



BARKS

from the Guild

Issue No. 10 / January 2015

TRAINING
The Porcine
Connection

PUPPIES
Four on
the Floor

FELINE
Do Cats
Grieve?

CANINE
Prong Is
Wrong

TRENDS
Life as an
Urban Dog

PISCINE
The Contra
Freeloader

**The Chemistry of Feeling Good:
Oxytocin, Training and the
Human - Canine Bond**

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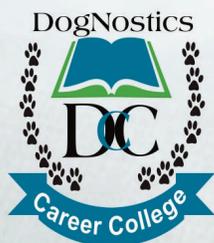
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BARKS from the Guild

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BARKS from the Guild

Published quarterly, *BARKS from the Guild* presents a collection of valuable business and technical articles as well as reviews and news stories pertinent to our industry. *BARKS* is the official publication of the Pet Professional Guild.

Submissions

BARKS encourages the submission of original written materials.

Please contact the Editor-in-Chief for contributor guidelines prior to sending manuscripts or see:

PetProfessionalGuild.com/Forcefreeindustrypublication

Please submit all contributions via our submission form at:

PetProfessionalGuild.com/BFTGcontent

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Letters to the Editor

To comment on authors' work, or to let us know what topics you would like to see more of, contact the Editor-in-Chief via email putting *BARKS* in the subject line of your email. *BARKS* reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and clarity.

Advertising

Please contact Niki Tudge at Admin@PetProfessionalGuild.com to obtain a copy of rates, ad specifications, format requirements and deadlines.

Advertising information is also available at:

PetProfessionalGuild.com/AdvertisinginBARKS

PPG does not endorse or guarantee any products, services or vendors mentioned in *BARKS*, nor can it be responsible for problems with vendors or their products and services. PPG reserves the right to reject, at its discretion, any advertising.

The Pet Professional Guild is a membership business league representing pet industry professionals who are committed to force-free training and petcare philosophies, practices and methods.

Pet Professional Guild members understand force-free to mean: No Shock, No Pain, No Choke, No Prong, No Fear, No Physical Force, No Physical Molding and No Compulsion-Based Methods.

Branching Out for the New Year

First of all, PPG would like to wish all its members and supporters a happy and successful new year. There are great things in the pipeline for the Guild this year, outlined in this month's message from PPG President, Niki Tudge, and in our events pages.

As is their wont, our members have contributed an array of thought-provoking articles for this issue. Our cover story focuses on oxytocin and its role in both dog training and the nature of the bond we have with our animals. We wonder whether dogs can become physically addicted to listening during training, given that it boosts the release of oxytocin in the brain. Anyone who has seen a dog "in the zone" during a training session will certainly be able to relate to this.

Species-wise, we are branching out a little with features on training pigs and fish, respectively. Pigs are becoming more popular as pets and are well-known for their high levels of intelligence. Given the potential size of an adult pig, training some rock solid obedience skills is essential, and we investigate this fascinating topic more closely. As for the fish, we discover that they too like to work for their food rather than just have it delivered on tap. While no one with a grasp of the mechanics of reward-based training will be too surprised at this, it is intriguing to see it in action.

Returning to all matters canine, we feature a number of articles highlighting the potential side effects of aversive training methods which, amongst others, have been proven to include fear, anxiety and aggression. Again, we wonder why anyone would want to risk causing their dog physical and/or psychological harm when humane, scientifically-sound techniques are so widely accessible.

Elsewhere in this issue we take a look at the modern dog, who is often required to live in a very urban environment and expected to simply "fit in". This can be highly stressful for some dogs, so we look at ways that can help their most basic physical and emotional needs be met. The world of animal rescue can be another immense source of stress - for both animals and humans - and we identify some of the inherent complexities and imperfections of this often dispiriting undertaking. We also continue our series on working with deaf dogs and outline exactly how to train a reliable recall.

For the cat people, we pose a different question: "Do cats grieve?" While anecdotal evidence suggests that yes, indeed they do (or some of them at least), there is no empirical evidence to support this, though of course many cat owners have witnessed it directly.

Our business section takes on something of a theme, with a focus on really listening to - as opposed to hearing - what our colleagues and clients tell us. That means listening actively, compassionately and with empathy to ensure the best outcome, with the clearest, most effective communication, for all parties.

Once again, we thank our writers for their excellent contributions and hope you enjoy this version of *BARKS*, whether you are reading it online or in print for the very first time.

Susan Nilson

Editor-in-Chief



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All Geared Up for a Year of Growth

Niki Tudge outlines PPG's plans and projects for 2015, with a focus on the International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and the Guild's inaugural Force-Free Summit: *Reaching for a Higher Standard*

Dear Fellow Force-Free Advocates,

Another year has gone by and I ponder whether to review all of the great things we have achieved together over the past year or to focus on what we are planning for 2015. Since I am writing this in early December and it will only be read for the first time in this, our January issue of *BARKS*, I guess the decision is made. Let's talk about the coming year...

As always the New Year brings about much excitement for all of us here at our Force-Free HQ. We have so many things planned that will, hopefully, not only start 2015 with a huge bang but take it out on a giant wave of accomplishments and growth.

Firstly, I want to highlight our second International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care (ICFF 2015) to be held on February 17. Last year's event was a great success and we hope to make it even better this year. The monies collected from this event go to our Leah Roberts Advocacy Foundation fund and will be used by our Advocacy Committee in 2015 to help spread our force-free message. It's a great cause and a whole lot of fun so sign up now - or after you finish reading *BARKS*! The registration fee this year is only \$20 and for that you receive our highly sought-after and collectible commemorative ICFF brass badge, a certificate of attendance and the opportunity to win some fantastic prizes (for more details, see Pages 12-13).

This year our generous sponsors have really outdone themselves. To name just a few, Dr. Susan Friedman is awarding a scholarship to her esteemed *Living and Learning with Animals* program while Dogwise and Tawzer are providing packages of books and videos respectively. Our TOP Prize is, wait for it... meals, lodging and credit toward your travel to our inaugural PPG Summit – worth over \$2000. So put your running/walking/training shoes on, get warmed up and get out there and do something fantastically force-free with your critter. These prizes are just too good to pass up. Visit our [website](#) to find out more and to read all the rules and, of course, to register.

To continue, the PPG Steering Committee met in early December and approved all our goals and projects for 2015. Of the many projects scheduled for the coming year, I would like to especially announce our inaugural PPG educational summit.

Titled *PPG Force-Free Summit 2015*, our first convention will be organized around the theme *Reaching for a Higher Standard*. In

2015 Committees, Key Tasks and Chairs

1. **The Marketing/PR Committee - Diane Garrod and Niki Tudge**
 - a. Marketing activities
 - b. Internet marketing
 - c. Force-Free Friday
 - d. *BARKS* marketing
 - e. ICFF celebration
 - f. Force-Free Summit
 - g. Market PPG convention
2. **Educational Committee - Niki Tudge and Angelica Steinker**
 - a. PPG licensing certification
 - b. Monthly webinar offerings
3. **Membership Benefits Committee - Anne Springer**
 - a. Vendor programs
 - b. Member educational handouts
 - c. Member survey
4. **The Ethics Committee - Catherine Zehner**
 - a. Ethics review procedures
5. **Advocacy Committee - Chair to be appointed**
 - a. Advocacy activities
 - b. Local, state and federal government communication
6. **PPG 2015 Summit Committee - Niki Tudge and Sub-Committee Team Leaders**
 - a. Location planning - Kelly Fahey
 - b. Presenter schedule - Fiona De Rosa
 - c. Vendors and sponsors - Gretchen Kabler
 - d. Marketing - Mickey Kinzer
7. ***BARKS from the Guild* – Susan Nilson**
 - a. *BARKS* publication, print and electronic
 - b. The PPG book
 - c. PPG bloggers
8. **Feline Behavior Committee – Jane Ehrlich**
9. **Local Area Chapters – Niki Tudge and Co-Chair to be appointed**
 - a. Development and documentation
 - b. Rollout and logistics



Become an Advocate



**For Force-Free
Dog Training and Pet Care**



keeping with this theme, all presenters have agreed to, and approve of, our educational message and Guiding Principles. We already have a fantastic line-up of presenters with PPG Special Counsel, Dr. Karen Overall, leading the way as our keynote speaker.

To make our convention available to the greatest number of PPG members we have also developed payment terms for members within a choice of attendance packages. We have put together three money-saving options, including *The Pug Package*, *The Aussie Package* and *The Mastiff Package*. You can find more information on these packages, as well as payment terms, our speaker schedule, the summit location and how to register on Pages 14-15. You can also visit our [website](#) to find out more.

In case you missed it at the end of last year, PPG launched a new *Become an Advocate* tri-fold (left) designed to help members educate veterinary professionals in their communities about the benefits of force-free training. With references to expert testimony to back up our message, the tri-fold is available as a full-print version and as an editable pdf in both US and A4 sizes, so members will be able to add their own business logo and contact details. More details are available [here](#).

Finally, I would like to thank Jan Casey, Caryn Liles and Heidi Steinbeck for all their hard work on the Steering Committee and wish them all the very best in their future endeavors.

That's it from me until next time. I wish each of you and your families a wonderful, force-free New Year and hope to see all of you at Summit 2015. Enjoy this issue of BARKS and, if you are reading this message in our new printed version, be sure to let us know what you think.

Niki Tudge

President - Pet Professional Guild



Niki Tudge is the founder of the [PPG](#), [The DogSmith](#), a national dog training and pet-care license, and [Dog-Nostics Career College](#). Her professional credentials include: CPDT-KA, NADOI – Certified, AABP- Professional Dog Trainer, AABP- Professional Dog Behavior Consultant, Diploma Animal Behavior Technology, and Diploma Canine Behavior Science & Technology.

The PPG tri-fold (left) has been designed to help members educate the veterinary community about force-free training methods

BARKS Hits the Press

This month we are running a trial version of BARKS in print. Although we would love to include BARKS in our membership fee, our yearly fee is half the cost of other pet industry associations so this is not financially viable at present. Instead, we have finalized discounted pricing and quality specifications and have made January BARKS available on a subscription basis. More details [here](#).

Additionally, from January 2015, BARKS will be going bi-monthly. Such is the quality and depth of contributions from our members, we feel that four times a year is no longer enough.

Also next year, we are planning to develop a "Pets" version of BARKS, which will be a force-free educational publication geared specifically towards pet owners. So there are exciting times ahead. On that note, we are looking for an advertising sales person for BARKS. If you know of anyone, then please [let us know](#).

Your Membership

In February last year we began phasing in our PPG membership fee. Many members jumped onboard immediately and continued to support PPG and for this we thank you. Membership funds are instrumental in helping us to continue what we do and achieve our organizational goals. Others did not renew their membership and, by default, their existing membership was transferred to the Pet Owner category. We have hundreds of Pet Owner members who support both our professional members and our cause and, as such, Pet Owner members have their own set of benefits that can be accessed through their own portal. To view the Pet Owner portal you can click [here](#).

BUT, if you are a professional in the pet industry and your membership category is still in the Pet Owner Category, then we would ask you to renew your professional membership. By doing this you will be supporting PPG's growth as well as giving yourself and your business access to many of the fabulous membership benefits that come along with it. See more details on the many benefits [here](#).

PPG Licensing Program

PPG is now in the final stages of setting up the certification tests for its very own Licensing Program to ensure they are psychometrically sound. This means the written testing portion of the licensing program will be administered by a third party who ensures the initial and future appropriateness of the examination specifications in terms of evaluating the body of knowledge necessary for competent practice. We are working as quickly as possible to make the new program available to our members at the most affordable rates, while ensuring it is developed and implemented correctly. The program will be open for applications shortly.

New Member Referral

If you refer a new member to PPG who qualifies through our membership application process, then we will reward you with a \$10 credit towards an educational event. Please help us build our membership. We have power in numbers.

Virtual Photo and Video Competition Now Open

Our International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care (ICFF) virtual photo and video competition is open for registration. The prizes this year include a place on Dr.

Susan Friedman's *Living and Learning with Animals* Program, a FREE PPG convention, including hotel room, food and a \$500 credit towards your airline ticket, and many more.

