

A stylized, high-contrast illustration of a woman's profile in black and white. She has long, wavy hair. The background is filled with abstract elements: orange and blue lines, a pink circle, and a black and white patterned area. The text is overlaid on the illustration in a bold, distressed font.

**RAVINGS OF A
LONG HAIRIED
DOG TRAINER**

BY MIKE DEATHE CPDT-KA

RAVINGS OF A LONG HAIRD DOG TRAINER...

VOLUME 1

MIKE DEATHE, CPDT-KA

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While dog training itself is a rewarding and happy endeavor, any issues involving aggression should not be attempted without the supervision and direction of a professional trainer.

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First Edition

I hope this collection of articles and “ravings” help all who read it to understand that, at least in the beginning, it is our job to listen to our dogs rather than them listening to us. Once we get to speaking Dog As A Second Language, the world will be a way better place... Let’s face it, in the end, the goal is listening to each other, right?



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I edited this book, it became quite clear that even I have evolved as a dog trainer in the three - five years it took to write all of these articles ... Part of me wanted to go back and change ideas, terms and include differing explanations. But in the end, I decided to leave the articles as they were written (for the most part) to allow the readers the chance to have their own ideas evolve as mine have. After all, no one likes to be told what to think — but everyone enjoys the discovery of new ideas!

A special thank you to Barb and Dan for their help and support, not only of me but my passion for dogs and the people who own them ...

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INTRODUCTION

Back in March of 2010, I started writing articles for a local pet magazine in Kansas City, Metro Pet Magazine (Check them out — awesome mag and people). It was something my then-wife encouraged me to do! I had just started my own business, Keep it Simple Stupid (KISS) Dog Training, created a blog and, to be honest with you, I enjoyed the process of writing. Almost five years later, I had the idea for what I sarcastically started calling “Ravings of a Long Haired Dog Trainer.” Well, the idea and the title stuck, and now we begin our journey into some of the topics I felt were important way back then, and still do ...

My ideas are, I hope, both simple and helpful. If they do anything, let’s hope they get you to look at life with your pooch a little differently. I will not try to tell you I am the smartest, best or most dynamic dog trainer out there. But what I will tell you is how passionately I believe in my techniques and hope you love them. You may not like or agree with all the things you read in this book, and that’s okay! I firmly believe that YOU must pick your own methods to train your dogs! I believe in positive reinforcement, science-based, resource control, fun dog training. But, as always, I promote the idea of Ignore the Bad and Reward or Redirect to the Good. I refuse to throw rocks at glass houses.

Instead, I offer the articles inside this book as a way to look at dog training differently and I hope it encourages you to pick up the phone and call a local dog trainer and continue your education in what I lovingly call speaking “Dog As a Second Language (DASL).”

I hope you enjoy the book and, even if you don't, I hope it opens your eye to some of the other options out there in dog training!

Thanks for supporting me and Keep it Simple Stupid (KISS) Dog Training by taking the time to read my book!

Mike Deathe, 2015

1

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOG TRAINER

The Five Basic Pet Dog Skills

My training is based on the idea that “Pet Dogs” must have five basic skills.

- **Basic obedience commands**
- **Good mouth skills or bite inhibition**
- **Good social skills (they like people and other animals)**
 - **Good leash skills**
- **Good understanding of recall (or, come when called)**

So there you sit, looking at a list of dog trainers on your computer screen. Your significant other has made it perfectly clear ... if you don't get the dog's “fill in the blank” behavior fixed, either you or Fido need to find a new home. Just how are you supposed to pick a trainer? And what is it that you and Fido need to learn? I bet you wish someone had gone over all this stuff before this “fill in the blank” behavior started ... it sure would have made your home life a lot easier.

Choices, Choices and More Choices

First, we'll start out with that huge computer screen of trainers. Just how should you make sense of all those choices? To limit your choices, look for two things:

- 1. Does the trainer have certifications?**
- 2. Is the trainer positive reinforcement based?**

Certification

Unfortunately, in dog training, anyone who wants to can claim to be a trainer and start his or her own business. If you are hiring a trainer, make sure that trainer is qualified. A good trainer should have taken the time to pass a test to gain certification.

There are many trainers who are certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers; the certification they earn is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer (Knowledge Assessed) or CPDT-KA. An additional qualification is Canine Good Citizen Evaluators. Many trainers also have specializations, including aggression, group classes or private in-home sessions. Some focus on simply helping people live happily at home with their pets!

There are many trainers out there, and each will train dogs differently. Who and what type of training you choose is up to you. A great place to start looking for a trainer is The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). Look for the APDT logo on the trainer's marketing material (like ads and website).

Begin with an interview

To choose a dog trainer who focuses on positive reinforcement, interview at least three dog trainers and, for goodness' sake, ask questions! This is the only true way to gauge a trainer's view on how to train dogs. Ask how the trainer deals with pulling on the leash or what techniques they use to deal with puppy or play biting.

Specifically ask about your dog's "fill in the blank" behaviors that are driving you nuts. One really simple litmus test: any technique you use on dogs should also be able to be used on kids. So if you are hearing things you would never use or try on a child ... then, in my opinion, you have not found the right trainer. Call the next trainer on the list until you find the trainer who relates to you and your dog the best. Let's face it: no matter how good the trainer is, if the two of you don't jive together, there will be very little learning going on for you or Fido.

Let's get started

So you've picked your trainer. Next, you have to choose between all these different types of training: group classes, in-home private lessons, one-on-one session with a trainer, formal obedience instruction, pet dog training and so on. How on Earth are you supposed to make this decision?

Well, there are several things to consider: cost, time investment, severity of the problem, type of problem and even the location of the problem behavior. For example, if you have a young dog who has had little if any training, group classes are probably the best bet so that you can get the most comprehensive training possible.

Maybe you have a dog who is very scared of strangers and barks at everyone in the house. In this case, private training is

probably best, but you will want it to be at your house so that your trainer can see the problem behavior in the environment in which it happens.

What if, on the other hand, you have a problem behavior like potty training or pulling on the leash? These are problems that could easily be taken care of through a one-on-one session with your trainer at their facility, and that could save you money!

Some behaviors will take a considerable time to correct or manage and others not as much. A trainer should be there to teach you and to instruct you in ways to correct the behaviors and teach your dog. Dog training should be about fixing behaviors, not starting therapy that takes years.

What About the Cost?

Last, you have the cost factor. While shopping around for the best deal is a great idea, in many cases you get what you pay for with dog training. Make sure to ask lots of questions, including “Why are you half the price of most trainers?”

In the end, choosing a dog trainer is a personal decision that you must be comfortable with. I by no means know everything, nor do I claim to — but I can tell you if you follow your head and your heart, chances are you will not go wrong!

So get back to that computer screen and grab the phone. Start asking questions, become your dog’s advocate and get busy fixing those “fill in the blank” behaviors that are wrecking the harmony of your happy home. Good luck!

2

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR POOCH

One of the most frustrating things about being a dog trainer is trying to explain and illustrate the importance and idea of management. So, I am going to attempt to use humor as a way to teach just what trainers means when we say “management.”

As you read this, it might leave you laughing, or it might just make you mad. Either way, I hope it will make you think about the myth of training and how at least half, if not more, of the answers to the riddle lies directly in the definition of the word management.

In a nutshell, management means paying attention to your dog, puppy, spouse or child. My mother used to say “Idle hands are the Devil’s plaything,” and nowhere is this more true than with a dog or puppy!

Let’s face it: a puppy will never get a chance to chew up your brand new red leather Manolo pumps unless you have conveniently “spaced out,” leaving them on the floor (unattended)

after coming home from a hard day's work. So with that being said, here are my Top 10 "management" customer comments and the corresponding internal thoughts of a trainer, upon hearing my customers' lamentations.

1. My dog keeps peeing and pooping on the comforter in the back bedroom.

Dog Trainer: If you would have just paid attention to Fido the five times he tried to tell you he had to go, or kept him in his crate or x-pen when you were not able to watch him, this phone call would not be taking place. You might even try keeping the bedroom door shut until he learns the rules.

2. Can you believe the nerve of my dog? She keeps chewing up my clothes!

Dog Trainer: Ever heard of a laundry hamper? Or maybe putting the clean clothes away instead of leaving them in the basket on the living room floor? Did Fido open your drawer and get the clothes out himself? If you will remember to put them away, then Fido won't have a chance to chew them.

3. I really need your help! My 16-week old lab puppy just ate our second couch while we were at work, and my wife says if we can't get the behavior fixed, the dog has to go.

Dog Trainer: I am really surprised — would you let your two-year old child loose in the den while you went to the grocery store? Probably not. So why would you expect a 16-week-old puppy to "behave" all alone, while you are at work? Consider crate training and/or doggy daycare. It may take more effort and

cost more in the short term, but in the end everyone will be happier!

4. I am at my wit's end. Fido jumps all over everyone who walks through the front door. Now he has broken my mom's hip. I think it is okay for him to give me hugs, but how do I teach him he can't greet guests this way?

Dog Trainer: If you know when or where your three year old son will throw a temper tantrum, you can “train” him not to throw it, and you can be prepared to handle it. With your dog, you have a pretty good idea when and where Fido will act up, so why are you not training in those areas now?

5. How do you teach a dog to quit begging at the table? It is getting really bad! Our dog has even started taking food right out of our kid's hands at the table!

Dog Trainer: If this is happening, then we all know that someone is feeding the dog at the table! Congratulations ... you (or someone else in your family) have now become a slot machine for Fido. Your dog is now programmed to think, “If I just keep staring or stealing, I will get human food. After all, it works most of the time!”

