

THE VOLUNTEER WHISPERER

On one of my favorite shows, *The Dog Whisperer* with dog psychology expert Cesar Milan, you're hooked by wondering how he's going to fix the neurotic skateboard-eating dog. And every episode, you discover that 90 percent of his job is training the humans. No matter the issue, he inevitably says: "You're the pack leader. It's you telling the dog what you want, not worrying about his feelings; just expecting him to do it." If you lead volunteers, that's a good truth to keep in mind.

I'm saying you have to be confident about your expectations. If they're unrealistic, be willing to adjust. If they're unclear, be ready to restate. Know what you want and articulate it. Because it's not up to a volunteer to read your mind then adjust to fit your leadership style. It's up to you to communicate and lead well with clear expectations.

A few reasonable expectations for volunteers:

- A regular devotional life that keeps you both sharp and compassionate.
- Punctuality to all youth ministry and church events.
- Follow-up and regular contact with two or three teenagers.
- Public support for your leadership, and the guts to question you in private.