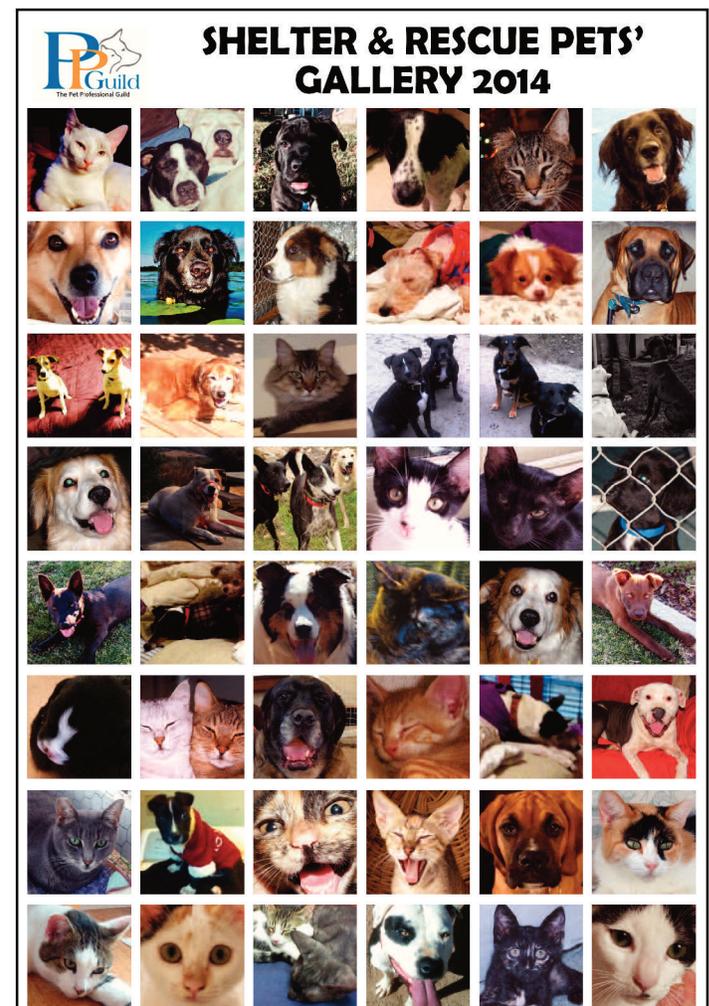
Click [here](#) for more information and to register. See also Pages 12-13.



International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care

Shelter and Rescue Pets Gallery

Following on from the success of our Mutts' Gallery last summer, PPG compiled another gallery in November in support of the Humane Society of the United States' [National Animal Shelter and Rescue Appreciation Week](#). As always, members and supporters sent in a wonderful array of pictures of the cats and dogs whose lives have been saved. Thank you to everyone who participated. View the Gallery on our [Facebook](#) page.



PPG Survey

The PPG Survey is in full swing and, once we get the results, members will get a full copy of all the analysis. The information obtained will be akin to a macro analysis of the industry and help with your marketing efforts, including what type of marketing is working for professionals in your area, what your peers are charging, what services they are offering and so on.

Force-Free Summit Speakers

We have received a large number of applications to present at the PPG's inaugural summit, The Force Free Summit – *Reaching for a Higher Standard*. Thank you to everyone who applied. It is a very exciting time for us and a lot of fun to be working on this project. For more information and to register, see [here](#). Registrations are now open. Speakers for the Summit are still being confirmed but you can find an updated list [here](#).

Letter from PPG Australia

In late October, at the annual education meeting of the Australian Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), PPG members and those interested in the PPG held a lunchtime meeting. PPG Steering Committee member Diane Garrod was a guest speaker at the APDT meeting, while fellow PPG Steering Committee member Deb Millikan is an Australian national, and the occasion gave the two an ideal platform to share PPG's message with interested parties.

Attendees were particularly excited to hear about PPG's upcoming Licensing Program, something that is eagerly awaited in Australia. Suggestions about who should mark the examination component of the Licensing Program were given, received and passed on to the Steering Committee.

There were very mixed feelings about the upcoming PPG conference in Tampa, FL this year. Excitement that it will finally be happening was huge, but so was disappointment that it will not be taking place a little closer to home. In spite of that, attendees were greatly enthusiastic about the plan to live stream the event and the possibility of being able to access some of the sessions for viewing at a later time.

Way down in the Antipodes, PPG members do sometimes feel a bit isolated but are keen to spread the word and are greatly looking forward to the possibility of local chapters. The general feeling was that the PPG needs a higher profile internationally and thinking caps are on about how that might be achieved in Australia.

The prizes for The International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care (ICFF), to be announced on February 17, 2015, raised smiles and enthusiasm also, with minds immediately ticking over regarding the concept of "patriotic" photographs. We look forward to seeing the "Australiana" pictures soon!

In South Australia meanwhile, pet dog training school, the Canine Behavioural School Inc. (CBS), has instigated a scholarship to be awarded to a student of the University

Calling Potential Webinar Hosts!

Do you have something to say? Are you passionate about a topic? Want to share your expertise?

It is once again that time of year when we are looking to add webinars to our webinar calendar for 2015. If you are interested in hosting a webinar for PPG members, then please [contact us](#). Alternatively, we have a simple form you can complete to help us list and market your webinar.

If you have never hosted a webinar before, rest assured that we will help you through the process. Please click [here](#) for our webinar form and you can read all the webinar event terms and conditions [here](#).

Many PPG members have stepped up and scheduled some great sessions and we already have some fascinating webinars set up for this year. Why don't you join us in our mission to advocate for force-free training?

of Adelaide, School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences who requires funding for a study project. CBS will offer 1,000 Australian dollars (\$840) per year for a project the CBS Committee feels will best benefit dogs and their people.

The inaugural recipient will be Petra Edwards who is an animal behavior graduate from Flinders University of South Australia, an Associate Member of the PPG and a former instructor at CBS. Her

project will re-visit a study published in 2007 in the *Journal of Applied Companion Behavior*, comparing and contrasting various types of dog training equipment. Petra's project will help deepen our knowledge of training equipment efficacy.

Collaboration between tertiary educational institutions and dog training education centers can only be seen as a positive step forward in the promotion of force-free training.

Elsewhere, in Bendigo, Victoria, a small group gathered to share some fun, games and education about pet dog training. All of the participants were eager to improve their skills in positive methods and discover how to incorporate them into their more traditional training format, a pet dog training component.

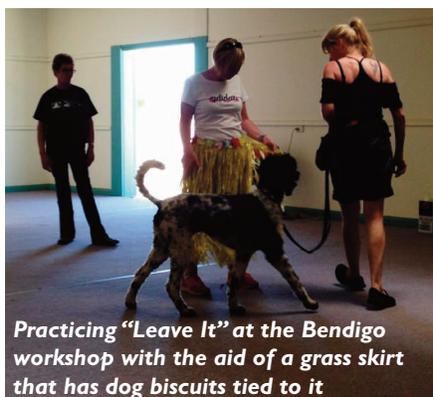
Pet dog training exercises were undertaken by dogs skilled in obedience, agility and Rally O but they did not always find the pet dog skills as easy as their people may have thought.

Thanks to Kathleen Kemp from ACE Dogs for organizing this get together.

- Debra Millikan
AABP-CABP CAP2 DipABST
DipDTBC Cert IV Training & Assessment



Petra Edwards with her Rottweiler, Gus

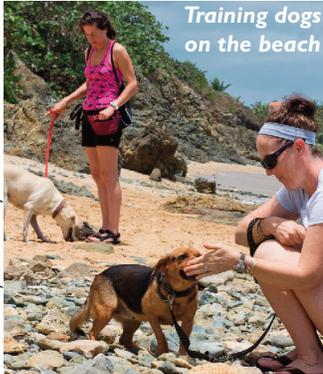


Practicing "Leave It" at the Bendigo workshop with the aid of a grass skirt that has dog biscuits tied to it



Force-Free Training Caribbean-Style

Photo by Timothy Wheeler



Training dogs on the beach

Rincon-based PPG Member, Terrie Hayward M Ed CPDT-KA, is to run a volunteer vacation from May 8–17, 2015 to introduce force-free training methods to pet owners, shelter staff and rescue groups in Puerto Rico.

“There are thousands of homeless dogs on the islands in the Caribbean,” said Hayward. “Breeders in the US supply pet shops with puppies who grow up

and produce unwanted litters. These dogs may manage to scavenge a living long enough to produce unwanted pups of their own before they succumb to disease, starvation, are killed by cars, other animals or inhumane eradication programs.

“One of the ways to improve the lives of dogs is to help their owners and caregivers communicate more clearly and effectively with them. Dogs who learn to respond to a few simple cues are more likely to remain in their homes.”

The volunteer vacation, a combination of community service, dog training skills, education, practice and flat-out fun, is open to anyone over the age of 18, not just professional dog trainers. See [here](#) for more information.

Upcoming PPG Events

Workshops

Back To Basics - A Five-Day Level Two Force-Free Dog Training Instructor Workshop with Niki Tudge and Angelica Steinker (Tampa, FL)

Monday, January 5, 2015 - 8 a.m. (EST) -
Friday, January 9, 2015 - 6 p.m. (EST)

Back To Basics - A Five-Day Level One Force-Free Dog Training Workshop with Niki Tudge and Angelica Steinker (Tampa, FL)

Monday, February 16, 2015 - 8 a.m. (EST) -
Friday, February 20, 2015 - 6 p.m. (EST)

A Two-Day Seminar - Helping Dogs Thrive: Tellington TTouch® and Other Life-Enhancing Techniques with Lori Stevens (Tampa, FL)

Saturday, February 28, 2015 -
Sunday, March 1, 2015 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (EST) each day
(working and auditor spots available)

Two-Day Workshop - Rocket Recall: If You Build It They Will Come! With Lisa and Brad Waggoner and Cold Nose College (Tampa, FL)

Saturday, March 28, 2015 - 8 a.m. (EDT) -
Sunday, March 29, 2015 - 5:30 p.m. (EDT)

Back To Basics - A Five-Day Level Two Force-Free Dog Training Instructor Workshop with Niki Tudge and Angelica Steinker (Tampa, FL)

Monday, April 13, 2015 - 8 a.m. (EDT) -
Friday, April 17, 2015 - 5:30 p.m. (EDT)

Canine Injury Prevention Workshop and Seminar Part 1 with Shari Sprague (Tampa, FL)

Saturday, April 25, 2015 - 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Canine Injury Prevention Workshop and Seminar Part 2 with Shari Sprague (Tampa, FL)

Saturday, April 25, 2015 - 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Master the Skill of Teaching & Achieving Loose Leash Walking with Daniela Cardillo (Tampa, FL): Three-Day Seminar for Dog Training and Dog Walking Professionals/Two-Day Seminar for Pet Owners

Friday, May 1, 2015 - 9 a.m. (EDT) -
Sunday, May 3, 2015 - 4 p.m. (EDT)

Live Webinars

Hands on Business Coaching for Pet Professionals - Out Think, Out Smart, Out Grow Your Competition with Niki Tudge

Monday, January 12, 2015 - 5 p.m. (EST) -
Monday, April 20, 2015 - 6 p.m. (EDT)

Reducing Behavior with Reinforcement with Dr. Susan G. Friedman

Wednesday, January 14, 2015 - 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. (MST)

How To Establish Working Relationships with Rescue Groups and Shelters with Tabitha Davies

Monday, January 26, 2015 - 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (PST)

Learn How To Work With Deaf and/or Visually Impaired Dogs with Dr. Morag Heirs

Wednesday, February 4, 2015 - 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (EST)

How To Develop Professional Assertiveness and Self Confidence in Today's Competitive Environment with Niki Tudge

Monday, February 16, 2015 - 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (EST)

Learn How To Teach Dogs To Relax with Cissy Sumner

Wednesday, February 18, 2015 - 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (EST)

Learn The Essential Skills to Use PowerPoint with Niki Tudge

Friday, February 27, 2015 - 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (EST)

What Does It Take and Should You Open Your Own Daycare Facility with Tristan Flynn

Monday, March 9, 2015 - 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (EDT)

Learn How to Play Sprinkles™ and the Benefits It Brings to Our Canine Partners with Sally Hopkins

Saturday, June 6, 2015 - 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (EDT)

Special Event

The International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Dog Training and Pet Care Professionals (ICFF):

International Virtual Photograph/Video Competition

Tuesday, February 17, 2015 (more details on Pages 12-13 and [here](#).)

