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My pug(s) are as cute as can be, but they have become very bad with their potty habits. Any advice?

Well, there are probably more questions than answers at this point, the answers to which would better hone the potential solutions.

- 1) Is this something new?
- 2) Are they both altered (spayed/neutered)?
- 3) Does one go in the same place as the other did?
- 4) What signs are there that one of them is preparing to go?
- 5) What is the response and or action when they go inside?
- 6) What is done to clean and deodorize the area?
- 7) What kind of training has been done with them?
- 8) What motivation do they respond to (food, verbal praise, petting, toy/play time, etc...)?
- 9) What is their schedule like? (Dogs are habitual creatures, especially in the sense of bathroom breaks coupled with meal times.)
- 10) Thinking back to when this started, what had changed either in their life or the families?
- 11) Which individual is the leader in the house? You, your husband, or one of the dogs?
- 12) Is there something medically occurring?
- 13) Do they have full run of the house? How often/when?
- 14) What amount of exercise do they get?

All these questions are centered around targeting the approach to take to correct the situation. See, dogs are pack animals that will follow their leader. If a person doesn't lead, then one of the dogs will step up to do so. Further, dogs have keen senses, and while pugs are prone to eye complications, they are born with both their eyes and ears shut with a keen sense of smell. Later their ears open, and then again later their eyes. So, if there is a scent that remains, it would seem like an acceptable place to go if their leader doesn't seem to mind. Add to this that dogs live in the moment, not so much the past, or planning for the future. That is not to say that they don't learn, but pugs can be a little stubborn about changing how things are done.

With positive reinforcement, they can learn to do the good things that are asked of them by their leader(s). They also feed off of the energy that is around them, so the saying that a dog looks like it's owner can be very true in that regards (though not everyone ends up as wrinkly as a pug). So having a calm demeanor when addressing them will elicit a calm response.

In order to modify their behavior their behavior needs to be anticipated, but not from the perspective that they are going to do something, but when they move this way or squat this way then that is a sign of things to come. When that precursor is seen, it is at that point to take the action to redirect. After they do their business when and where desired, they need reward. Especially at the onset of correcting the issue. If the reward is food (typical for a pug), then it should be coupled with an

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alternate reward at the same time. This way, eventually the food reward can go away (and any pounds gained as well) and they will still receive a reward that is reminiscent of the tasty food. Further if food is a reward, be sure to use something low sodium, possibly low fat, and something small or broken to be small. This will minimize the extra calories.

In the sense of freedom in the house (and then outside as well), typically a dog will not go in the place it considers it's home (ie in a crate) unless there is an uncontrollable urge, illness, or the like. However, if a space is big enough, a dog will still respect it's private portion of the house, but the rest is just part of the "land". Having too much freedom (a source of the dog taking the leadership role) allows the dog to claim its place by marking. If the more submissive tries to claim the space, then the more dominant is likely to follow up/step up and claim it. This leads to both urinating in the same place time and again. Back on the sense of smell, if the area is not cleaned from a dog's perspective, then it needs a "touchup" to reclaim it.

The fact that they are peeing outside is a good thing. If not where desired, then may need to help them by leashing them and taking them to the "designated" spot. When they go there, praise, praise, praise. If they go where not desired, do something to distract them (shake a can of coins, say something other than no, clap, etc.) Then take them outside to the desired location. Do this as soon as possible and try to observe/remember what was going on just before they went in the undesired location. Were they trying to get your attention?

Unfortunately, this is not likely to be something that will be fixed/modified quickly, it will require the work of both of you in a cooperative effort. It is almost like you will need to return to puppy training which could include the use of "piddle-pads", but that really should only be a training tool, not necessarily a permanent fix. Piddle-pads are typically cloth on plastic sheets that have a urine attracting scent (encourages a dog to pee on that area) used to help get a dog to target an area instead of just going wherever. If you can get them to use the pads (and only the pads when indoors), then slowly the pads can be moved outside so they associate outside being the place to go. In the short term, there are belly bands and girl panties that can be used to prevent or reduce the amount of pee that gets to the floors. These should be used as a training tool only and not substitute routinely taking them outside. Basically they are a piece of fabric that goes around the "waist" of the animal. Add a feminine pad (available at discount stores such as dollar tree) and there is some absorbency at least until they can be whisked outside. Again though, it is important to identify what they did just before going. Also, their pad should be frequently checked and replaced. Wouldn't want an infection to set in because of urine on the fur. We have some in our online store that you can look at: <http://shop.pugsugottasave.org/items/belly-bands>

There really are a lot of good books out there as well. Some of the more favorite authors are Caesar Millan, and Victoria Stillwell. Caesar primarily addresses the behavior and thought processes of dogs, a sort of view into the psyche of a dog and the way(s) people should be around and with dogs. This is a more life approach to working with dogs rather than something like pat chest and dog should come running and jump in your arms. Victoria Stillwell also gets into the mind of the dog,

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but doesn't necessarily get to the level of the dog. These and other types of books are available at most book stores, plus they have internet sites that cover most topics.

We encourage you to continue working with your dog(s) and hope that they remain a part of your family. To compare the situation with that of raising a family, would you give up your child because they threw peas at the wall? If we can help you further, please let us know. If you could help us further, please visit <http://donate.pugsugottasave.org>.

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