6. Every time I open the front door, the dog barrels through. It takes us 30 minutes to catch him! What do I do to stop this behavior?

Dog Trainer: Maybe you should watch to see where the dog is before you open the door. Or maybe you could just teach the dog to sit at the door. You probably want to teach a good, solid recall before something bad happens. One other question —

how often are you taking Fido for walks? Is this the only time he gets outside? Maybe that explains why he runs outside.

7. Can you explain why my dog runs from me every time I call him after he gets loose?

Dog Trainer: From the dog's perspective, he sees a crazy, unstable human at least 6-10 times his height yelling, screaming and running towards him. Or, your dog may think you are starting a game of chase and running from you is fun. Either way, if you would relax so would your dog ...

8. I am so tired of this. Every time my dog does something bad, I tell him very clearly he has been bad, but it is just getting worse. How long will it take before this dog outgrows this behavior?

Dog Trainer: You learned as a kid that this did not work with your pet rock, didn't you? Is this question really serious or are you just making a "funny"?

9. Just how long is it going to take before this dog can sleep through the night without waking me at 3:00 am to pee?

Dog Trainer: I will bet a hundred bucks this is the person who lets the dog tank up on water or eat within an hour of going to bed. Or this is a 14-week old puppy that can't yet hold it all night?

10. Why is it that every time I try to establish dominance with my dog, he just squats down and pees on the damn floor?

Dog Trainer: How about teaching Fido the “house rules” before enforcing them? Try this first and see what happens. Not to mention, you just literally scared the pee right out of him! Hmm ...

In Summary

If dog trainers had the “secret,” we would have already published the book and we would be millionaires. Unfortunately, there is no “secret” unless you think that “dogs only do what is rewarding and what they are allowed to do” is that “secret.”

I can save you money and time by saying this: a behavior never tried is a habit never learned. Focus on “mistake-free” training with Fido and be ready to redirect or eliminate opportunities for Fido to make mistakes. That is what dog trainers mean by management.

If you don’t pay attention or actively train, then know something bad is going to happen. So put down the phone, car keys or computer keyboard and save yourself some money by not calling a dog trainer. Instead, go spend the time, pay attention and manage the behavior of that furry little ball of fur you love so much. Be patient!

3

DOGS DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH!

Markers are nothing more than how we let our dogs know when they have done something right or wrong. Let's start off with the positive marker. Most people simply say "Good Dog" or "Thank You" when the dog does something correct. I, on the other hand, use a clicker: a simple noise maker that, when you depress a button, makes a clear and consistent noise the dog can relate to, a "mark." There are several reasons for this but the biggest is DOGS DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH!

I know there are people out there who will argue this point with me, but dogs don't really understand language the way humans do. Yes, they can, over a period of time, learn that "sit" means "put my rump on the ground," but they can also learn that "pineapple sherbet" means "put my rump on the ground" if I, the trainer, spend the same amount of time associating the word and the behavior!

Marking a Positive Behavior: Enter the Clicker!

One benefit of using a clicker is that it eliminates confusion. I have noticed that different people use a different tone of voice when marking a behavior, either positive or negative. This can confuse a dog, since their method of comprehension is tone and body language. A clicker keeps the message consistent.

The other real reason for my preference for using a clicker is timing! We, as humans, very rarely mark a behavior with our voice with the correct timing. We are either early or late and that can make for a very confused dog. Let's say we are working with Fido on Sit and we say SIT. Presto! Fido puts his rump on the ground, but we were not quite ready and we say "Good Dog" a little late.

In those precious few seconds, Fido has not only sat, but he has chewed a flea, seen a purple butterfly and smelled the poop in the neighbor's backyard! Now, in Fido's world, he has to figure out which of these four behaviors got him the "good dog" praise. Yes, he will figure it out in time, but why not use a positive marker that can pinpoint the exact time the correct behavior happened? This takes all the human inflections out of the picture.

The idea is that at the exact moment Fido's rump hits the ground, we click and then reinforce with a reward, maybe a nice liver treat! Wow, would Pavlov and Skinner be proud of you! Yes, you already knew this from your high school or college Psychology 101 class. Do you remember operant and classical conditioning?

Negative Markers?

Now what about the negative marker? From my vantage point as a trainer, I am shocked that most dogs don't think their

name is “NO, NO BAD DOG,” because that is what most owners say when their dog has done something inappropriate or incorrect. Once again, I will repeat, “DOGS DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH.” So yelling, pleading, explaining or discussing will not make a dog understand what in the world you want.

Let's say you want to be concise and clear and decide to use just the word NO to mark a bad behavior for your dog. Well, you are now back to being human and forgetting to think like a dog! Does it mean NO or KNOW? If you live in a household like mine, where there are two young boys running around, how many times is that word used daily? Next thing you know, your dog will have a nervous twitch and hide in the corner because he has no idea who is getting the mark.

This also brings up the idea of learned indifference. Let me give you an example. I am a dad to the aforementioned boys, and I hear the word “Dad” 4,362 times a day. You honestly think I don't tune out that word from time to time?

“Dad, Dad, Dad, DAD!!!”

“Huh? ... Were you talking to me?”

Sound familiar? The moral of this story: don't be that dog owner saying a command over and over and over. Communicate with your dog like a dog, not another person! So, what do I use as a negative mark? Just a simple sound, one syllable: AAAGGGH! Not sure of the spelling, but it is sounds like the word egg with out the hard G at the end.

Keep in mind that the negative mark is less about the dog doing something wrong. It's way more about getting the dog to stop the inappropriate behavior long enough for me to direct the dog to an appropriate behavior, so that I can then reward the good! Another tip is to remember there is no need for volume or

venom when using the Negative Mark... Being loud or angry is just going to freak out your dog and convince them you are well, unstable! All you really need is a change in pitch and inflection, trust me Fido will “hear” you just fine ...

4

DOG TRAINING 101: DON'T EVER ASSUME ANYTHING

Last week I encountered two really interesting situations while teaching my beginner class. One concerned a three-pound Chihuahua and the other a 55-pound Great Pyrenees puppy. One dog refused to sit and the other put the brakes on every time he felt the leash on his collar.

On the surface, these two dogs appeared to have very little in common. But in the time between classes, I came up with two very different solutions for these behaviors that came from the same idea. Never assume you know what a dog is thinking (or feeling) and don't be afraid to think outside the box!

Refusing to Sit

With our spunky three-pound Chihuahua who would not sit, it took simple detective work. I asked the owner if the dog sat at home. The answer was yes, but not on command. As I sat at home wondering what was going on, I had a thought; could it be the floor? Let's face it, this dog is obviously small, and Chihua-

huas don't have what most would call a lot of fur. The training facility floor is concrete; could this little girl be cold or uncomfortable? So the next week I brought a blanket, and guess what? Within 10 minutes, she was "sitting pretty" and doing just fine.

Many people would have labeled this dog as stubborn or just plain dumb; in reality, she just did not like the type of floor. As easy as it would have been to get frustrated wondering what I was doing wrong, I forced myself into the dogs "paws" for a minute, and the answer was right there, staring me in the face.

Stop, Don't Walk

Now as far as "big boy," the 55-pound Great Pyrenees puppy ... well, he was a real head-scratcher. He would walk on-leash for about 10 minutes and then just stop cold and refuse to move. When the owner told me about this behavior, I asked her to "show me." I very quickly noticed that the moment he slowed down, the owner did not notice and would keep walking. The minute the leash caused the collar to put pressure on his neck, he stopped and refused to move.

I did all the trainer stuff and asked if any leash corrections had been used in the past. I had the owner focus on keeping the leash loose, and even used toys to keep the dog's attention. Of course, as any good positive reinforcement trainer does, I even tried treats as lures. Nothing worked. I suggested we work on other things and told the client to relax and keep calm and we would start fresh next week.

Listen to the Dog

Once again, I went home and just thought about the situation. The problem was not as much the walking on the leash as

it was the pressure on the neck. Then it came to me: quit trying to train the dog and, instead, start listening to him. The problem was (again) right there in front of me. The reason he was having issues being loose leash trained was the pressure on the neck caused by the collar. The solution was simple: a standard harness to take the pressure off his neck and move it to his shoulders. Yep, it worked. Now when he slows down, the owner does nothing different, but the pressure is now on the dog's shoulders which doesn't bother him, so he has no negative reaction.

In all honesty, I should have seen these issues right off the bat. In the case of the Chihuahua, she looked nervous, confused and not her normally happy self when asked to sit. Same story with the Great Pyrenees. I missed the look of fear and stress in his eyes when the pressure was inadvertently put on his neck by the owner.

Think Outside the Box

Yes, I am admitting that I missed the signals both of these dogs were sending me. I got too deep in Trainer Mode. However, when I went home and thought about the situation, I forced myself to:

Think outside the box, and look at the situation from the point of view of the dog

Stop training and just think

It is our job, as owners of dogs, not only to train them but also to be their advocates! Never be afraid to think outside the box

and try to look at problem behaviors from the perspective of the dog. And, for goodness sake, do not assume anything!

Remember that we are the ones with the great big brains, opposable thumbs and the ability for complex thought. It is our job to look at training through the eyes of our dogs when setbacks happen and, better yet, become more fluent in D.A.S.L. (Dog as a Second Language).

5

TRAINING TERMINOLOGY: CUES

For me, cues fall into two basic categories: verbal cues and hand signals. A cue is nothing more than how we ask a dog to do something. For example, I can ask Fido to put his rump on the ground by saying the word “sit,” or by flipping my hand upward, palm up (my hand signal for sit). Both, if taught, will work.

One better than the other?