Details of all upcoming workshops can be found [here](#).

All PPG webinars are recorded. More details can be found in the [education](#) area on the PPG website.



Level 1 Dog Training Workshop with *Niki Tudge* and *Angelica Steinker*

A Five-Day Workshop in Tampa, FL

Monday, February 16, 2015 – 8 a.m. (EST) – Friday, February 20, 2015 – 6 p.m. (EST)

Calling newbie dog trainers, pet enthusiasts and pet dog owners! February is the perfect time to visit sunny central Florida to enjoy five action-packed days of creative, fun dog training activities. The event is being hosted at [The Canine Event Center](#) in Tampa, FL, home to PPG and The DogSmith.

The Canine Event Center is set on 23 acres of fully-fenced training areas against the backdrop of King Lake, a 500-acre inland water feature hosting some of Florida's richest bird species, yet only minutes away from restaurants, malls and interstate facilities. The location is a paradise for both canines and humans.

Over the course of this workshop participants will learn professional dog training skills while their pet dogs also learn some new skills and tricks. Participants will enjoy eight hours of classroom instruction each day as well as hands-on training. The program is suitable for pet dog owners, pet enthusiasts or individuals exploring the pet industry.

Each day will commence at 8 a.m. There will be a two-hour midday break for lunch and relaxation. Activities will resume in the afternoon from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. During the week participants will also have the opportunity to visit our Dog Sports location and try out Dock Diving, Agility and Lure Coursing.

Our training programs are packed full of games and fun exercises for both participants and their dogs. For anyone interested the program will close with fun competitions and "Canine Good Citizen" Testing.

CEUs: CCPDT - 21/IAABC - 36



Dogs and owners will both learn new skills

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Level I Dog Training Workshop Details

Two Types of Registrant:

- Off-site accommodation arranged by participant. Program cost is \$550. Cost per day = \$110.
- On-site accommodation in a shared room. Program cost is \$680. Cost per day = \$136.
- RVs are welcome for \$20 per night. There is no power or water hook up.

Payment Terms and Conditions:

- Payment terms are available for PPG members, DogSmiths and DogNostic students.
- Three payments accepted with the full program being paid for 60 days prior to the course start date.
- No refunds will be given.

Aside from a vast variety of pet dog skills, participants at the workshop will also learn:

- Soft mouth
- Collar behavior
- Introducing a leash
- House training
- Teaching a hand target around head and body
- Building distance and duration
- Speed and fluency
- Distractions, moving, stationary, point of commitment
- Context - generalization
- Intensity, duration and frequency
- Let's go
- Spin
- Target
- Jump over an object

More information and online registration:
[Level I - Five-Day Dog Training Workshop](#)



Helping Dogs Thrive: Tellington TTouch® and Other Life-Enhancing Techniques with *Lori Stevens*

A Two-Day Seminar in Tampa, FL

Saturday, February 28 – Sunday, March 1, 2015 – 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day

Working Spots and Auditor Spots Available

Join Lori Stevens for this fabulous two-day seminar in Tampa, Florida. The event is being hosted at [The Canine Event Center](#).

The seminar will introduce you to force-free, humane and gentle techniques for improving the life of your dog. You will be introduced to TTouch® bodywork, movement and leash-handling techniques and learn how to recognize when your dog is stressed or fearful and what to do about it. You will also learn about how your own body posture and movement patterns can affect your dog's behavior.

Other topics include: canine body language, observation skills, analyzing behavior, enrichment, fear and stress and hind-end targeting. It will also discuss the importance of building a trusting relationship and what that involves.

TTouch® is a method of working with animals that was developed by animal expert Linda Tellington-Jones as a result of her experience as a Feldenkrais practitioner. As an experienced horsewoman she realized that some of the Feldenkrais rehabilitation exercises linking body and mind that were used with people could be used to help animals as well. She found that an animal's posture influences its behavior and that physical, mental and emotional balance are inextricably linked.

Working spots are \$240; auditor spots are \$160. PPG members can make two payments for the workshop over four months but full payment should have been made 60 days prior to



Lori Stevens is a Senior Tellington TTouch® Practitioner for dogs, cats and other animals

28 February, 2015. Please indicate this preference on your registration form.

TTouch® is a holistic approach, which includes the following:

- Bodywork which is gentle and non-invasive
- Equipment and techniques which bring awareness and changes to animals
- Movement or ground work which

- builds confidence and improves focus
 - Philosophy which is one of respect for animals
- The combination of TTouch® movement exercises and bodywork improves concentration, coordination, behavior and athletic ability in many animals. TTouch® is used widely around the world by trainers, pet owners and veterinarians.

Other topics in this workshop include: canine body language, observation skills, analyzing behavior, enrichment, fear and stress and hind-end targeting. We will also discuss the importance of building a trusting relationship and what that involves.

This workshop will provide you tools and techniques to help with the following issues:

- Fear and stress
- Inability to focus
- Lack of confidence
- Over-activity (unable to easily be calm)
- Touch sensitivity
- Lack of body awareness, especially hind-end awareness
- Pulling on lead
- Behavior issues

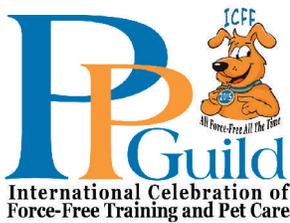
You will learn how to do the following:

- Utilize TTouch® bodywork
- Incorporate TTouch® wrap
- Recognize signs of stress
- Build skills in a fearful dog
- Re-think your relationship and how to build on what you currently have
- Approach behavior challenges
- Hind-end targeting
- Apply movement exercises
- Walk in balance with your dog
- Assess harness fit

CEUs: CCPDT - 16/IAABC - 16/KPA - 16
NADOI certificate will be issued

More information and online registration:
[Helping Dogs Thrive: Tellington TTouch® and Other Life-Enhancing Techniques](#)





The International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care

February 17 marks the International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care. Come and celebrate with us! Register today for a chance to win great prizes!

Every year on February 17, PPG hosts its virtual advocacy fund-raising event, [The International Day of Celebration for Force-Free Training and Pet Care](#) (ICFF). The event honors founding PPG member and pioneering force-free dog trainer, the late Leah Roberts, who spearheaded an early crusade against the use of choke, prong, and shock collars and was a tireless advocate of modern science-based training, eschewing coercion.

Often finding herself swimming against the tide, Roberts had the insight to realize that force-free trainers needed a professional organization to represent their ethical standards. So, in 2012, she became a founding member of the PPG, formed that year by Niki Tudge, President, in conjunction with several other trainers nationwide, and joined the Steering Committee.

Even when diagnosed with terminal cancer, Roberts continued to act as a mentor to new trainers. In February 2014, in honor of her indomitable spirit and lifelong mission to promote force-free dog training as the only appropriate and acceptable method, PPG created the Leah Roberts Foundation. The foundation will actively manage and implement ICFF day and other PPG educational advocacy events each year.

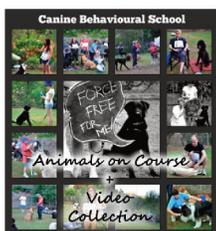
PPG dedicates 10 percent of its income to the foundation, specifically to spread the force-free message and improve industry operating practices, standards and philosophies through educational marketing campaigns, membership handouts and marketing collateral. In 2015 PPG will roll out its Force-Free Advocacy Committee and Local Area Chapters to further support its mission. Leah Roberts passed away on March 9, 2014.



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ICFF 2014 Winners

Best Group Photo



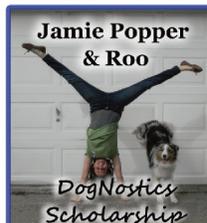
2nd Place
Jill Marple 4H
Doggie Goodie Box
3rd Place
Carole Husein
ITDH \$25.00

Most Difficult



Joanne Livermore
Bark Box
2nd Place
Breanna Norris & Nina
Chirag Patel Consult
3rd Place
Adrienne Farricelli & Petra
Hounds 2 Hounds

Overall Winner Popular Vote



Jamie Popper & Roo
DogNostics Scholarship

Funniest Costume



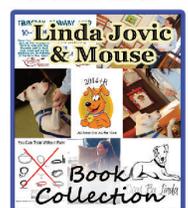
Carmel Catuara & Bella
Portrait
2nd Place
Jill Marple & 4H
Hero Drawing
3rd Place
Steve Brooks
Positively cap and bandana

Best Dressed



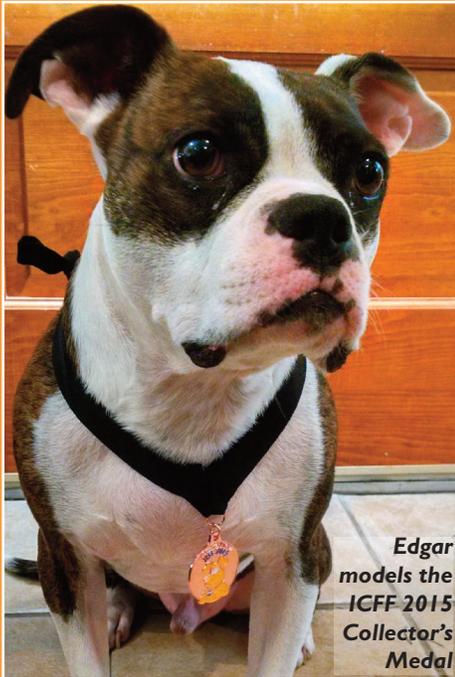
Kathleen Tepperries & Max
Dog Kingdom Gift Certificate
2nd Place
Fiona De Rosa & Mel Cocking
Leash Aggression Classroom
3rd Place
Steve Brooks
Puppy DVDs + Clickers

Best Photo



Linda Jovic & Mouse
Book Collection
2nd Place
Michele Frank & Tucker
PPG \$100
3rd Place
Christina Bourne & Prince
Family Paws Education





Edgar
models the
ICFF 2015
Collector's
Medal

Celebrate ICFF 2015 with Us!

To participate in this year's event you simply have to take a photograph and/or make a short video and submit it to one of our competition categories. You can participate from anywhere in the world. Register today and help celebrate this important day!

There are some FANTASTIC PRIZES up for grabs! Together we can help educate and advocate the use of force-free training and pet care methods.

This year we have amazing prizes, a more streamlined competition and a brand new collector's medal.

So don't miss out! Register [HERE](#) and join our [Facebook event](#) too!

COMPETITION CATEGORIES AND PRIZES

BEST OVERALL PICTURE

GRAND PRIZE: THE INAUGURAL PPG CONVENTION PACKAGE. A \$500 CREDIT TOWARDS YOUR AIRLINE TICKET, HOTEL, FOOD AND YOUR FULL PPG CONVENTION ENTRY. VALUED AT \$2000

BEST DOG(S) AND HANDLER TEAM

PRIZE: A FULL SCHOLARSHIP AT DOGNOSTICS CAREER COLLEGE

BEST GROUP PHOTOGRAPH

PRIZE: A COLLECTION OF 10 DVDS SPONSORED BY TAWZER DOG

BEST PICTURE NORTH AMERICA

PRIZE: A \$200 GIFT CERTIFICATE SPONSORED BY DOGWISE



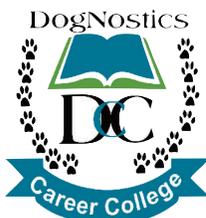
MOST CREATIVE COMPLEX TRAINING VIDEO

PRIZE: ONE ENTRY TO DR. SUSAN FRIEDMAN'S LIVING AND LEARNING WITH ANIMALS ONLINE EDUCATIONAL COURSE

BEST PICTURE REST OF THE WORLD

PRIZE: UNLIMITED PPG WEBINARS FOR 12 MONTHS

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Save the Dates!
November 11 - 13, 2015
www.ForceFreeSummit.com

PPG's First Force-Free Summit for Pet Professionals in Tampa, FL

The Force-Free Summit: *Reaching for a Higher Standard*

PPG is to host its first-ever educational convention in 2015.

