See you in the next lesson!

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