I don't really think so, but I do think that you must first start by teaching hand cues or signals when training a dog to do something.

Just so there is no confusion, the words cue, command and signals are all synonymous in dog training. They mean the same thing. I don't care to argue subtleties or word meanings here; suffice it to say, they all mean the same thing.

Dog Trainer's Rant ...

There is a growing movement in training that would rather not use the word “command” because it shows we are commanding the dog rather than requesting things from the dog. In my view, people give words way too much meaning and as long as you can teach your dog from a kind place, I really couldn’t care less what particular words you use. Understanding is what is important in my book, not terms.

So why do hand signals need to be taught first? Simple: DOGS DON’T SPEAK ENGLISH! This is a common theme in teaching dogs anything. Making dog training easier for dogs is the best way to make dog training easier for people! I know this won’t be popular with all. But I have learned that if you insist on teaching a dog like a human, you will fail; but if you think like a dog as you teach, you will be much more successful with your dog.

Remember, dogs have no ability at all with what English teachers call syntax (i.e. sentence structure, meaning or understanding with context.) So, speaking to our dogs is about as helpful for them as us understanding who is on the phone by the sound of the ring! (Cell phones with special ringers don’t count!) Instead of expecting the dog to conform to us, we need to conform to him. Dogs do understand body language and body position very well, so why not start there?

Hand Signals

Remember the following motto: Keep it Simple Stupid! I have basically five hand signals I use with my dogs. They are for watch me, sit, down, stay and come. What the signals are is not as important as consistency of use. Mine are pretty simple:

Watch Me — pointing my index finger to my nose
Sit — bringing my hand upward, palm up
Down — bringing my hand downward palm down
Stay — showing the dog my hand palm forward
**Recall — my arm straight out from my side and bringing it
down and slapping my leg**

Once a dog is reliably responding to your hand signal (80% of the time), it is time to add the word or combine cues.

Verbal Cues

The trick to this is to always lead with the unknown cue or command which, in this case, is the spoken word. Why? Because if I gave the dog the hand signal before saying the cue, he/she would simply ignore the verbal cue. Remember, the verbal cue has no bearing since the dog already knows what to do when they see the hand signal.

After several repetitions of saying the verbal cue, such as sit, and then following immediately with the known cue or hand signal, something amazing happens. Your cues begin to mean the same thing to the dog that they mean to you! Now you have two cues, verbal (command) and body language (hand signal), that are interchangeable to the dog.

From my perspective, the word is simply to make us primates feel better, but the body language (hand signal) is really what facilitates communication between our two species! With enough practice we could say “pineapple sherbet” instead of “sit” and it would work just as well! A fine example of how dogs don’t understand English.

Speed Up the Training

So remember: cues are simply how we ask our dog to do something. What we say is not nearly as important as how we relay the meaning. Training will go much faster if you start with a hand signal, then combine it with a word at a later stage. The goal here is to make training easier for the dog and you, so think less like a human and more like a dog!

Consistency

It is not as much about the time invested in training a dog, but more about the consistency of the training that is important. It would be better to spend 15 minutes a day, seven days a week rather than spending two hours a day, three days a week. Remember, having fun is vital to teaching anything to anyone, so RELAX.

6

TEACHING BASIC COMMANDS: SIT

Now for the big question: how do we teach Fido to sit? Well, we know that “sit” is when a dog puts his/her rump on the ground, right? So, let’s use a little bit of physics to help us get this behavior. Put simply, where the nose goes, the butt follows!

I start with a basic luring technique. I hold a treat near the dog’s nose until Fido is interested in it, and then I move my hand with the treat in it, back over the dog’s head towards the tail. You will notice that as Fido tries to follow the treat with his nose, he folds into a sit to get to the treat! This sounds really simple, and it is. But you have to consider the value of the reward and the speed in which you lure the dog with the treat! With a couple of tries and some patience, you should be able to consistently lure the dog into the sit position!

While the mechanics are easy, the process is a little more complicated! When do I click or mark? Do I say “sit”? When do

I treat? Do I use a hand signal? The answer to all of these is yes, but the order is specific and important!

Positive Markers & Clickers — How to Use

As you are luring the dog to this position, you also need to use the clicker! I know that some people are not fans of this device and debate its usefulness, but if you have read my last few chapters, you know I am a big believer in these simple noise makers as a way to tell your dog they have done something correctly.

The idea of a clicker is to bridge the time period between performing the right behavior and getting the reward. The click will be used as a way to affirm and let the dog know that what she has done is correct, and that a treat or reward is on its way. So, as you lure the dog into a “sit,” make sure to click the moment Fido’s rump hits the floor, and follow with a tasty treat or toy. Let your dog know he got it right!

Now some folks will not like using a clicker because there is just too much stuff involved. A treat bag, a leash, a dog and now a freaking clicker? You can also just as easily use the word “thank you” in place of the clicker. Just remember that timing with words can be tougher than the use of a clicker, so practice. Make sure your marker is right on time. That way, Fido does not get confused about what he is being rewarded for!

Release — How to Use

I need to mention at this point that a release word must also be worked into the picture. If not, you will find the dog releasing his “sit” at the sound of the clicker. Remember, the click is the positive mark (letting the dog know they have done something

right); but how do we let the dog know it is OK to come out of the sit and get the treat? Enter the idea of a release word.

The release word is used in conjunction with the positive mark (clicker or “thank you”). The idea here is that the clicker tells the dog something correct has happened and a treat is on the way, while the release word tells the dog the behavior is complete and now you can come get the treat or reward. So, after the rump hits the ground and you click or mark, you will need to say the release word (“all done” is mine) then allow the dog to have the treat.

As the dog becomes better at the command “sit,” you will begin to add time between the click and the release word, which will start building time (duration of the command) or what we call stay. As you go forward you will find that many dogs will begin to work just for the noise of the clicker! At this point, we not only have a dog that can be lured into a sit but one that is working for the positive mark of the click.

P.S. — Just a tip and hint ... I do really believe in using clickers!

I understand that some folks will not want to use them and that is fine. However, those of you who spend the time to master a clicker will find training goes faster and your timing with your pooch will improve one-hundredfold. In my humble opinion, it is totally worth the work to learn to use one properly and correctly!

7

TRAINING TIPS: WATCH ME

Watch Me should be the first command people teach their dogs! Let's face it, if you don't have a dog's attention, teaching them anything else is pretty much futile.

What is Watch Me?

When I want to teach a dog this cue, with either a hand signal or a word, Fido should stop what he is doing and look me in the face, waiting for the next command. Watch Me can be used for a variety of reasons, but for me it's the first step in stopping problem behaviors. Put simply, dogs can rarely walk and chew bubble gum at the same time, so if Fido is engaging in a behavior I don't like, the first thing I will do is ask for a Watch Me.

For that split second when the dog stops the inappropriate behavior, I have, in essence, won the battle, but not the war! The war is teaching the dog an alternative behavior to replace the bad behavior. For example, if my dog is chewing on my prize pair of shoes, I will first negatively mark the behavior (make the EGGHH! noise), then ask for a Watch Me (to gain attention)

and finally ask for a sit (alternative behavior) to take the place of the chewing of shoes.

As you may know, I truly believe that the smartest trait a dog trainer can have is the ability to IGNORE THE BAD and REWARD THE GOOD. This becomes the first tenet for winning the war of bad behavior, and Watch Me becomes your first line of defense for your campaign! So how do I teach my dog this wonderful little trick?

How To Effectively Use Treats

Start with a high value treat, and place it right on the end of your dog's nose, but don't let him have it yet. Once you have the dog's attention, move your hand up towards your face. When your dog looks at you (at this point really looking at the treat) Click, and reward. As the dog becomes more comfortable looking up at your face, begin to shape your verbal and hand signals. I use my index finger pointing at my nose for my hand signal and simply say the words, "Watch me," as my verbal cue.

As your dog builds stronger duration and distance capability, you will be able to continue your work in more distracting environments. This command not only works for chewing on shoes, but can also be used for barking, jumping up, rushing the door and even aggression with dogs and people! In all situations, that "watch me" command becomes your main way to refocus your dog's attention from something you don't like back to you. Then, you can ask for and build the habit of a behavior you do like.

Many times I hear, "My dog does not want to look at my face." Let's face it, Watch Me can be a pretty strange idea to a dog. Think about it, what does it mean when two dogs lock eyes

and don't "blink"? That's right, it's a challenge. And some anxious, shy or even aggressive and fearful dogs may not want to participate in this cue. Let me be clear: if you're dealing with aggression, I don't recommend you try this by yourself. Call a trainer or behaviorist. Do not risk challenging an aggressive dog.

Teaching Dogs of All Ages

The best time to teach Watch Me is when your dog is a puppy. The tabula rasa, or blank slate, will make this much easier. All commands and cues are easier to teach before bad habits start. If all owners did this I would be out of a job — but business is still good. Don't worry though. Even an older dog or one with baggage can learn Watch Me. But let me warn you, it won't be hard on the dog. It may be more difficult for you!

Let me clarify, it really isn't harder — but it will require patience, and many dog owners seem to think patience and difficult are the same thing. Remember to relax and go slow. If the dog will only glance at you with the treat, start there, and work towards a more reliable watch me. It might take a lot of time, but trust me, it will be worth it.

A quick hint on clickers: if your dog is scared of the clicking noise, don't worry! Use a click style pen which is a much softer noise, and then gradually move to a clicker. And if you always have to use a pen, who cares? Chances are, you always have a pen with you so it's an easy substitute. Keep in mind if the fear of the clicker is severe enough you can resort to using the the positive mark of "Thank You."

So what have we learned?

- "Watch Me" should be one of the first commands taught.