The goals of this inaugural event are three-fold:

- To help build awareness of PPG as a first-class organization and to build a stronger collaboration of force-free pet professionals
- To help support and build communication and networking opportunities with the veterinary community and veterinary educators
- To provide a highly interactive and fun educational format for all who attend

Guest Speakers (To Date)

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Karen Overall MAVMD PhD DACVB CAAB

Dr. Michelle Duda - Senior Level Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Pamela Johnson - Pam's Dog Training Academy

Dr. Soraya Juarbe-Diaz - Veterinary Behaviorist

Emily Larlham - DogMantics

Barb Levenson - Puppy To Partner Program

Ken McCort - Four Paws Animal Behavior Services

Theresa McKeon - TAGteach International

Pat Miller - Peaceable Paws

Jacqueline Munera - Positive Cattitudes

Chirag Patel - Domesticated Manners

Angelica Steinker - Courteous Canine Inc, The DogSmith of Tampa

Niki Tudge - The DogSmith

Venue

PPG has secured excellent room rates with [The Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel](#). When you contact the hotel, be sure to mention PPG to benefit from our special Summit rates. We have also created several different package options for you that can be financed over several months if you are a PPG member (see opposite page). The Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel is a Tampa pet friendly hotel and is happy to accept dogs up to 80 lbs.

We will be updating our website regularly with more details so keep checking back [here](#).

Registration is now OPEN!



Pricing and Packages

Option One - The Pug Package

Rates include:

- Registration and "Treat Bag"
- Welcome Cocktail Party on the evening of November 10, 2015
- The Tampa Treasure Hunt on the evening of November 11, 2015
- Your Summit Registration



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Option Two - The Aussie Package

Rates include:

- Registration and "Treat Bag"
- Your Summit T-Shirt
- Welcome Cocktail Party on the evening of November 10, 2015
- The Tampa Treasure Hunt on the evening of November 11, 2015
- Your Summit Registration
- Summit group breakfast and lunch each day
- "The Splash" Formal Dinner around the pool overlooking Tampa on the evening of November 12, 2015



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Option Three - The Mastiff Package Limited Spaces So Book Early!

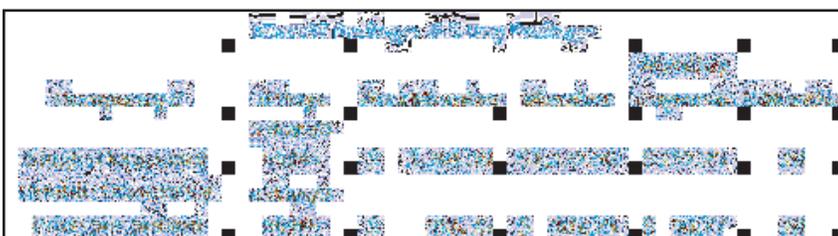
The Mastiff package is booked through PPG. We coordinate your room accommodation and at registration you will receive all the necessary documentation for your meals and any LABS you register for. If you are interested in sharing a room and registering on the "Double Occupancy" Package we will also work with you to find a suitable room mate.

Rates include:

- Registration and "Treat Bag"
- Your Summit T-Shirt
- Welcome Cocktail Party on the evening of November 10, 2015
- The Tampa Treasure Hunt on the evening of November 11, 2015
- One Working Spot in a LAB each day
- Your Summit Registration
- Summit group breakfast and lunch each day
- "The Splash" Formal Dinner around the pool overlooking Tampa on the evening of November 12, 2015
- Your accommodation The Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel on the nights of November 10, 11 and 12, 2015



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Dogs in the Zone



© Can Stock Photo/ksuksa

Training stimulates the pleasure center of a dog's brain and can become chemically addictive

Is it possible that oxytocin levels in the brain induce a chemical response that makes training “addictive”? *Barb Levenson* investigates

Have you ever seen that look in your dog's eyes? He looks at you and it feels like he truly loves you. Well, you are probably right. Scientists are discovering that we may actually be correct. Our dogs are indeed expressing their love for us.

Several weeks ago I was working with my eight-month-old Border collie puppy, Classy. I wanted to shape the behavior of him putting his head down while he was in his bed. In this situation I used a clicker as my marker so I could pinpoint the exact time Classy made a correct response. I also picked a very specific criterion – click when his nose moved down toward the bed. Classy was getting the behavior but something interesting was

happening at the same time. He seemed to go into a “zone.”

I usually keep my training sessions short in order to keep Classy wanting to play more with me. In this instance, however, he seemed to be enjoying the game so much so that distractions in the room had no effect on his attention to me. Our session lasted almost 12 minutes. Never once did he want to leave the bed and only one time did he glance away from me. This was amazing. I had not seen this in him before. Adolescent puppies are not known for long attention spans but Classy was showing me he might be an exception, in this context at least.

It was fascinating for me to watch my puppy become thoroughly engaged in the game. I was reinforcing him with his break-



fast so I was simply using kibble and not special treats. Becoming an observer, not just a participant, I watched Classy become calmer and calmer. He only took his eyes off me once and those eyes had something going on behind them.

What was also interesting was that he did not want to stop the game. I literally had to pull him away from the bed. If I had had more food he would have continued indefinitely. At the time I thought Classy was having the same experience as the so-called “runner’s high” where endorphins flood the brain while you are running. You feel as though your feet are not even touching the ground and you can run forever. So this set me to thinking about what was going on in Classy’s brain.

Pieces started coming together. I remember seeing a Facebook page that I had shared on my website and posted at my training facility. The title of the page was [Effects of Training on Your Dog’s Brain](#). Your dog becomes physically addicted to listening to you. The first bullets in this post were as follows:

- Training stimulates pleasure center of the dog’s brain
- Boosts release of pleasure chemical, oxytocin
- Reduces levels of stress chemical, cortisol
- Makes your dog want to REPEAT positive behaviors

I started a search for oxytocin. Where to first? [Wikipedia](#), of course. Exactly what is oxytocin?

The Chemical Connection

Oxytocin was first discovered in 1906 as a hormone that increases during and after child birth, and secures a bond between the mother and her newborn.

More recent studies have investigated the role of oxytocin in behaviors such as social recognition, anxiety and pair-bonding. The same connection that is formed between mother and child is formed between many owners and their dogs, chemically speaking that is. This is why I hear people describe their love for their dog as though he were their baby.

Oxytocin is a hormone produced by the hypothalamus and stored and secreted by the posterior pituitary gland. It acts primarily as a neuromodulator in the brain. Neuromodulators facilitate focused delivery of modifying agents – e.g. electrical, optical or chemical signals - to targeted areas of the nervous system in order to improve neural function. Recent studies have begun to investigate oxytocin’s role in various behaviors, including the above mentioned pair-bonding, and, for this reason, it is sometimes referred to as the “bonding hormone”. In addition oxytocin is released during various positive sensory stimulations such as touch, light pressure, warmth and stroking, and is one of the reasons why our dogs love their belly rubs.

Oxytocin Studies and Dogs

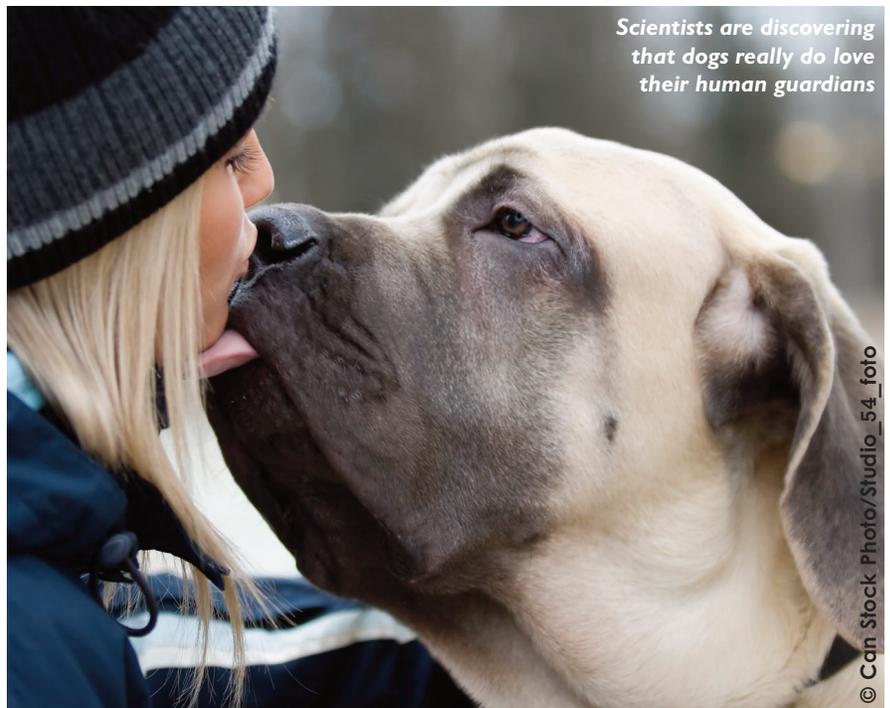
I began looking into research that went beyond

human pair bonding and looked at the effects on our dogs. Several well-known and respected names came up. The first that attracted my attention was the well-known behaviorist, Patricia McConnell. McConnell speculates about oxytocin in her book, *For the Love of a Dog* (McConnell, P., 2007 *For the Love of a Dog* Ballantine Books). She became interested in it because of an article in the journal, *Hormones and Behavior*. McConnell states the authors, M. Nagasawa et. al., found a correlation between the level of an owner’s oxytocin and how much their dog tended to gaze directly at them. This is exactly what Classy was doing. I did not realize it was building up in my brain too.

McConnell calls oxytocin a “feel good” hormone associated with social bonding and it correlates with friendly social behavior in many species, including humans. As I watched and worked with Classy in this training session, I realized he was becoming more and more committed to me and the “game” and I was too. It was reinforcing to look into the eyes of my Border collie. I felt we were making a real connection.

Ian Dunbar, another internationally known veterinarian and behaviorist, quotes a study conducted by Tokyo University (found in the journal, [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America](#)). The article offers evidence that a dose of oxytocin given to our dogs will increase the demonstration of social behaviors toward both other dogs as well as their humans.

According to Dunbar, the Tokyo researchers worked with 16 pet dogs who were given either a saline spray or a spray of oxytocin into their nostrils. They monitored the dogs both behaviorally and physiologically (blood and urine samples were taken) after the oxytocin was administered and while they were released to interact with their owners and each other. The owners were not informed as to which spray the dogs had received but had been instructed not to interact with the dogs.



Scientists are discovering that dogs really do love their human guardians

© Can Stock Photo/Studio_54_foto



The Chemistry of Feeling Good

At present, brain oxytocin, opioids, and prolactin systems appear to be key participants in the subtle feelings that we humans call acceptance, nurturance, and love - the feelings of social solidarity and warmth. Although many human interactions and cognitive experiences also contribute to maternal states, without the underlying mood- and behavior-altering neuropeptides, those experiences would probably remain shallow and without emotional intensity.

At the present time, AVP, oxytocin and opioid systems appear to be prime movers in the construction and maintenance of social bonds in mammals...Animals also prefer to spend more time with other animals in whose presence they have experienced high brain oxytocin and opioid activities. Thus, it seems as if friendships are cemented by the same chemical systems that mediate maternal and sexual urges.

Additional research on oxytocin provides yet another intriguing piece to the neurosocial puzzle. The chemistries that promote pleasure and family values are also able to dramatically reduce irritability and aggressiveness.

It has long been known that human societies that encourage physical closeness, touching and the free flow of intimacy tend to be the least aggressive in the world...This of course makes a great deal of evolutionary sense: If one is socially well satisfied, there is little reason to fight.

Oxytocin administration reduces all forms of aggression that have been studied.

Source: **Panksepp, J.** (1998)

Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions

© [Oxford University Press](#)

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The results were fascinating. The dogs who had received the oxytocin treatments displayed more playful, affiliative and social behaviors towards both the humans and other dogs. Behaviors such as pawing (for attention), sniffing, licking (go ahead, call it doggy kisses) and prolonged directed gazes were measured. Additionally, all that social bonding behavior produced even more oxytocin in the dogs. I believe the little "capturing game" I performed with Classy was definitely doing this because he wanted to continue to play the game. Was he on an oxytocin high? I am beginning to think perhaps he was.

