

# Summary of Nishi

Nishi is an 18 month old Show line German Shepherd. Nishi displays what is commonly known as genetically weak nerves. I have seen this genetic malady in numerous Show line German Shepherds. Some are stronger than others but for the most part as they age the weakness worsens. Sometimes a contributing factor to this malady is a lack of socialization at a young age. Socialization does not necessarily mean interacting with humans. A young dog as a pup needs to be exposed to environmental challenges as well as interacting with humans, other canines and farm animals. Pups need to be exposed to loud noises and startling experiences to “neutralize” them to these unfamiliar stimuli. Professional canine trainers know this process as “impressing”. We impress the canine’s mind with positive experiences. Everything that the dog is exposed to needs to be in a positive manner.

I have trained Nishi to sit on command. Nishi will sit but she sits and trembles. I have trained Nishi to down on command. Nishi also trembles in the down position. I have trained Nishi to come on command. Throughout the exercises, Nishi has a lot of difficulty maintaining her composure (not trembling). Nishi MUST be trained tenderly without compulsion. Any training with Nishi must be done motivationally with food and/or a toy which is still difficult because of Nishi’s nerves. It takes Nishi some time before she can settle in and be comfortable in the exercises. It is a fine line to tow with Nishi because of her nervous condition. Nishi will also sit and stay in the down position until told it is OK. I have exposed and integrated Nishi into a (canine) pack environment. She has not done so well with the integration. She assumes the submissive position BUT she isolates herself by staying in the bedroom or on the sofa. Nishi has a deficiency in prey drive which inhibits her in play activities. Nishi lacks the confidence to play competitively with other dogs. Nishi has learned how to be part of a pack which is a social improvement. Nishi needs to be exposed to numerous environments. I had Nishi sit outside a Shaw’s Supermarket by the electronic doors (which initially spooked Nishi). She got better with the doors opening and closing but then she had fear of people coming and going with shopping carts. The noise of the carts spooked her. Then she was spooked by the people. Nishi accepts strangers petting her only if she is approached VERY SLOWLY. If Nishi is approached somewhat quickly, she takes that motion as a threat and she goes into defense drive. Nishi is very capable of biting if she

perceives someone as a threat whether the threat be real or imagined. Nishi does have a strong defense drive which emanates out of fear. When Nishi barks at people and wants to bite, this behavior is based upon fear. When Nishi is challenged by a human facing her, she backs down which is the behavior that confirms weak nerves and fear. You observed this behavior in your home with me. I would recommend that you have visitors in your home and THEN bring Nishi into your home from outside or the garage. You need to reverse the introduction process where Nishi is brought into the situation after the visitor is in your home. She will be less apt to go into defense drive with visitors. Nishi needs her pack environment at home changed to where she is not put into the forward position of greeting people. She needs to be introduced to visitors from a submissive position. Nishi should not be allowed to be a leader in the household. Nishi should not be allowed to be with children unattended. It is likely that she will bite a child if the child moves quickly or loudly. This is not to say that Nishi should never be with children. To the contrary, Nishi needs to be exposed to children but with supervision and readiness to correct Nishi if she begins to become defensive. Nishi is not an aggressive dog. She just has an inordinate amount of defense drive which can be toned down. AJ, you must assume the pack leader role and enforce Nishi being submissive under all circumstances. Nishi has been to Shaw's, Petco, outside the Bangor Mall and other busy environments numerous times to neutralize her fears. Nishi needs a lot of this type of exposure.