- Simply getting your dog's attention away from a bad behavior is the start to fixing that behavior.
- Watch Me is a great way to teach your dog to keep attention on you
- You cannot stop with the cue alone, you must replace the bad behavior with an alternate one. REMEMBER to ignore the bad and reward the good!
- As with all dog training, go slow, be patient and relax. This command should be the cornerstone to you and your dog having a better relationship!

8

PERSONALITY OR BEHAVIOR

I get phone calls every day asking if I can fix this problem or can I get a person's dog to quit doing this or that. It kind of reminds of a bumper sticker I saw recently which said "I am a beautician, not a magician."

Don't get me wrong — as a dog trainer, it is my job to get people to relate, understand and fix the rapport between them and their dogs. But, unfortunately, many people just don't understand the difference between a behavior and a dog's personality. So I am going to attempt to break down the difference between the two, and hopefully help you understand what each means and how it relates to your dog and their training.

People Management

Years ago when I worked as a manager, in the real world, a very wise man told me that you can fix behaviors, but to try to fix personalities was about as fruitful as squeezing water from a stone. It was his way of helping me understand just what I could fix in my employees and what I could not.

The basics here are simple. A behavior is a choice that can be changed and a personality is a mindset that is unchangeable. That might be a tad simplistic, but, overall, it is a true statement. Take this scenario as an example. Fred is 44 years old and just had a heart attack. He works 65 hours a week, drinks too much, smokes, never exercises and always has to be in control.

His personality type would be considered “Type A” by most people. As he is recovering in the hospital, his doctor comes in and gives Fred an ultimatum: “You can keep living life as you have and die soon, or you can start exercising, quit smoking, quit drinking, cut down on the number of hours you work, get regular check-ups, take proper medication and live to be an old man.”

Fred does as the doctor directed and lives to be a ripe old age of 94 years old then dies in his sleep. Now for the \$64,000 question: was Fred still a Type A? The answer is, of course, Fred was. He simply changed his behaviors. Deep down his personality didn’t change — he was still a “Type A.”

You Can Change Behaviors

So whether we are looking at people or dogs, we must realize that yes, you can change behaviors. But trying to change a personality is, well, like spitting into the wind.

Your first job as a dog owner or trainer is to determine whether the unwanted action of the dog is due to a behavior or a personality trait. Did you know that a dog’s socialization period (the time frame where they learn to accept and like situations vs. being scared and anxious around the situation) is only from about three weeks to roughly 20 weeks of age? Considering the fact that most people don’t bring puppies home until they are

between 10 and 12 weeks old, new dog owners have a very small window to affect their puppy's personality.

How owners do or don't socialize a pup will have a direct effect on the behaviors that are manifested. This in turn will affect the personality. So as a trainer I will say (AGAIN) that I would be out of a job if folks would only ensure that all puppies get tons of positive associations during those first few weeks; they learn that the world is a fun environment that is not only safe, but, in many cases, full of rewards.

Unfortunately, many dogs that were ignored as puppies are in shelters or for many other reasons are not exposed to the world at all. This leads to the dog learning to be anxious, nervous, scared and even aggressive when exposed to anything new, and unfortunately anything new to a fearful or anxious dog is, in most cases, scary.

Manage The Personality

So what does this have to do with the personality vs. behavior discussion? Simple. The overall emotional makeup of a dog is the personality and it can rarely be fixed. In my mind those less-than-desirable personality traits (being nervous anxious or aggressive) must be managed instead of attempting to train them away. However the actual behaviors that come from those traits (hiding, growling or barking) can, in most cases, be managed with what are known as replacement behaviors. Put simply, you are making the new behavior more rewarding than the unwanted behavior.

Look at behaviors as something that can be changed, while personality is something that is created by our experiences during critical developmental periods! The only things we can

change with our dogs, kids, wives, employees or bosses are the specific behaviors, and we can change them when we create more rewarding replacement behaviors.

As I have said for many years, and will continue to say ... please, please socialize your puppies when you get them, and chances are you will never have to call me or one of my colleagues! If you get an older dog, realize their personalities are what they are. But never fear, you can always work on specific behaviors and manage their personality.

9

VISITS TO THE VET OR GROOMER

So Fido doesn't like his nails trimmed, mouth touched, tail messed with, hates the hair dryer and could live life happily for the rest of his life without another bath. You know it, so does your groomer and/or your vet? Here are some tips, because your groomer, your vet and I want Fido to accept, if not like, his trips to these folks! With a little work on your end and patience on the part of your wonderful groomer and fantastic vet, I bet we can improve this situation in no time at all. But where do you start?

Cradle and Massage

I call it "Cradle and Massage" and it is something every dog owner should do with their furry best friend! The earlier we start, the faster we get Fido to like his visits to the groomer. Don't freak out if your dog is three or four years old; we can still improve the situation, making the visit safer and more pleasant

for everyone involved. So, just what is “Cradle and Massage”? It is a simple but effective desensitization program for dogs of all ages in regards to the common spots most dogs just plain don’t like having messed with, the feet, mouth, tail and ears. Ironically, these are the same spots our unfortunate groomers, and sometimes vets, have to touch every time.

It is Easy to Get Started

This technique will need to be done three-five times a week for 10-15 minutes. I want you to get on the floor with your dog, even while watching TV, and simply cradle the dog between your legs and massage each of the above mentioned body parts, followed by a treat after each part! The goal here is to convince Fido that touch is good (rewards) and relaxing (kind, gentle touching) is even better! By the time you get this perfect, your dog should be comfortable lying on their back, being touched and will be totally relaxed. Don’t be upset if you can’t even get close to this description the first time you try this. Take it slow and progress in baby steps. Consistency and being gentle will pay off in the end!

The other thing that needs to be done immediately is to change your dog’s view of being at the groomer or of going to the vet. I want you to commit to going to those locations at least once a week, (2-3 times a week starting off is even better) and just go in, sit in the lounge and give Fido some treats. Let the staff know what you are doing and ask them to give treats to your pooch as well. After 10 minutes or so, just get up, get in your car and go home! The reason for all this subterfuge is simple: the only time you ever take your dog to the groomer (or vet) it is an unpleasant situation (at least for those who don’t

practice “Cradle and Massage”). By adding weekly short trips full of treats and rewards, your dog starts to associate more visits as being positive and less being negative. This makes an overall positive association about going on these field trips!

Last thing, ask your groomer or vet to attempt to give your pooch a treat during the groom or examine and report back to you whether or not the dog took the treat. Ironically, one of the best ways to determine Fido’s level of stress or fear (leading cause of snarkiness) is to see if he is comfortable enough to eat. This litmus test needs to be your final goal, not to mention a vet or groomer who gives gifts (treats/rewards) isn’t all that scary anyways. The goal here is not to label, categorize or belittle your dog, but rather to help you, his Mommy or Daddy, make the visit less scary and more fun!

10

NON-NEGOTIABLE RULES

In my writing and in my training classes, I refer to the “non-negotiable rules” when it comes to human and dog relationships. So just what are non-negotiable rules and why do I stress using them so much? Let’s define them.

What Are Non-Negotiable Rules?

Non-negotiable rules are the behaviors you expect your dog to exhibit every day, not only to instill good manners, but to put you, the human, in a role of leadership. These rules also give us the opportunity to work with our dog without carving out “training” time each day. Instead, you just live your life as normal and you and Fido just live by the rules you have chosen.

Fido gets trained without even realizing it! These rules are also crucial in embedding impulse control in Fido! Based on my observations, lack of impulse control is responsible for roughly 70-80% of all problem behaviors.

What Are YOUR Non-Negotiable Rules?

So, just what rules should you require? That is a question that you as the “owner” have to answer! Your trainer can suggest ways to achieve the goals you have for Fido. But in the end you have to decide what behaviors are wanted vs. those that are unwanted. The fact of the matter is, what I want from my dogs might be totally different than what you want from your dog. This is the main reason I refer to myself as a Pet Dog Trainer rather than obedience or even a plain old dog trainer! My job is to help people successfully live with their pet dog based on what they want and need.

As you are thinking of what your rules will be, let me share with you my “Top Ten List.” These are the things I require from my dogs every day. These things improve my dogs’ behavior and keep me in the role of “Top Dog” without having to resort to being a “Butt-Head” to my dogs.

1. Sit and/or Down at every door.
2. Sit and/or Down before every meal.
3. Sit before leash is put on.
4. Ask permission before getting on furniture or bed. (This means a sit, then being invited up: you make the final choice.)
5. Walks only continue if there is no pulling. (If Fido pulls, the walk stops until he calms down and sits. Then, we will try again.)
6. Go to crate on command using “go to bed” or “go to your room”.
7. Crazy behavior equals no attention. If the dog gives any unwanted behavior, I ignore it and walk away for approximately two minutes.

8. Dog must have a reliable **leave it** command, and know that means to move back and wait for further instructions.

9. Dog must have reliable recall, or consistently come when called. This should work in the house, outside, at the park and, yes, even the dog park.

10. Dog must stay behind you on stairs, with the “wait” command. This should be used at doors as well. Dog knows to stay behind you until invited to move forward. “Excuse me” or “Back up” is the other side of this coin, where the dog understands to get out of the way for you to move through.

Living Together

I’m sure that you are aware of the idea out there, that in dog training we must “rule over,” “be the boss,” or in some cases even dominate the dog to achieve and keep a leadership role. In my opinion, this is not at all necessary and in many cases is “just plain mean.” Leadership, whether with dogs or people, is all about resource control.