Another study supporting the effects of oxytocin in our dogs is quoted by Victoria Stilwell in her book, *Train Your Dog Positively* (Stilwell, V., 2013 *Train Your Dog Positively* Ten Speed Press). The research was performed by another Japanese researcher, Miho Nagasawah, of the Department of Animal Science and Biotechnology at Azabu University in Japan.

This study demonstrated that even eye contact between a dog and a human causes an increase in oxytocin. This interaction between our two species has a powerful physiological effect on both of us, promoting feelings of love and attachment while low-

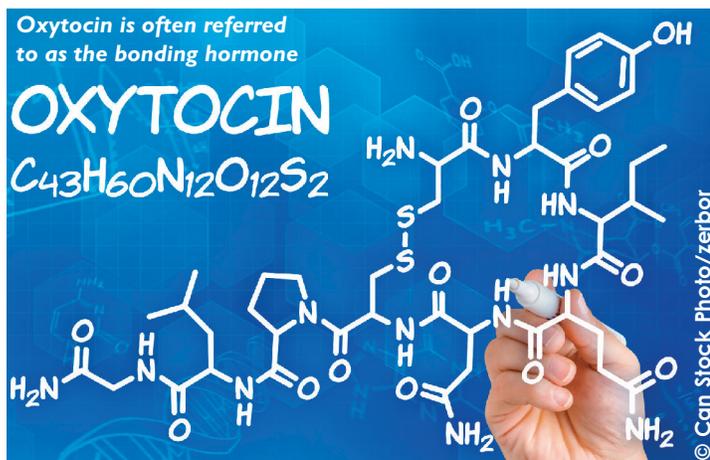
ering blood pressure and heart rate, soothing pain and lessening stress. This is one of the reasons dogs are being used in therapy with the elderly. And, this is exactly what was happening with Classy and I in our session. I was starting to find some answers.

Oxytocin and Stress

There was one last interesting bullet in the aforementioned post on the [Kurgo DogBlog](#). Oxytocin reduces levels of the stress chemical, cortisol. I knew about cortisol and stress but was unfamiliar with its implications for my dog. In humans, cortisol amps up our response to fight or flight stimuli. It is one of the body's hormones that helps to speed up our heart rate and create the hyper alert energy state which empowers us to immediately get out of danger. In human beings, even non-physical related stress like relationship problems, job-related problems and family problems increase cortisol levels. Could this relate to our dogs? The research says it does.

The *Kurgo DogBlog* stated that training reduces cortisol levels in the dog's brain. Right now, Classy is in the midst of his adolescent fear period during which he becomes stressed at and frightened of both novel and familiar situations. For example, we have struggled with the teeter - we get it, we lose it, we get it back and lose it again as his fears ebb and flow. He becomes confident and then a couple of weeks later he is terribly afraid. When he is afraid of the teeter I simply revert to an earlier step and build again.

Now I am beginning to think about the effect of oxytocin on this retraining. Perhaps it is not simply the "retraining" that gets his confidence back but my force-free training that allows him to offer behaviors (on the teeter and elsewhere) that are reinforcing for him. And I now know that this interaction, this offering of behaviors for reinforcement increases his levels of oxytocin. I originally thought it was the food plus the training that helped him overcome his fears. But instead, is this oxytocin at work countering the effects of fear, stress and his cortisol levels as I





train and bond with him?

A lot of the training of my own dogs is designed to help them learn how to think and offer behaviors. When they are reinforced for a behavior they offer I have found that behavior to be stronger and more durable than behaviors I teach primarily as a verbal cue. As a result of this line of thinking I have come to an important conclusion.

My force-free training stimulates and engages the pleasure centers of the brain, stimulates the production of oxytocin and thus creates an opposing effect to cortisol. Could more of this kind of training help Classy through his fear period? By engaging in more training of the kind that reduces cortisol and increases oxytocin could I help him be calmer and also bond more with me?

My little Border collie is the most challenging of my career. Many of the behaviors I have taken for granted in my many other dogs result in very stressful reactions from Classy. For example, the simple act of a pat on the side and “good boy” caused him to react excessively and snarl at me. He came to me with some body sensitivities. “Don’t touch me like that,” was what he seemed to say.

The well-known veterinary behaviorist, Dr. Karen Overall, would tell me that Classy has difficulty with control and she would be right. In her manual *Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Small Animals* (Overall, K., 2013 Mosby, Inc. Pages 214-215), Overall describes Classy’s reactions as an “impulse control” behavior which is analogous to some generalized anxiety disorders. I see this also as an adolescent anxiety disorder and per-

Screenshots (left) of Classy during one of his training sessions. Note his tail position, his focus and calm demeanor. It is clear that he is “in the zone.”

Watch the video [here](#).

The Bonding Hormone

Oxytocin is a posterior pituitary hormone that is released by way of touch... Oxytocin not only mediates maternal behavior but also appears to facilitate attraction of the young toward their mother. Panksepp notes that oxytocin exercises some significant agonist effects over opioid systems, sensitizing them to opiate substances and making them less responsive to the effects of opioid tolerance. Consequently, oxytocin may render a mother particularly responsive to attachment signals and help to sustain long-term nurturing bonds with her young. Like opiates, oxytocin and prolactin (a pituitary hormone that stimulates milk production) exert powerful inhibitory effects over separation distress. Finally, oxytocin (and arginine vasopressin) appears to facilitate the formation of lasting social memories, thereby complementing underlying neurophysiological attachment processes mediated by the neuropeptide.

Source: **Lindsay, S. R.** (2001)
Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training
 Volume Two: Etiology and Assessment of Behavior Problems
 Iowa State University Press/© John Wiley & Sons
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fect for using training/oxytocin as a mediator to overcome the stress. I can also see how the old, outdated collar corrections could cause a rise in the cortisol levels of a dog frequently leading to more stress, avoidance or a complete shutdown on the part of the dog.

Dr. Overall believes the studies being done with oxytocin are leading researchers to understand that cortisol-induced increases in oxytocin could mediate some of the effects of stress and cortisol. She also believes that nasal oxytocin may even hold promise for distressed and panicked dogs, dogs with true fear or generalized anxiety disorder.

For me this has turned into an amazing journey. I have learned so much about my dog and my dog training. I have become even more committed to positive training if that is possible. It also appears that, as a result of increases of oxytocin during training, Classy could even become addicted to listening to me. What a great addiction. Bring on the oxytocin! ■

Barb Levenson BS has been competing in dog sports since 1981 and teaching obedience and agility privately since 1985. She has titles in Obedience, Agility and Herding and heads the [Barb Levenson Dog Training Centers](#) in Pittsburgh, PA. Barb's first book *Flatwork for Agility* was released in early 2007.



Eye contact between a dog and a human causes an increase in oxytocin

Pigs at Work

Pigs are becoming more and more popular as pets and, given their size and intelligence, training is essential, says *Lara Joseph*

Many people are astounded at the intelligence of pigs. Of all the animals that I train, one of my attractions to pigs is how quickly they learn. I had wanted to train pigs for quite a while, having been aware of their intellectual ability. I now have several who are regular



Pigs are renowned for their intelligence and respond well to training

clients and am contacted quite a bit for porcine behavior issues.

With the latest craze for the 'Teacup Pig' or 'Micro-Mini Pig', this does raise concern. A Teacup Pig is only a Teacup when he is first born and can fit into a teacup. That Teacup Pig grows up to be a Micro-Mini or a Pot-Bellied who can easily exceed 150 lbs. Besides size, a pig's level of intelligence is a real concern. With manipulation being a sign of intelligence and the opportunity for an animal to change the consequence of a situation with each time they are successful... well, this describes the pig to a T.

I train many pigs here at my training -center and still more in people's homes. One of the most common behavior issues I hear about is aggression. Pigs are... pigs. They will do anything for food, which is one reason they are so fun for me to train. Food makes it easier to modify their behavior. On the flipside, I see pigs charge other pigs for the opportunity to eat. I see them charge their owners or caretakers to get them to toss food. This seems to be pretty common and I see owners tossing food to put distance between them and a pig who is about to bite or charge. Other common issues I see are with potty training, problems with other animals and the lack of appropriate enrichment for an animal this smart.

Pigs are prey animals and I have observed instances where the body language clearly shows that the pig is not comfortable with a situation so many times. I watch for hair rising on the back of the neck. Or, the tail stops wagging, the pig stands still and observes his surroundings from the side. These are all clear antecedents to aggressive behaviors such as charging, swinging the head to the side to hit or bite, or biting from the front. Often, if I see a pig not comfortable with a situation, he quickly puts distance between himself and the subject causing the concern.

I am kept on my toes quite a bit with a Micro-Mini who comes to my training center for training on a regular basis. I have observed his body language. The sound of food dropping on the

floor quickly becomes a conditioned stimulus. If a dog leans down to grab the food it can quickly make the pig run faster to get the food. If this happens, I now have a pig running toward a dog. If the pig does not get to the food first, I have noticed his frustration levels rising, from the dif-

ference in his snorts to charging faster for the food and quick head swings to get the food. It is for this reason I teach most animals to station to a carpet square and provide high rates of reinforcement for them staying there when they hear the sound of food hitting the floor. I make sure the behavior of stationing brings a higher reinforcer than running to the food that has hit the floor.

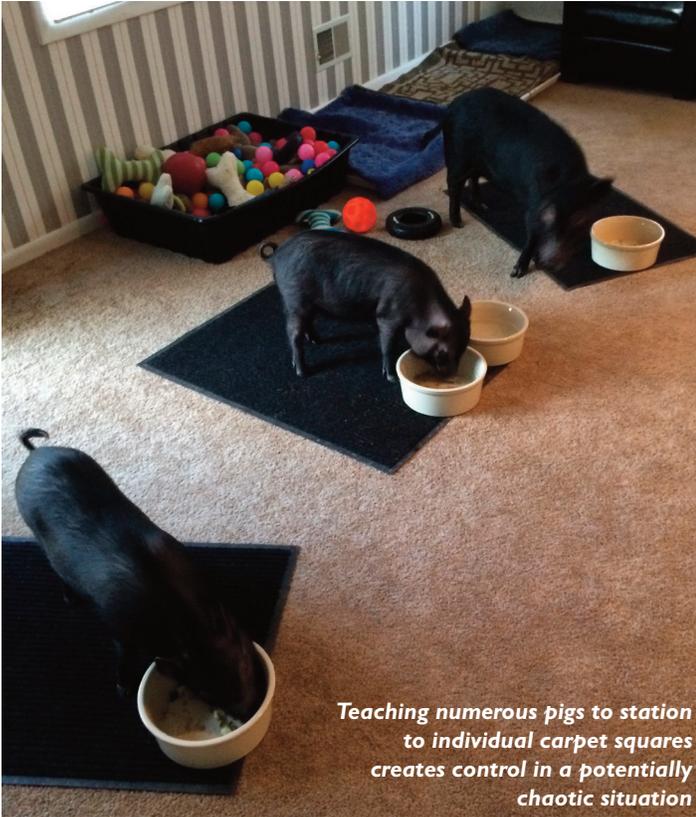
In a center with numerous animals there is plenty of opportunity for a lot of different things to be reinforcers for a pig. This is why we provide many opportunities for animals to target. Each time a bird cage door is opened, we train the pig to "touch your target". We train this cue so the pig places his head to hover around the center of the X's we have taped on the floor next to each bird cage. These areas are high traffic areas and running to grab a carpet square would not be easy, nor would it likely stay in one spot with the people, dogs and other animals walking around these areas.

Teaching numerous pigs to station to individual carpet squares creates control in a potentially chaotic situation. When I was first contacted about training pigs, I had to deal with them jumping on people and nipping at fingers and toes in anticipation of feeding. So I trained each pig individually to station to a carpet square then added a ceramic bowl and created the conditioned stimulus of a Cheerio hitting the bottom of

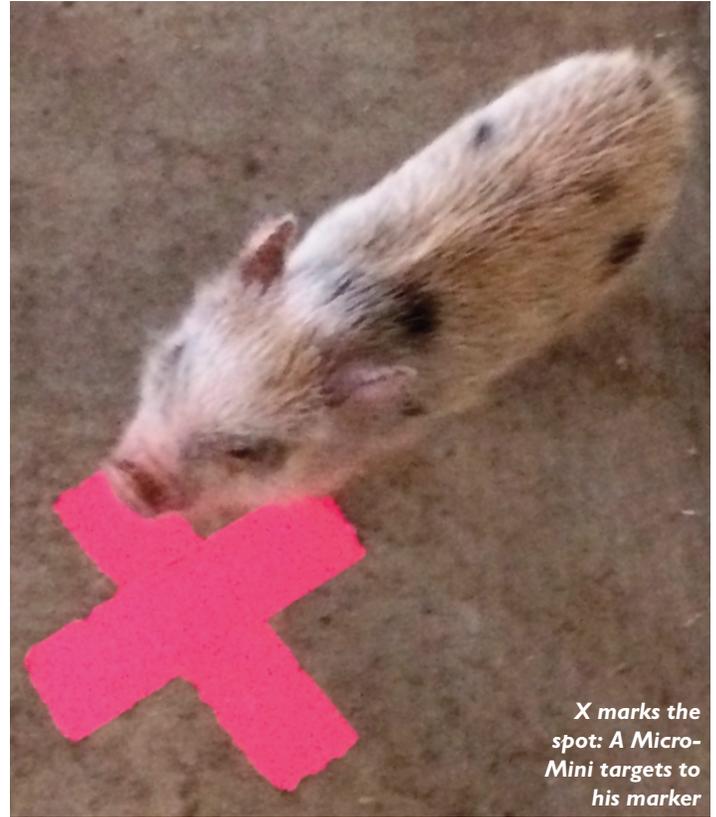


A still from the video showing a pig training to have her temperature taken





Teaching numerous pigs to station to individual carpet squares creates control in a potentially chaotic situation



X marks the spot: A Micro-Mini targets to his marker

the dish. Eventually I added another pig and reinforced both pigs for having four hooves on the squares. Then I added a third pig. I began adding small portions of their meals, gradually training them for all of their meals.

So much of what I do is target training. One of the pigs I train was getting sick on a regular basis. One of the first signs of sickness is a high temperature and it is for that reason that I began training each pig to allow me to perform voluntary rectal temperature readings. I began by having them target their backsides to my hand. I would reinforce them with Cheerios using the [Treat & Train](#) technique designed by the late Dr. Sophia Yin. Once they began targeting, I began reinforcing longer periods of targeting. I began the lifting of the tail, the application of the thermometer, and then waiting the period of time required to accurately take a temperature. The pig who had been getting sick weighed in at 85 lbs and had been showing signs of aggression. For obvious reasons, I did not want my face anywhere near her eye level without protection. Now we have trained her to do all of the above behaviors from inside of the crate. No need for force, no need for coercion and no need for punishers to control behavior. You can see the video of one of the pigs voluntarily training to have her temperature taken [here](#) (see also the still from the video on Page 21). Happy Training! ■

Lara Joseph is the owner of [The Animal Behavior Center LLC](#) in Ohio. She is also the Director of Avian Training for a wildlife rehabilitation center where she focuses on removing stress from animal environments. Lara is a professional member of The Animal Behavior Management Alliance and The International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators.



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Training Tips by PPG Members

Caught in the Act of Doing Good!

So often when our dogs are doing exactly what we want we don't notice because we're relieved of the need to supervise them to keep them out of trouble. Then when they're doing exactly what we like....oops, we miss the opportunity to reward that behavior in order to increase the odds of it occurring again. Sometimes your dog might come up with a really creative solution to a behavior problem or do something adorable but, if you miss it, you might never see it happen again.

Another oops is to accidentally reinforce a behavior you don't like. Your dog is barking incessantly at the window and you are giving attention in some way or another, uh-oh, more barking later! Or, jumping up when you come home and you look into your dog's eyes and reprimand, uh-oh, more jumping later!

Instead, catch your dog in the act of: walking past the window while something is occurring and not barking, say "good dog" and treat; walk up and your dog sits, say "good dog" and treat; the dog is lying quietly chewing on a proper chew toy, say "good dog" and treat; or the dog is lying quietly on a dog bed while you're watching TV, say "good dog" and treat! Does that mean, as Kathy Sdao says, you have to be a marsupial and carry treats in your pouch or pocket? Yes, that is if you want to see more of that behavior in the future. There isn't much more in this world that is as intrinsically, organically and naturally reinforcing to dogs as food, so why not use it to say "hey, I like what you're doing right now this minute"? When you're caught empty-handed use your calm praise voice and a smile, give a soothing ear scratch to convey approval without ratcheting up the excite-o-meter. Do something for your dog that you know he will love without "shooting yourself in the foot" by getting him so excited that a mistake happens! Aim your praise and rewards for success... Bulls eye!

- Heidi Steinbeck CPDT-KA, [Great Shakes Dog Training](#)

Calm behavior is more likely to be repeated when reinforced



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The Art of Doing Nothing



© Can Stock Photo Inc./halfpoint

Dogs are often expected to behave in ways that do not come naturally to them

Basic dog training tends to focus on behaviors with names or what are often referred to as "cues": sit, down, come, heel, stay etc. But in my experience, about 80 percent of what most people expect a well-behaved dog to do is not behave, or at least not behave in ways that come naturally to dogs. Instead, a dog is expected to "do nothing" when a stranger stomps up the front steps and pushes papers through the mail slot. "Do nothing" when another dog appears across the street. "Do nothing" while the rest of the family gathers around a table full of delicious food.

One thing I really love about clicker training is that it broadens the trainer's perspective on what "behaviors" are, opening her eyes to lots of perfectly good behavior that the dog is already offering all the time. Recently I set my sights on a situation where I would have preferred that my own dog "did nothing." After a change in my work schedule, she had developed a habit of barking whenever I picked up my belongings and leaned in to kiss my husband goodbye.

I decided to capture what she was usually doing just before she barked: lying around with her mouth closed. I began by leaning in only partway and clicking before she had a chance to bark. After a couple days of one quick session per morning, when this motion had her anticipating a treat, I finished the kiss before clicking and treating.

Problem solved, in a week or so of practicing once a day with a dog who understands the clicker game.

- Kiki Yablon KPA CTP
CPDT-KA, [Dog Training by Kiki Yablon](#)

Four on the Floor

Donna Savoie details a fun protocol to make sure puppies learn the important life lesson of not jumping up on visitors

Who doesn't LOVE a puppy? And it is wonderful when puppies LOVE their owners' guests. But it is also important to start teaching puppies not to jump up on guests sooner rather than later.

Guests inevitably say "I don't mind" whilst petting an exuberant jumping puppy but this strongly reinforces the jumping behavior at a very early age. Jumping up can be especially problematic later when the dog is fully-grown.

The following training protocol will help the owner manage both the puppy and guest, and successfully teach the puppy that all good things happen to those who keep four on the floor.

By using kibble, treats or other types of food or toys, owners can successfully teach their puppy to move away from a person or people who are entering the home. This gives owners time to manage the environment and train the puppy to not jump on people while simultaneously training him to pay attention to them.

Owners can use 'move away' training any time they want to encourage their pup to move away from another person to prevent jumping and to reinforce four on the floor. Using the following directions, guests coming into the home will no longer be jumped on as the owner tosses food or toys to encourage the puppy to move away from them. The owner will also successfully prevent the guest from rewarding any jumping behavior.

This technique starts out using a lure and it successfully teaches the puppy to keep four on the floor, to move the other way and that good things happen when people enter the house. At the same time, the puppy learns that fun games happen when guests come.

Caveat: it is necessary to use a toy or treat that is of a "higher value" than that of the guests. So if the puppy is über friendly and absolutely delighted that guests have come to visit, owners may need to toss a very high-value food such as hot dogs or even pork roast, or perhaps the pup's very favorite ball or tug toy. They will need

Ready to launch: puppies can be easily trained not to jump on guests



© Can Stock Photo/Colecanstock



to be prepared to toss more than one time, as it may take the puppy several repetitions of scurrying away and returning to them before calming down.

If there is no food or toy that is more enticing to the puppy than guests, owners can use an x-pen to prevent the puppy from getting to the guest, thus making the owners and everything that is fabulous about them the only thing available to him.

Four on the Floor: How It's Done

1. Be prepared! Does the owner know that guests are coming? The treats should be prepared and stashed in a convenient location.
2. If the owners frequently have guests coming to the home unannounced, they will need to have food or toys available at the entrance door at all times, secretly stashed. Training happens through consistency.
3. Have a goal. Generally the goal is simply for the puppy to not jump on the guest. However, over time the owner can increase the criteria.
4. When the guest knocks on the door the puppy will probably bark and get excited. Owners need to bring the puppy with them to the door and, before opening the door, toss yummy treats or toys away from the door while all four feet are still on the floor. Owners should try to remain calm and not get the puppy more aroused with "who's here!" or "let's go answer the door!"
5. As the puppy is scurrying around to find the treats or toys, the owner can open the door and allow the guest in, instructing him or her not to speak to or acknowledge the puppy. When the puppy turns and notices that someone has entered the home, the owner should call his name or make some enticing sounds to get his attention and immediately toss treats again. But it has to be fast. The goal is to avoid the puppy getting to the guest and jumping up. The puppy should then go scurrying away again to find more treats or toys.
6. Repeat this procedure several times until the puppy is scurrying around and then returning to the owner fluidly. The



Four on the floor in action

© Can Stock Photo/feedough

owner is the bearer of treats and toys and therefore the puppy should return to .

7. Once the puppy is reliably returning to the owner, it is time to ask for a sit.

8. Once the puppy sits, the owner can toss again.

9. Simultaneously, the owner should ask the guest to ignore the pup. No petting the puppy, no talking to the puppy, no engaging the puppy at all. This helps make the owner the bearer of all good things, including love and attention.

10. Once the puppy is not super excited that guests are in the home, the owner can instruct the guest how to interact with the pup.

11. As time goes on the owner will need to toss fewer treats/toys and less often and eventually not at all.

12. As the owner becomes proficient and coordinated with managing the door, the treats, etc., they should be animated and consistent with the hand signal as they toss, so that the puppy learns that "that" hand signal means to go "that" way. Eventually the owner will not need treats, the puppy will learn the hand signal to move away.

Practice makes perfect! ■

It is never too early to start channeling puppies' exuberance



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Donna D. Savoie CDBC CPDT-KA CBATI ABCDT is the owner and president of [Pack of Paws Dog Training](#) LLC in Southbridge, MA.



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Be Prepared

- 🐾 The treats and/or toys that the owner tosses must be more exciting than the guest.
- 🐾 Owners should watch the pup, not the guest. This is difficult for many people to learn as it is deemed rude but remember, this is training. Hard work now gleans permanent results sooner.
- 🐾 Do not be in a big hurry to open the door. Feel coordinated with the puppy and the treat toss first. Practice many times when no one is at the door.
- 🐾 The guest must ignore the pup.
- 🐾 Remember the importance of strategic treat placement. The treats should be scattered so the puppy is moving away from the guest but not so far that he finds interacting with the guest more convenient and less effort.
- 🐾 Be prepared and be 100 percent consistent.
- 🐾 The owner may have read, heard or learned to just ask the puppy for a sit as an alternative behavior to jumping. This is a great technique. However, with a young puppy or even a puppy who is new to training this can be very frustrating to the puppy, the owner and the guest. This simple protocol will help teach the puppy to sit when guests enter the house with out causing anyone – canine or human – any frustration.



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The Argument against Prong Collars

Diane Garrod compares aversive training devices, their physics and psychological effects with the more enlightened approach of positive reinforcement

In the 21st century, when there are plenty of humane and results-oriented options for dog training, why would anyone resort to a tool that has the potential to do incredible damage to a dog's neck and break the bond of trust between the dog and his owner? Prong collars are used as punishment to decrease behavior. They involve a swift jerk and tightening of the collar on the neck - causing a pinch - when the dog does something wrong. They cause pain. Otherwise why would they be used?