If I control the dog’s most important resources — food and access to my attention ... Not to mention other options around the house (like furniture, beds, toys and so on) — I will naturally become the leader without having to resort to physical force or being a butt-head. In a matter of speaking, this is as simple as relying on your brain instead of your brute.

So get out paper and pencil and come up with your own list of non-negotiable rules; start using them and in no time you and Fido will be on your way to living a happy, healthy and relaxed life together!

11

REAL LIFE STUFF

As a trainer, as well as a parent of two kids, I learn about dogs and kids from their behavior by living life and learning from our mistakes. A recent morning was no exception! My sons learned a valuable lesson this morning; and two of my dogs are licking their respective wounds ...

This morning, like any other morning, my sons were doing their chores, taking the dogs outside to potty, getting Kongs ready for breakfast (Kongs are interactive feeding toys), and I had run to the kennel to get some training supplies — and then the mistake happened. Instead of bringing the dogs in to eat, they decided to go do kid stuff and forgot about feeding the dogs! You know, life in action!

The Unexpected Happens

Now, having the dogs together is not necessarily a bad thing, but as with life — the unexpected always occurs! Remember, Murphy's Law!

Turns out, two of our neighbor's dogs got loose. And guess where they headed: right up to our dog run! If you weren't already aware, when dogs get over-stimulated, they will sometimes lash out at whatever is closest. Penny, our smallest (but in her mind, mightiest), lashed out at Lexi (our lab mix) and, well, let's say Lexi did not take this insolence kindly! Next thing you know, I have one dog with a puncture on the leg and the other with a small cut on her shoulder.

Now, in terms of a dog fight, this would not be a considered a "really bad" dog fight. But it was still a very stressful situation for both the family and the dogs. What this does point out is a huge buga-boo about dog owners that drives me nuts: leaving dogs alone outside (in a run or backyard) for prolonged periods of time!

Dogs Are Social Animals

Let's face it, dogs are social animals — and they love being around us. By the way, they deserve no less. If you have a dog, or are planning on getting a dog, and are thinking about leaving them by themselves outside all day while you are at work or solely for your convenience, then a dog might not be the pet for you! Dogs require your time and attention, period!

Do you think my kids expected the neighbor's dogs to get loose and then to be the catalyst to a dog fight? Of course they didn't. But as most of us have already learned — life (or the other four letter word) happens! Just like kids, dogs left unattended will result in something bad eventually! Not to mention, if we keep dogs with us and around us, WE control the situation! We can choose what behavior to reward and what behavior to correct or coach.

Far too many people just deposit their dogs in their dog run or back yard, leaving them to their own devices, and then act shocked when something bad happens. In my case, the entire situation came to fruition in under an hour!

Teachable Moments

Was I mad at my sons? Of course not. They did not mean for the fight to happen, but unintentionally put an unforeseen chain of events in motion without realizing it! That morning was what many trainers refer to as a “teachable moment!” I sat down and let them know that the responsibility of owning dogs does not end when we want to listen to an iPod or play the Wii; it is a full time job!

In the end, the dogs were okay (even if a little sore), my stress levels are coming back down to normal and all involved have learned to be more aware. The key to dog training — heck, life in general — is to learn from mistakes and move on! So take heed ... use my mistake to look at your own situation and adjust for success! I guess in the end, situations like this explain why I chose the name Keep it Simple Stupid for my dog training business!

12

DOGS ARE LIKE A HYDRAULIC SYSTEM ... KINDA!

Every hydraulic system has a set pressure it can withstand. Go over that allowed pressure or exceed “critical mass,” and ... BOOM!

Fido’s Behavior Has Its Own Tank

You can look at Fido’s behavior the same way. Each behavior has its own tank: barking, digging, jumping, play biting and, yes, even pulling on a leash! If we are smart owners, and keep the pressure under “critical mass,” the behaviors remain normal, problems never surface and life is good! But if we allow the pressure to build ... you probably already know and may be experiencing what’s about to happen.

If your dog pulls you like a demon, you have allowed that tank to overflow and, consequently, you probably hate walking Fido! What you have not considered is that once the walking tank overfills, that pressure has to go somewhere. Now you not only have a leash issue, but Fido has started barking at everything. As

the barking tank overflows, Fido might now start digging to China in your back yard ... and so the story goes until I, the dog trainer, receive a phone call from a prospective client telling me that Fido is completely out of control!

But the simple translation is a dog whose pressure capacity has been taxed to the point of complete hydraulic failure! At this point, take a deep breath and realize this now out-of-control conduct actually started with just one behavior. And the only way to fix this is to fix each behavior the same way they occurred: ONE AT A TIME!

The Key is Exercise

The key to a happy, healthy and well behaved dog is simple: exercise! This is the action we very rarely consider for our out of control, over-pressured and now bleeding hydraulic systems! The only way to fix the leak is to first lower the pressure in the system (exercise) and re-train (increase the pressure capacity) of the system! So, what is energy in regards to a dog, and just how do we exercise or vent the system?

While it might seem like a simple question, all dogs are different. That means energy types and requirements are as different as the dogs in question! Take, for example, a Golden Retriever — they have been bred for retrieving, thus their energy type is generally running and fetching things. In comparison, a schnauzer, bred as a varmint hunter, has energy geared to tracking small moving critters, and they really like to bark! Beagles are similar in that they love to bark, but they use their nose vs. tracking the moving objects. What about a Husky or a Malamute? They were bred to pull sleds (and everything else attached to them), or an Australian Shepherd, whose goal in life

is to herd things. Now, consider the classic (and my favorite) Mutt! They could have parts of some if not all of these dog energy types! Needless to say, you had better be willing to do some “homework” on your dog and really find out what “trips their trigger!”

I bring this up because, to many dog owners, the backyard, a 15 minute walk (really only an excuse to pee!) or a day or two a week in “doggy day care” are foolishly considered to be enough of a mental and physical work out for their furry, four legged best friend! This is the point, as a dog trainer and volunteer in animal shelters, I stress — people must think before they get a dog as a pet! If you know your lifestyle is one where hour-long walks, trips to the dog park, ability to afford or schedule classes in agility, rally or scent work (let alone basic obedience) are not achievable ... DON'T do it!

Dogs actually require work! There is no law saying every family is required or even ought to own a dog. Okay, off my soapbox and back to exercise.

Mental and Physical Exercise

Exercise needs to be both mental as well as physical! Dogs cannot live off bread (exercise) alone; they need some variety. Simply walking your dog daily won't cut it! You might need to add agility or rally obedience work to exercise the mind as well. It might even require finding a herding class to allow your dog's more primal needs to come to the surface! If, as an owner, you are unable to exercise your dog on any given week, consider adding three days a week of doggy day care, which will also help with socialization. The point here: there is no one “magic bullet,” but what we do know is that what you are doing now is

not enough! Unless, of course, you are a dog junkie or trainer, and are nodding your head in agreement because you have a dog whose pressure regulator is in tip-top condition!

What Next?

So what do you do now? I cannot believe I am saying this, but calling a dog trainer is not the first step! You need to take a serious look in the mirror and ask yourself: am I giving my dog all the exercise and mental stimulation needed to make him happy and balanced? I would guess, if you are honest, the answer is no. And your first step to fixing the problem is staring back at you in the mirror — it's you! Before calling a trainer to prescribe a “magic” dog training pill, get out and start living life with your dog! Spend time with her and just be with her! If you are lucky, you just might solve your “problem behaviors” without having to call a dog trainer!

So you've determined Fido's energy type and needs. What's next? Well, step two might be to call that trainer for help with the retraining to find better outlets for the behavior to allow for a higher pressure limit in your dog's hydraulic system! But calling a trainer before you actually take the time to exercise your dog is futile and expensive, since all we (the dog trainers) will do is charge you hard-earned money to tell you to walk your dog more, take her to a dog park, enroll in a fun competition-style class or challenge her mind with interactive toys or games. Doesn't that sound just like what I shared with you in the above paragraphs, and for FREE?

Why, you ask, is this exercise piece so important? Because, without cutting the edge (decreasing their pressure) from the dog first, formal training or obedience will be essentially impos-

sible! There is no magic pill or silver bullet when working with dogs — or kids, for that matter! — there is only time and effort! You and your dog will bond better, love more and be better friends the sooner we get everyone on board with this idea! I leave you with two thoughts to chew on:

1. A tired dog is a good dog!

2. Nothing good ever comes from less, only from effort!

As always ... Keep it Simple Stupid, and please don't forget to have some fun while you are at it! Wasn't that why you got your dog in the first place?

13

HAND FEEDING

I often get one particular question from folks when they find out I am a dog trainer. “What can I do to make my dog pay attention to me?” Well, that’s a bit like asking what a person can do to get better gas mileage. Trust me, there are more than just one or two answers.

That being said, there is one thing I wish all dog owners would do. And of all the things I could teach, the one thing that will produce the fastest and biggest change in a dog’s behavior is to hand feed your dog.

Okay, I know many of you are wondering if Mikey has finally lost it, but I really mean it. When you hand feed your dog, you make yourself more important, you teach bite inhibition and you get your pooch to pay more attention to you, all without being mean to your dog. Let’s break this idea down into the three smaller pieces to get the whole picture!

Makes You More Important

The first thing that hand feeding your dog does is make you more important in your dog's eyes. Some trainers call this "being the pack leader." Others call it "being the alpha dog." I simply call it making yourself the most important or necessary thing in your dog's life.

To be honest, I don't put any credence in the idea of pack theory or could care less who the "pack leader" is in my house! The way I look at leadership with my dogs is that if I control all the really important resources in Fido's world, who is really going to be calling the shots?

So, if I could get people to hand feed every piece of food to Fido for at least 30 days, he will very quickly understand that without Mom or Dad, he might not get fed! This is not only a great way to bond with and build a better relationship with any dog, but it works even better when the dog is new to the family.

How to Feed Your Dog

So how does hand feeding impact bite inhibition? I believe that all dogs need to be taught to be careful with their mouths and teeth when interacting with people. There is no better way to get this point across than by hand feeding.

It gives me the perfect opportunity to focus on giving pieces of kibble, one or two at a time, and teaching the command "gentle." If the dog touches my finger with teeth, I can say "ouch," and then with a calm voice use the command, "gentle." I'll withhold the food for 10-15 seconds, then repeat the process.

Before you know it, the shark you have been living with is now the polite and patient dog you wanted in the first place. In fact, if you do it right, you will find that when you say "ouch"

anytime a tooth is felt, most dogs will actually begin licking you as a way to express their own apology and realize they got too rough. So simply by feeding our dogs by hand, we are teaching mouth skills (or bite inhibition) with humans who they need for the stuff they want. But wait, there's more ...

Pay Attention

It makes sense that hand feeding your dog would help get your dog to pay attention to you, right? But why does that matter? Regardless of whether you are a dog or person, we all tend to pay way more attention to the person in our life who doles out the rewards, paychecks or praise. Unfortunately, the opposite can be said for those who punish, write up or take things away (we avoid them like the plague!).

So by simply looking at the relationship between you and your dog, and determining who controls the resources, you can put yourself right at the top of Fido's list of people he/she needs to survive in this big old world. I hope, as you are reading, you are starting to inventory all the resources your pooch has and how you can use them in training.

There is a very critical distinction and mistake many people make when trying to control resources with a dog. They think that control has to be in some way negative. Think of it this way: spoiling a dog or child is thought to be a bad thing, but what if the spoiling only occurs when the dog or child has earned it? The ultimate goal is to be necessary in Fido's life, not control that life. So, get out there, hand feed your pooch and see the difference it will make!

14

DOGGY DAYCARE

Have you ever taken a foreign language? Maybe in high school or even in college? Now, many years later, how many of you have forgotten most if not all of what you learned? I took Spanish throughout high school and college, and even took a conversational class and at one point was able to dream in Spanish! Unfortunately, 15-20 years later (man, that is depressing), I can barely remember how to conjugate a verb and only remember a few words!

Practice Makes Perfect!

Now why do you suppose that is? Could it be that in the last decade or two I have not kept up or practiced Spanish? Not to mention, I have not needed it or used it. Let's face it, our knowledge and how we remember things is just like a muscle. And if it is not exercised and practiced, then it becomes weak and undependable.

So, what does my ability to speak Spanish have to do with doggy daycare facilities, or dogs in general for that matter? Well,

actually, they have a lot in common. Let's look at it from Fido's perspective.

Fido's Perspective

From the day I came home as a puppy, my new family was great. They spent tons of time with me. They taught me to sit, where to go potty, how to work for my food and even how to play nice with them and a thing called the "family cat" (this one I am still not sure about). Everything in my little doggy life was going great until I hit about seven or eight months old, when they decided I had too much energy and they started taking me for walks and to this really scary place called a dog park.

Now I keep finding myself surrounded by these things my family keeps calling dogs. They kind of smell familiar but they don't look at all like me or my family, and my owners keep getting angry with me when I growl at them in an attempt to make them go away.

In fact, last week one of them bit me right on the end of the nose! It is now official: these things called dogs are no fun and I do not like them.

Now this little story might seem a little farfetched; hang in there with me for just a little while longer. This dog was brought home and never socialized with dogs, only people. It was taught obedience skills and how to live inside a home full of humans (from their point of view) and that goofy thing they call a cat. At no time was the pup given a chance to be around dogs to learn things like:

- *What a play bow means or is*
- *What a dog yawning means*
- *What a dog licking his lips means*

- *What a look away means*
- *Why on Earth it is okay to have my butt sniffed*

Or, finally, how he should react to these and many other things dogs do every day to communicate with each other.

Doggy Daycare

The fact is, without continual exposure and life experiences around other dogs (and I do not mean the ones they live with), dogs themselves can and will forget how to speak “DOG.” This is one of the main reasons I strongly believe in doggy daycare programs as a way to not only burn off some energy in a safe and controlled environment, but also the chance to be around other dogs and learn about and from them!

Facilities such as this will not only give your dog exercise, but will allow the dog to, well, be a dog! Doggy daycare is a great way to keep them proficient at their native tongue, while properly socializing them. It also allows dogs to spend some quality time away from Mom and Dad, realizing that being away from the family is not a bad thing, but is actually fun! It can actually help prevent and even help with separation anxiety!

Which one to choose?

Here are some thoughts on picking out a doggy daycare facility.

- *You should always visit a facility before you take your dog for a stay. You should insist on a tour when you visit the facility.*

- *You should not see 20 plus dogs loose together in a big pen.*
- *Play groups should be small: 6-8 dogs of the same personality and energy level. (The dogs should be categorized by age, energy level, size and personality.)*
- *You should see at least one, if not two, employees monitoring the play groups.*
- *Dogs should have access to the outdoors, or be taken outside several times a day. Big dogs need space to run! The goal is to have a tired dog when you go home at night.*
- *Ask about extra charges. If you don't, you could get quite a surprise. You should also ask what happens if you are 15 or 20 minutes late. I have heard stories about being charged an extra day in some cases.*

Remember: Not all dogs are going to do well in a doggy daycare or kennel environment. Dogs, like people, have different personalities, just like some people don't like being around other people, some dogs don't like being around other dogs. You may want to talk to your vet or trainer before taking your dog to a facility. Staff at a good doggy daycare facility should be the first ones to tell you if this type of program will work for your dog.

Now, go out there and find a place for your dog to brush up on Doggy 101 — and you'll get the benefit of a socialized and exercised dog! As always, have fun and remember to Keep it Simple Stupid.

15

JUST GO TO BED

I believe in crate training. That is where “go to bed” comes in. It is a command that can be used to let your dog know it is time to go get in their crate. This is where I start! Next is “Park It,” an advanced command.

Why do I need these commands? Like most other commands, if used correctly, these two can be useful obedience commands, but more importantly, they can be used to eliminate problem behaviors. Let’s start with crate training. Crate training can help eliminate many slippery slopes, such as separation anxiety, clingy personalities, puppy and adolescent destruction and yes, even potty training issues.

Many people feel that using a crate is in some way cruel or restrictive to a dog. But in reality, dogs are den animals. They prefer being in a close-fitting enclosure, where they feel safe and not vulnerable. The people who feel that crates are cruel, tiny cages usually feel that way because the first night they had their puppy, he cried! The owner feels like the dog hates the crate, and the owner lets the dog out! So, what has the dog learned? If

I cry, these new people come and get me! Anyone who has had small kids is most likely giggling or crying over the realization of what has been going on.

Remember, like most things with dogs, they don't speak English, and we don't speak dog. When the dog was crying, it had nothing to do with the crate. It was all about the fact that they are social animals that want to be close to their pack. When we let them out of the crate when they whine, we are teaching them the crate is bad! Ironic, ain't it? So, if we focus on making the crate a positive environment, we eliminate the crying and the anxiety. Then, guess what? We have a dog who is on his way to liking a crate!

So how do we make the crate a positive experience? This is where the crate training begins: all the other stuff was prerequisite info and laying the ground work. Let's start with how we get the dog in the crate. The dog goes in the crate on his own; we do not put the dog in the crate! We can lure with treats, we can feed the dog in the crate, we can put Fido's toys in the crate and then reward with treats when he goes in to get them. What we cannot do is force the dog into the crate, or do anything else that negatively affects Fido's view of being in the crate. The real problem here is that we, as owners, are the reasons why our dogs like or dislike their crate. If we extrapolate this idea to training in general, we can make the leap that most problem behaviors we experience with dogs are generally due to our actions or reaction to them. (Things that make you go hmm?)

So how do we break this down? First, focus on making Fido's time in the crate as positive as possible. Next, combine the act of going in the crate with the verbal cue go to bed. It's a really good idea to keep a treat jar on or near the crate to reward Fido when

he goes into his crate when you use the cue go to bed... In no time at all, you will have a dog happily enjoying his own personal condo on cue!

Remember that we can't expect our dogs to go into the crate and stay there 8-10 hours on the first try. This is one of the biggest mistakes many folks make that gives the crate a negative association to Fido; remember to go slow. It is imperative that we gradually build up the time the dog spends in the crate. If you don't take your time acclimating your dog to the crate, it becomes your fault Fido doesn't like his crate, not his.

Park It: The Advanced Version of Go to Bed

Once you get Fido reliably going to bed on cue, we can now begin to work on Park It, a command that is very handy in dealing with problem behaviors such as barking, charging doors, begging at the dinner table and bothering new visitors to your home. This one might be a little more challenging than teaching go to bed, but the results will be far more advantageous!

When I say park it, the dog will go to a particular spot in the house and lay down on a bed, blanket or area of the floor! In my house, I say go to bed and the dogs scatter to their bedrooms and get ready for going to bed. However, when I say park it, keeping in mind that each of my four dogs has their own blanket in the living room, they settle there. I use this command while we eat, watch TV or just need to calm things down.

The goal here is to condition the dog that the snap of your fingers and a point to the location where you want your dog to park it will tell the dog to go to a particular place and lie down and settle.

The simplest way to think of “park it” is as an advanced-level “go to bed.” And yes, the way you teach this command is somewhat similar to the method we used to teach go to bed. The technique will be a little different though.