The prong collar originated in ancient Greece, where reverse prongs were used as protection or a preventative. Dogs were often guardians of livestock. To protect their necks against predators, dogs were fitted with leather collars spiked with nails pointing outwardly.

In the Middle Ages, dogs had different jobs and wore collars reflecting those jobs. Hunting dogs wore simple leather collars while shepherd dogs wore spiked collars, especially in the sport of wolf hunting. These resembled prong collars with the prongs facing outwardly. The dogs were used as bait and sent to hunt wolves. The sharp prongs were meant to protect them while hunting, although many dogs were sacrificed in this cruel sport.⁴

In Europe, huntsmen fashioned the collar in reverse with nails embedded pointing inwardly from the leather strap. It was used as a standard training tool for gun dogs by J.A. Sanchez during the early part of the 20th century.¹

Aversive collars use discomfort or pain to cause a dog to stop doing unwanted behaviors. Their use is controversial, with many humane and veterinary organizations recommending against them.²

Like the choke chain, the prong collar is placed high on the dog's neck, just behind the ears, at the most sensitive point of



The difference in the demeanor of these two dogs is clear

the neck. Plastic tips are occasionally placed on the ends. Some dogs can free themselves from prong collars with large wire looped sides by shaking their head so that the links pop out, so some trainers have come to use a second collar (usually an oversize check chain) in addition to the prong collar so the dog does not run loose when this happens.

For and Against

How do prong collars

stack up against force free training, which involves rewarding the behavior we want, in this case, loose leash walking? Those who use and like a prong collar say:

- The collar itself is designed to have the prongs close, grabbing skin and pinching, not poking into the dog's neck. The entire mechanism is designed for the loose skin of a dog.
- They can work well if used reasonably and on the right dog.
- There are plenty of people who do know how to use prongs correctly and do not cause pain or fear in the dogs.

Those who do not use a prong collar say:

- "Prong collars are subject to all of the same criticisms as are chokers. Furthermore, they can do incredible damage to the dog's neck since they can become embedded in the skin if the dog learns to override them. Most dogs learn to override these collars and people who use them often voluntarily comment that they need to use some degree of pain to control their animals under some circumstances.

"These collars, if sharpened - as is often the case - are intended to employ pain to encourage the dog to attend to the person. If left unsharpened, these collars are

intended to provide more uniform pressure than a choke collar.

“Oddly, prong collars were intended to be a safer improvement over choke collars but that is not how it has worked out. For aggressive dogs, this the uniform pressure response - especially if accompanied by pain - can worsen their aggression, and, in some cases, this response can not only worsen their aggression, but endanger the client. Were people to understand more about how dogs communicate and how these collars work, they would appreciate that responses other than pain and pressure are more desirable for changing an animal's behavior.

“These collars are no substitute for early intervention and the treatment of problem behaviors. For every situation which clients claim control is provided by a prong collar, a head collar is the better, safer and more humane choice, although it requires some investment of time to use correctly. Some dogs are fitted with prong or spike collars because they make the dog look “tough”. The problem, here, does not lie with the dog.”³

- The walk is an enrichment activity owners should be using to bond with their dog. How does that happen if there is pain involved?
- Instant gratification cited by prong collar trainers is at the cost of long-term psychological damage.
- Why would one knowingly inflict pain on an animal they profess to care about?
- Why use a tool that we all accept works by restriction and discomfort when you can use alternative tools that do not. We can argue science and correct use but it boils down to one issue. Choice. You can choose to use tools that work by the fact that they cause pain or you can choose tools that do not. You can teach alternative and more appropriate behavior or you can correct incorrect ones. It is a very slippery slope when we begin to justify our use of these tools when there are now so many other options readily available and affordable.
- Prongs place the pressure on the neck. Harnesses take the pressure off the neck.

Those who have previously used a prong but are now positive trainers say:

- There is not the same level of trust, training, understanding and control when the prong collar is on. If you truly want a dog who is happy, trustworthy (as much as an animal can be, of course), focused and relaxed, the prong collar is not the answer.
- From one crossover trainer: “I have used chokes and prongs “skillfully” and, at the time, believed I was not causing pain or fallout. But having been on both sides of the fence there is no turning back for me, as is true for many crossover trainers. When there are gentler, kinder, effective ways, why would one ever choose otherwise?”
- “Any tool can be misused.” This is an age-old argument that is irrelevant and diversionary. It is a strawman argument. The intent and design of the prong collar when

used properly is to inflict pain, period. That is how it is designed to work - to suppress behavior through pain. Whether the prong is “skillfully” used or abused and misused, it intentionally causes pain. There is no dancing around that fact.

- Claiming that more dogs will end up in shelters if prong collars are not used or, worse yet, claiming that the alternative to removing a prong collar is death to either human, dog or both, are attempts to justify the choice with fear and unsubstantiated conjecture. It is an exaggerated leap in thinking to create a false dilemma which presumes only two options when, in fact, there are many options.
- It is about dignity. It is a fallacy that force-free is permissive. It is not. There are clear guidelines for creating mannerly, thinking dogs.

Many dogs who have behavioral issues may have underlying health issues and it makes one cringe to think an aversive tool has forced them to have no voice.

One case in point is my own Chancellor, a Belgian Tervuren with clear human reactive issues at a high level. To imagine that someone would claim to “fix” him or force him or manipulate him into submission sends chills down my spine.

Chancellor's issues were neurological and he displayed



Positive reinforcement is a kind, humane and effective way to train a dog - or indeed any animal

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seizure activity at four and a half years old. Today, with force-free training and behavior modification protocols in place, he is a different dog and retains the dignity he deserves.

Chancellor's teaching tools were a harness, two-points leading, a flat collar or no collar (naked training), training treats, toys and lots of positive reinforcement. The lack of dignity to an animal forced to have no escape from pain devices is not acceptable to me.

Alternatives

With the advances in harness gear on the market, there is no reason not to work with a dog rather than against him by causing discomfort.

Front Clip Harnesses: These turn the dog away from his goal and back toward the other end of the leash. Why? So that you can do what you are supposed to be doing - getting eye contact so you can train. So you can reinforce to the dog that you are walking as a team. It is really not that difficult to do. If you find yourself in the position of having to reassure others that what you are doing does not hurt your dog, it is time to ask yourself why you are using something that clearly has the capacity to do so.

Some popular harness gear brands are the Freedom No-Pull Harness and the SENSE-ation™ Harness. There is also a new system called Dog Reins developed by Nancy Yamin of [Mutts Better](#). There are many types, so try several and look for comfort, what fits your dog best and what you are comfortable using. It should not ride up under the legs and a proper fit is critical.

Two-Points of Contact: This is a [Tellington TTouch](#)™ Training Method and involves a harness with a top of the shoulder attach-

ment and a leash with two clasps, one heavy, one light.

The Engineer's Perspective

Consider a typical big dog who weighs say 80 pounds, and has a 20-inch neck size. This dog can pull with more than his own weight because his weight is low and forward compared to the distance between his front and back feet, and he will not lift his front feet by pulling until he is pulling a lot more than he weighs. With an 80-pound dog, 120 pounds of pulling force is easily possible. This could increase a lot more if he gets a running start before he gets to the end of his leash.

Newton taught us the every action (force) has an equal and opposite reaction. So take the 1½-inch web collar as an example. The bottom of the collar supplies all the force to the dog's neck. If he pulls with his own weight, the contact force is around 5½ pounds per inch² (80 pounds ÷ (10 inches of collar × 1½ inch wide)).

Now, consider a choke collar made of ¼-inch nylon cord. A chain choke would be similar as a flat collar as the links make a nearly continuous contact band. Even if it does not slide tight, in the same configuration as the web collar the contact force will be 32 pounds per inch² - six times as much, before one even considers the drawstring effect. This is far more likely to cause injury to the larynx or restriction of blood flow in the neck.

A prong collar has a pair of prongs approximately every inch. The prongs are made of wire, approximately ⅜ inches in diameter. Still ignoring the drawstring effect - each prong contacts the neck with an area of only about ⅓ inches². So 20 prongs, 80 pounds, generate about 579 psi at each prong tip, assuming they are blunt, not pointed. If the prongs are located over the larynx it is hard to imagine injury (at least bruising) NOT occurring. This pressure will easily collapse any blood vessel that suffers the fate of being beneath a prong.

To recap: the contact force is over six times greater for a simple choke, and over 100 times greater for prongs for the SAME PULL. Yet some people will still believe there is no physical damage.

Psychological Effects

The psychological effects of prong collars and other pain devices may be witnessed in submissive (subordinate) posturing and/or fear responses.

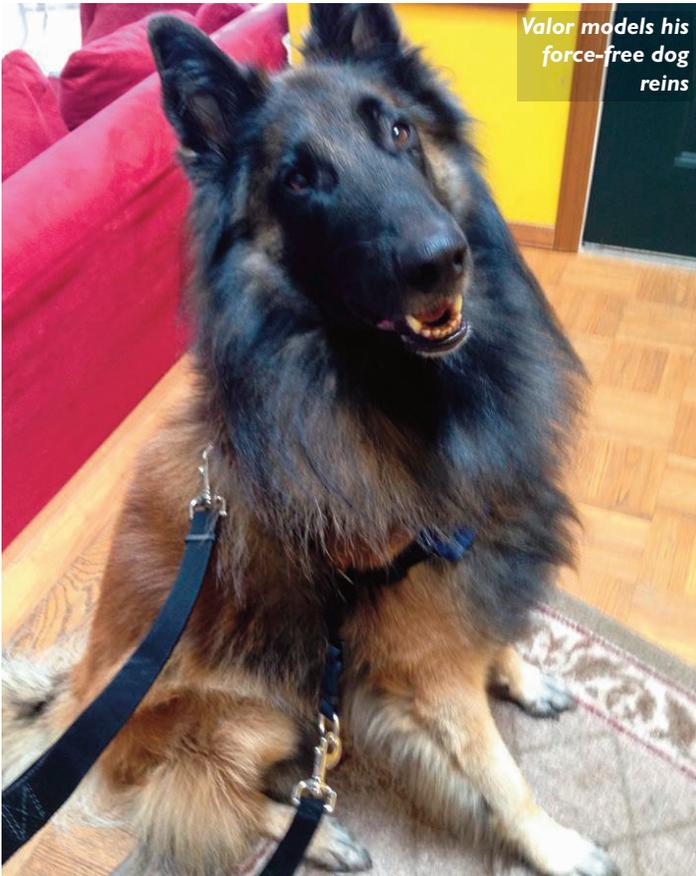
Submissive posturing would include ears flat against the head, eyes narrowed to slits or wide open with the whites showing (whale eye), lips pulled back into what looks like a grin.

Behavior witnessed would be nuzzling or licking a person or another animal. Body position may include a lowered to the ground posture, front paw raised, lying on the back with the belly up, possible urine leaking/dribbling and even possible emptying of the anal scent glands.

Further, one might see a tail tight at the base



A harness is comfortable for the dog and a valuable training tool



Valor models his force-free dog reins

or between the legs, and vocalizations will be minimal, low, or whining and whimpering. Signals like these in this context are unlikely to indicate a well-adjusted dog.

Fearful body postures are very similar to submissive postures and would include ears laid flat back against the head, eyes narrowed, averted and possibly rolled back into the head showing the whites, mouth and lips drawn back to expose teeth, tense musculature, crouched low, shivering or trembling, possible secretion of the anal scent glands, tail between the legs. Vocalizations are likely to be low, and include whining, whimpering or growling.

If you see even one of the above behaviors, that is not the dog you want to see. A force-free dog is a happy, thinking, mannerly dog who enjoys being with you, and who is not afraid to move because of you.

Heavy metal is for music, not for necks. Since there is no need to use a prong collar in the 21st century, with all the options now available, it is time to look at alternatives, meaning more humane choices. ■

- "*The Engineer's Perspective*"
contributed by Jim Casey BS

Diane Garrod BSc is a certified Tellington Touch Practitioner (CAI), ATA Certified Treibball Instructor and holds certificates in Theriogenology, Science in Writing and Animal Behavior. She is the owner of the [Canine Transformations Learning Center](#).