First, you need to be able to snap your fingers. Once we have that down, we then begin by shaping this behavior. Pick a spot in the room where you spend the most time, the den or living room (the room with the boob tube in it!). Next, get a bed of some kind, it could be a blanket or a fancy bed from the pet store. Or if you are mean, you can even pick just a spot on the floor.

So we have a cue (that’s snapping fingers) and a location. Now, all we need is a way to get the dog on that spot! Enter the treats! First, call your dog to the location (snapping your fingers and pointing to the spot,) then lure the dog onto the spot with the treat and ask for a sit.

What about lying down and settled? As always, it will take patience. Early on as I started training, I did lure the dog into a down and attempt to work on stay while they were in the park it. But I quickly found that because down is a submissive position for a dog they constantly tried to get up and move because they were uncomfortable, or I, as the trainer, was not patient enough and moved training too fast (even a trainer needs to know when they screwed up). So I found another way around the same problem! I simply asked for a sit and was patient this time, waiting for the dog to get tired during the stay and guess what, they laid down on their own.

Let me warn you now: don’t get in a hurry on this one. The distractions under which you will be working will make this command very hard to achieve with reliability. Think about it

— you will use park it in situations like dinner, new people and barking, so if you expect Fido to learn fast you will fail!

Let me illustrate this with a story ... when I started teaching my dogs park it, it was because the family was tired of having six eyes staring at us during dinner! Here's the bad news: it took me six weeks to get them kinda reliable. Let me repeat, KINDA! I spent six weeks eating, standing up in the doorway of the kitchen re-parking my dogs every five minutes! But then it was every seven minutes then nine and so on. While there are still times when we have to do some reminding, I am happy to say that now my family can, for the most part, eat without interruptions.

Remember to take it slow and build up to reliability. And one final note on this command: do not use it on problem behaviors until the command is at least at an 80% reliability with at least 10 minutes of duration.

P.S. — Whenever aggression is involved, hire a professional dog trainer to guide you! This might sound really simple, but aggression should never be dealt with without professional help!

16

TETHERS

Tethers. There is a word that brings up all sorts of emotions in pet owners; some are positive and some are negative. This article will lay some ground rules for using tethers, as well as give you some examples of how I use them when training dogs.

What is a Tether?

A tether is a metal cable that is coated in plastic or rubber and has dog leash connectors at each end. They are tools that, if used correctly, can teach a dog a great deal. Unfortunately, many people use them the wrong way. This is why some people do not like them, or have a negative outlook on them.

To make sure we start on the right foot, let's share the ground rules first.

1. ***You never, ever, under any circumstance, leave a dog unattended while on a tether. The tether is a tool, not a babysitter.***

2. *If used as a consequence due to an unwanted behavior (timeout) Duration should be no more than 30-60 seconds. The dog should see the cause and effect, not simply isolation as a punishment...*
3. *The duration of time spent on a tether should always be considered. If there is no training taking place, then there should be no tether. Once again, it is not a baby-sitter.*

Permanently or Temporarily?

Next: should you set a tether point permanently or set one temporarily? The permanent tether point is the one I use in my house and is reasonably simple. Buy an eye hook, pick your general spot, find a stud in the wall and screw the eye hook into the baseboard. Make sure you go through the baseboard and into the stud or your pooch will end up pulling 8-10 feet of baseboard molding off the wall.. Once done, simply connect one end to the eye hook and the other to the dog. The temporary point is easier but will have to be set up each time you wish to use the tether. There are basically two ways:

1. **Wrap the tether around something heavy like the leg of a couch; or**
2. **Take the cable under any door and then bring it up to the door knob on the back side of the door.**

Shut the door and “voila!” you have a temporary tether. You can Google pet tethers and get really good images of either of these ways or just give me a call and I can help.

So What Now?

So, just what am I supposed to do with these tether things? Well, I use tethers to facilitate the teaching of three specific skills:

Greeting people at the door nicely while using Park It The technique of the 15 minute ignore Learning basic commands at a distance

Now, for specifics. The first technique is how to greet people at the door without barking, jumping and or freaking out. When I have a client call me and talk about a dog that rushes the door, jumps on people or is just plain snarky at the door when people are trying to enter the house, I will recommend using a tether to teach the Park It command.

I encourage the client to make sure they are also using the 15 minute ignore as part of this training to change the behavior. Park It is a command like go to bed or kennel up, but only in a different location such as their tether spot. The 15 minute ignore is simply a technique: by giving no attention to bad behavior, as well as time to calm down, most dogs will choose the behavior we want.

The scenario goes something like this. The doorbell sounds and, guess what, so does Fido. Next, we use the Park It command to get Fido to go to his place; a nice comfy bed by the tether point. Once the dog is on the bed you connect the tether. Then you answer the door. Fido can still bark, but can no longer make the mistake of rushing or jumping up on your house guest.

The 15 Minute Ignore

Then, you incorporate the 15 minute ignore by having the house guest grab a seat and ignore the dog. Obviously, you need to pick a tether spot where the dog can see the door but can still give your guest a dog free route to a chair or couch. You then explain to your guest that you are working on training Fido to greet people in an appropriate manner, and they can help you by simply not looking at, talking to or, for goodness sake, touching Fido for roughly 15 minutes.

Whether you know it or not, most dogs have an attention span somewhere between a rock and a gnat, and if ignored, they quickly realize the behavior is not getting them what they want (attention) and they give up on the behavior. This gives us the opportunity to have our guest ask Fido for a sit and give him a treat, all while Fido is tethered so he still cannot make the mistake of jumping up. Once Fido is calm with this step, then and only then do we disconnect the tether.

Another positive outcome of this technique is the fact that once Fido sees you interacting with the guest and being totally okay with the situation, Fido starts to think, “Well, if Mom is okay with this person, I guess I am too.”

A Calm Fido

You have now eliminated the mistake of rushing and jumping on guests, reinforced the command of “Park It” and begun the process of positively associating new house guests with presents (rewards/treats). In the end, you and your guests end up with what you both want; a calm dog that knows how to say hello the right way. The tether is actually only needed early on to reinforce “Park It” and help eliminate the dog from making mis-

takes. You can even begin using the “Park It” command at dinner, to eliminate the begging dog scenario during meal times. But remember to give your pooch a reward for being on their place during dinner. After all, your dog should be rewarded for this type of behavior.

The other main way I use a tether is to take commands like sit, down and stay to the “graduate” level of learning or being able to get these commands to work from a distance. In essence, if my dog is 15 feet from me and I say sit, I want the dog to sit where he is, not come all the way to me and then sit. Another quick tip on dogs is that they are unable to generalize or transfer a skill from one situation or location to another different one. That being said, a dog that you can ask to sit and stay, while you walk 15 feet away, and still reliably hold the stay will not be able to relate to a command given at a distance until they are re-taught the commands from a distance. This is where the tether comes in. Once again, we only use the tether to introduce the new idea and to eliminate the chance of making a mistake.

Short and Sweet

Remember that your training sessions should be short and sweet, about 15 minute each, a couple of times a day. We don't want Fido to lose interest. So, how do you do it? The first step is to ask the dog to Park It or go to their place and attach the tether. Now put four - five feet of distance between you and the dog and begin the training process of asking for different behaviors such as sit, down, watch me or even stand.

After several days or maybe a week, the dog should be comfortable with these newly learned skills, and the tether should be removed. Again, the goal is to help the dog jump start their

learning and to eliminate mistakes. The tether is, in many ways, much like the clicker: something to help facilitate training, not something that has to be used forever.

There are many instances where I see absolutely no place for using a tether in dog training, but the training techniques mentioned above are very useful and still positive in nature. As I have said before, no tool is positive or negative; it is how people use them that should be judged as right or wrong.

17

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Are you tired of having your dog bark for 15 minutes every time the door bell rings, or for any of the infinite number of other reasons dogs bark?

An Action Plan

Well, so was I. And so, like any good dog trainer, I took a step back and compared what the dog was doing to what I expected him to do and put together an action plan to get what I wanted (not what the dog wanted!). Because the only way to change a behavior is to ignore the bad (unwanted behavior) and reward the good (new desired behavior), my action plan was based on this.

What I came up with was a unique extension to the command “Watch Me,” which my dog already knew. I call this command Enough! Whenever the door bell went off, so did my dog — exhibiting an unwanted behavior! I recognized that dogs can’t focus on more than one activity or behavior at a time, and I knew if I asked for a “Watch Me,” the dog would stop barking in

order to pay attention to me. Just like kids, dogs can't chew bubblegum and walk at the same time and you can use this to your advantage.

I also understood that this request for a "Watch Me" would only give me a few seconds, so I had to reward the dog almost instantly when Fido looked up at me. But even in that short time frame, a seed was planted that the teaching of the command Enough was possible!

Getting Started

When the doorbell went off and the dog started barking, I would begin by negatively marking the behavior using the EGGH noise to interrupt the barking. I would follow immediately with a "Watch Me" command and reward the dog with a yummy treat. As the training continued, I would add time between the "Watch Me" and the treat.

As I built more and more time of non-barking after the ringing of the doorbell with "Watch Me," I pulled a dirty trick on my dog! I switched the cue from "Watch Me" to Enough, and then would count to three before the dog got the reward! I know that three seconds doesn't sound like much, but believe me, this gives you a way to let the dog know that you appreciate his or her bark and that you know that someone is at the door. The big difference is that you now have a way to turn off the bark...Enough!

Baseline Behavior

Now you have your baseline behavior (three seconds), and after you work for several days, you will add two more seconds, practice for several days, add two more seconds, and so on.

Remember, the dog will not receive the treat until the time is achieved without a bark!

Before you know it, Fido understands that not barking is what is getting him the treat. He will choose to not bark because he gets a reward, while barking gets him nothing (ignore the bad and reward the good).

Keep in mind that this technique can work in all examples of a barking dog. But remember that the more distracting the environment, the harder the command Enough will be to learn. For example, a dog barking at a squirrel in the back yard will probably not stop barking if we use the command Enough from the back door, and many times will not stop barking even if you are in the back yard with Fido. Since the distractions outdoors are so intense, I have found Enough to work way better inside the house than outside. But, as in all things, the more you practice, the more solid your command becomes.

So, start in the house, then gradually move outside, knowing that distraction is the hardest thing to deal with and there will be setbacks. As parents, we understand and avoid the candy aisle at Wal-Mart to keep from dealing with whining kids. In comparison, is it fair to relegate our dogs to the backyard for hours, with all of those wonderful distractions, and not have them bark? By simply managing your dog's outside time, you can avoid the entire barking issue since you are not allowing the dog to learn the bad behavior. Otherwise you will be calling a dog trainer to help you unlearn a bad behavior that you, in fact, allowed.

Training Tip ...

So, is there an easy way to train this behavior? How does a wireless doorbell sound? It has the advantage of allowing

you to practice during the day without having your neighbor, kids (though they'd love it!) or wife standing outside ringing the door bell over and over. You have the button in your pocket where you can practice without the dog realizing it! They even make a package that has two buttons! One for your pocket and the other to replace the button at the front door, so that they both sound the same... Who would have thought a trip to Home Depot would have been so damn rewarding (yes, we work off rewards as well)!

18

LEASH PULLING DOGS

Okay, we know your dog pulls, but let's delve a little deeper. What is the reward for your dog when he pulls? Honestly, he figures that the fastest way to get from point A to point B is ... well, to drag you along. There is no dominance; thinking your dog is trying to take over your world or any other world is just plain silly.

What matters to Fido is that he (and you!) are here ... and he'd rather be there. So guess what? You're going along for a ride — or a drag! After all, you two are connected by this goofy rope thing aren't you? Put simply, your dog has never been taught to pay more attention to you than to his environment. And, at this point, there is a lot of cool stuff in the world Fido wants to see, so get ready for the ride.

What Reward Does Fido Receive?

First, ask yourself one very important question, "What reward does Fido get from being on a walk?" Think hard, because the

answer is irritatingly simple. It is the walk itself. *The reward your dog gets from going on the walk is actually the walk.*

Now the next question has another irritatingly simple answer. (I promise, there is a point to all of this.) If Fido is inappropriate on a walk, what action do we take? Well, we already know that dogs only do what is rewarding. So if the walk is the reward and the unwanted behavior is pulling, what is it that we must do before anything else? That's right, we must stop walking! If Fido is not walking correctly, then the walk must stop.

This is the easiest technique to stop a dog from pulling, but we can't forget the other side of this equation. If we don't want him pulling and we stop every time he does pull, do we have any idea just what it is we want Fido to do? Without this answer, it's going to be pretty darn hard to get any level of reliability when walking without pulling.

Pay Attention to Us!

My suggestion is simple. We want Fido to pay attention to us on the walks instead of all the other crap he has been paying attention to previously. I know this may sound simple (solutions usually are!), but a dog paying attention to her owner is not pulling on her leash. This is basic physics. We need to let Fido know you don't like his pulling on the leash, by stopping the walk. We know what we want Fido to do on the walk — pay attention to us. But just how do we accomplish that?

The Watch Me Command

First off, let's start with the command Watch Me. It may be easier to accomplish these steps in the comfort of your living room, where there are fewer distractions. This command is as

simple as pointing to your nose. Fido looks you in the eye and is rewarded for that contact. Once you have a good Watch Me, throw Fido a curve ball. Turn your back on him and wait. In a matter of moments, Fido will come around and look at you with out you having to ask! Jackpot time. Give him a nice big reward and turn around again. Before too long this becomes a game and you are on your way to having a dog that is paying attention to you. Oh, and by the way, at this point in the game we don't even need to have Fido on leash.

As Fido gets better at this, the game will become boring and once again it's time for the curveball. Now, instead of just turning your back, take one giant step away from your dog and wait. Yep, she will still come around front and look at you, but this time looking at you is not good enough. Patience ... just keep waiting. If you have taught your dog that all the good stuff in life comes after she sits, then before you know it, your dog will sit in front of you!

Sit Equals Please

The important part is not asking for the sit but waiting until you get it — as long as you have taught Fido to sit! We are teaching Fido that whenever we stop, he must come around in front of us and sit and wait for further instructions. Now I am sure you have figured out that the next step is simply more starts and stops until the behavior of front and sit are reliable at least 85% of the time! (Come on, no one is 100% at anything.)

So start moving in all directions and with different numbers of steps, until every time you stop, no matter where you are, you are getting a front facing sit. Once that's accomplished, it is time to back-track to the Watch Me game — only this time, with a

leash and while increasing number of steps and varying directions, while still getting the front facing sit.

Take it On the Road

Are you ready to take this act on the road? You've been in the low-distraction environment of your living room until now. So what is the secret to successfully loose leash walk with your dog? Guess what? It's simply paying attention. Too many people check out while walking their dogs, they get bored and then the pulling begins.

So begin immediately, every 10 to 15 feet you stop and practice the front facing sit! If you want to get really crazy, start practicing all your commands on your walk; every 20 feet sit, every 10 feet a down or every 15 feet front facing sit, and so on. One last thing. I want you rewarding the dog for correct decisions and paying attention, so take treats on the walk. After all, you are expecting Fido to consider you more rewarding than the sights, sounds and smells of the walk, so give him a reason to pay attention to you!

19

THE LIVING ROOM DOG

In a recent class, one of my students gave me inspiration for this chapter with one simple question. Why is it that my dog does all the exercises and behaves so well at home, yet completely falls apart when we try the same stuff outside the home? “Simple,” I said, “You have a Living Room Dog!”

The 3 Ds of Dog Training

Okay, let me try to make sense of that last statement. Let’s start with the 3 Ds of dog training: Duration, Distance and Distraction. And you have to do them in that order to be successful. For example, I must first teach Fido a solid 30 second duration stay and only then do I add, let’s say, six feet of distance. Only when I have both duration and distance under my belt and working well will I dream of adding the last and toughest “D,” DISTRACTION. Distractions are the hardest thing any person will ever have to deal with when training Fido.

Another thing you need to understand about the “Living Room Dog” is the fact that dogs do not, cannot and will not gen-

eralize training the way we humans understand the concept of generalization. If I teach my son to hit a baseball in a batting cage, chances are he will be able to take that skill to a new environment, like a baseball diamond. Unfortunately, dogs often do not have this ability.

Teaching a dog a skill in one environment and expecting it to translate into a different situation or place is just not going to happen in most instances. A good example is that crazy dog that can fetch and retrieve toys inside the house perfectly, but couldn't care less about the game in the backyard. Why is that, do you suppose? Maybe it's not that Fido couldn't care less and it's more that he has not learned the game in that particular situation or environment, or versus the distraction of the outside world...

Practice, Practice, Practice

Each time you go to a training class, you go home with your head full of great ideas. You practice every morning before work, you come home and practice every night and everything seems to be going great. Until that one night you decide to take Fido for a walk (instead of practicing in the living room) and all hell breaks loose!

Fido doesn't listen, won't sit, barks at everything and generally acts like the goon you had before you started training classes. You are embarrassed, not to mention frustrated and probably more than a little out of sorts. This brings us full circle to you or my student standing in front of me or any other trainer and pleading to know why your dog falls apart outside the house. Like it or not, you own the "Living Room Dog"!

Don't Get Frustrated

The problem was not your dog and it was not you. It was the fact that you forgot, or were not taught, about the two critical aspects of training discussed earlier: Distractions and Generalizations. You mistakenly thought your dog would take the things learned in the living room and translate them to the world outside their living room!

Remember, the outside world is very distracting. The only way to make a dog reliable in all situations is to practice in all situations. I hope you take heed of these ideas and are ready to begin training in a slightly different way. If not, it is likely that you too will complain about having a “Living Room Dog” and be one of the many people who only experience the well-behaved and smart dog in your own living room. Personally, I would prefer to experience life with an “EVERYWHERE Dog”!

CONCLUSION

Well you made it, folks — it's the end of the book! First, I want to say thanks for buying the book. And secondly, I really hope you got something here in these pages that will help you and your dog communicate better. The information in these pages has come from many years of helping folks with all sorts of problem behaviors. I promise if you put in the time, practice often and spend the time *with* your dog versus *against* your dog, really anything can be accomplished!

If you enjoyed the book, there's plenty more where this came from! We have several other books, as well as many videos on our YouTube channel. We have an active blog, Facebook and other social media outlets. You name it, we've done it — in an attempt to teach folks to speak Dog as a Second Language.

While writing these books has been a pleasure, my true passion is public speaking! I love spreading the word about positive, scientific-based dog training. Let's face it, there are many people out there who have no idea how easy it is to train a dog or how enjoyable it can be! So simply Google me, Mike Deathe, or visit our business page www.kissdogtraining.com [<http://www.kissdogtraining.com>] (and yes it does stand for Keep It Simple

Stupid) if you or your group would like me to give a presentation!

A final thought, and a request if you don't mind ... as a small author, one of the greatest gifts you the reader can give me is a few minutes of your time and a review online of this book. This is information I am passionate about and I feel will help lots of people out there. I just need your help to get the word out!

So with that being said, thank you for reading the book, thank you for buying the book and thank you for being a part of training your dog the Keep It Simple Stupid way!

Mike