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2. The Humane Society of the United States (2013) [Dog Collars: Which Type is Best for your Dog](#)
3. **Overall, K.** (2013) *Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Dogs and Cats* Elsevier, St. Louis
4. [The History of Dog Collars](#)

Other Resources

[Choke and Prong Collars: Health Concerns Call for Equipment Change in Dog Training](#) Original article by PPG
[No Choke, No Prong, No Pain](#) Client Handout by PPG
[Choke is No Joke](#) PPG Blog by Drayton Michaels
[Do Some Dogs Need a Heavier Hand?](#)
[Confrontational vs. Non-Confrontational Intimidation in Dog Training](#)
[If You're Aggressive, Your Dog Will Be Too](#)
[Dog Training's Latest Buzzword: "Balanced"](#)
[Dog Training: The Trouble With Punishment: AVSAB Position Statement the Use of Punishment for Behavior Modification in Animals](#)
[Are You Willing To Be Wrong about That?](#)
[Talk Softly and Carry a Carrot or a Big Stick?](#)
[Confrontational Training Techniques Elicit Aggression](#)
[Punishment Affects Both the Dog and the Owner](#)
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Ditching the Pinch

Sometimes you have to be creative when encouraging clients to give up their aversive training tools. *Kristin Yonkers* explains how she does it

I had my first lesson on training dogs in 2003, during which I was informed that a pulling dog did not “experience pain” when wearing a prong collar because it was “like a mother’s correctional nip” to her puppies. I was even taught the sales tactic of putting the collar around my arm and pulling to show that it did not “really hurt.”

It was not until a few months later when I witnessed a puppy yelp and urinate upon pulling towards me to greet me that I started to question the practicality of something that can cause so much pain. Ever since then I have devoted myself to the cause of training without force and intimidation.

Having recently seen a surge in prong- or choke collar-wearing dogs with behavioral issues, I can honestly say that I will never recommend such products and I hope that, once users try force-free tools, they will feel the same way. This is something I hold near and dear to my heart and I wish I could take back the time before I knew of gentler ways of training.

I introduced the Ditch the Pinch™ Challenge in the first quarter of 2014 to reward dog owners who decide to use force-free tools instead of prongs or choke collars on their pets. I encourage my dog training clients to surrender their aversive training tools and upgrade to a front-clip body harness or head collar to deter pulling while working on polite leash manners.

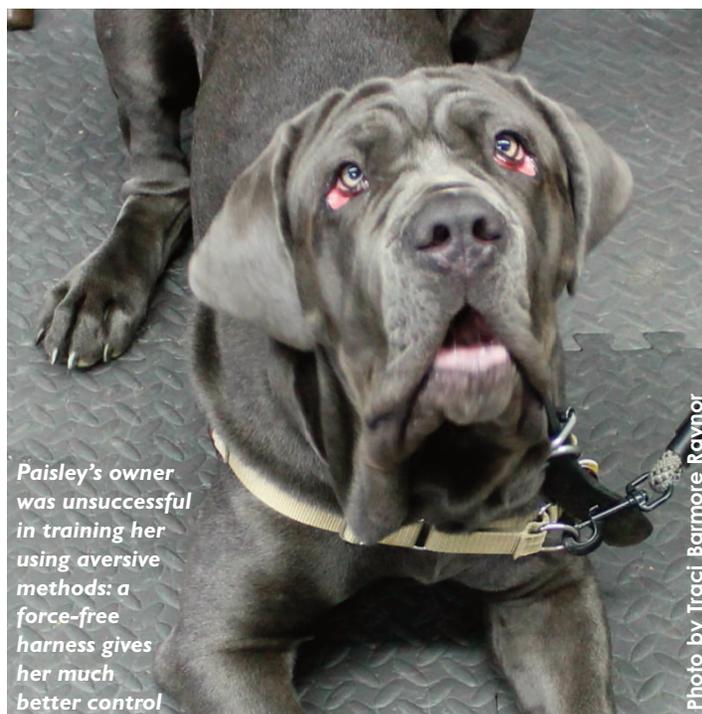


All dogs benefit from a kinder approach to training, no matter what their size

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Discounts for behavioral training are also offered separately. By the third quarter of 2014, over 30 dog owners attending my training classes had converted from aversive collars to force-free tools.

Initially, all the owners who have converted to either a front-clip harness or head collar have been very skeptical that force-free tools would help them gain control of their dog. Some had



Paisley’s owner was unsuccessful in training her using aversive methods: a force-free harness gives her much better control

Photo by Troci Barmore Reynor

been told that these tools would not work for their strong puller or did not even know they existed. After sizing the tools on their dogs and going out for a walk though, owners were immediately excited at how effortless it was to handle their dogs.

The reasons people sign up for Ditch the Pinch™ are manifold. Some, for example, were actually challenged by fellow students in training classes. Others tried it out of curiosity after prong and/or choke collars failed to control their pulling dogs. Many felt cornered, that it was their only option, and also felt bad for choking their dogs when the end result was not a noticeable difference in pulling. One student realized that, because of being corrected when pulling to towards other dogs, his dog actually got worse and was starting to act fearfully.

The results speak for themselves. One before-and-after example I like to cite is a large mixed-breed dog named Maggie, who was surrendered to a rescue when she was 7 months old. She remained in the rescue for almost a year, all the while learning terrible leash manners. She quickly learned that pulling got her where she wanted to go faster and she got away with pulling all the volunteers along whenever she was walked. When she was adopted, her new family quickly realized how strong she was so they started to use a prong collar as suggested by the rescue. Even then, Maggie would pull on the prong collar for a good 30 seconds before it started to bother her. Over time she became reactive to the things she was pulling towards, such as children

and dogs. However, after trying out a head collar, the family was ecstatic that Maggie was no longer able to pull and that she no longer suffered with painful pressure on her neck or throat. Their son was now able to walk Maggie with minimal effort. Maggie then learned to heel on cue in some private, discounted classes and was reintroduced to children and dogs with a more positive association. Now, instead of pulling, Maggie heels with lightning fast speeds and happily gets into a sit when waiting to greet her soon-to-be new friends.

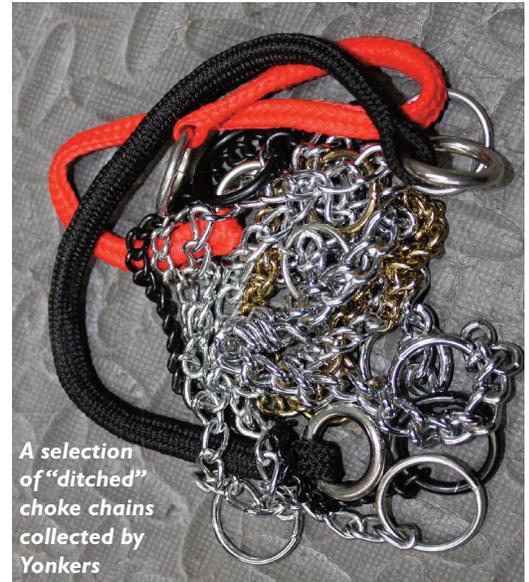
Another example is Neapolitan mastiff, Paisley. An 8-month-old puppy who was already 130 pounds, even the slightest pull knocked her mom off her balance. Aversive methods did not faze or really help to control her at all. Her mom wanted a permanent solution that was easy and effective, but not just because it caused her pain. Paisley is now hooked up with a bungee leash. The front clip harness offers not just control but redirection, so walking is no longer a balancing act for her mom. This will be vital in the long run when Paisley will weigh close to 200 pounds.

But encouraging clients to take the force-free route is only the first part of the challenge. The second part involves inspiring other pet professionals to offer similar perks if they have clients who are prepared to give Ditch the Pinch™ a try. I would highly recommend that PPG members involved in dog training classes take on the challenge and offer incentives to their clients accordingly.

My aim is to highlight the downfalls of aversive training tools and show dog owners who have a pulling pooch that there is a kinder, gentler, more effective approach. If one person will accept the challenge and tell his or her friends about it, then they tell their friends, gradually more and more people will take part. I believe if more force-free pet professionals were to offer perks to

their clients for switching then this would reach a large number of pet owners and we could eventually see the decline of aversive tools once and for all.

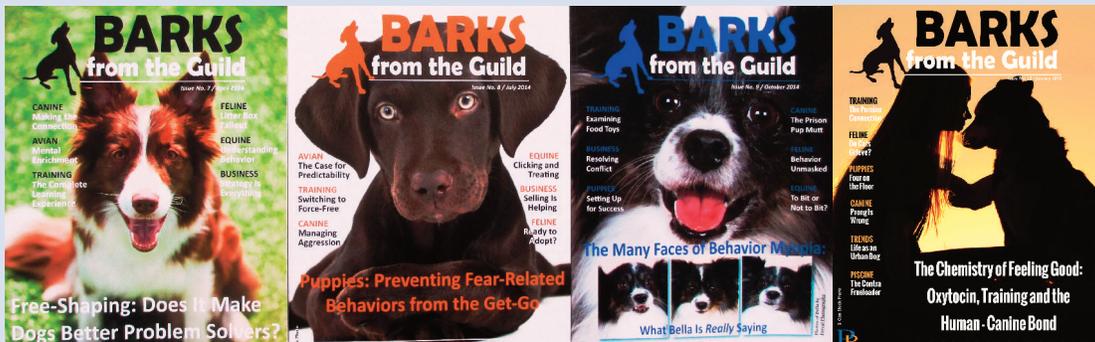
With each purchase of a gentler option tool from my training store, I donate 10 percent to local charities with Ditch the Pinch™ Challenge in the memo. I also save all the surrendered tools so someone can repurpose the metal in the form of jewelry or other crafts. With the awareness this challenge can bring, my goal is for everyone in the pet industry to give force-free tools a chance. ■



A selection of "ditched" choke chains collected by Yonkers

Kristin Yonkers is the owner of [Perfect Pooch Dog Training](#) in Brocton, NY, Treasurer for the [Lakeshore Humane Society](#) in Dunkirk, NY and Assistant Show Chair for Obedience and Rally for the [Conewango Valley Kennel Club](#). Kristin graduated from the [Animal Behavior College](#) in 2009 where she is now a Mentor Trainer.

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The Reality of “Snake Breaking”

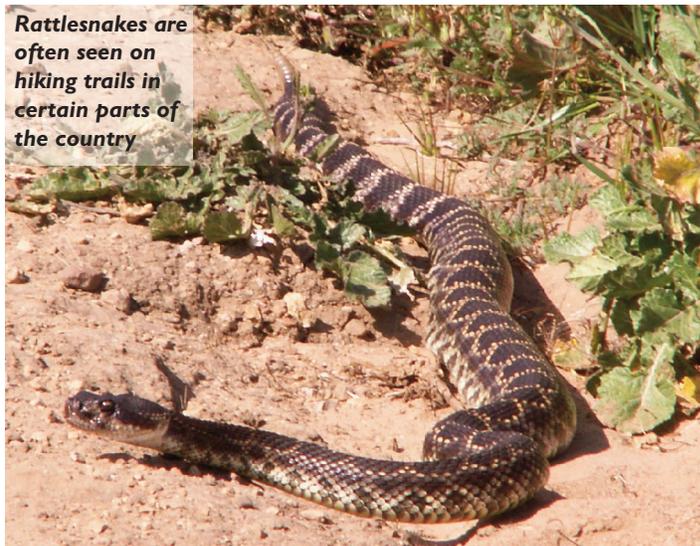
Rattlesnake Avoidance Training is both popular and prolific, but does it actually work?

Nan Arthur explains why it doesn't from a scientific perspective

Keeping a dog leashed gives the owner a better chance of keeping their dog safe from snakebites



Rattlesnakes are often seen on hiking trails in certain parts of the country



As predictably as the seasons change, at the start of a new year many communities experience heightened media awareness of the dangers of venomous snakes to pet dogs and a resulting offering of “snake breaking” classes from trainers who use snakes and shock collars to teach “snake avoidance.”

Even though, to the average person, it sounds good in theory, to modern, science-based dog trainers and behavior experts, shocking a dog in the name of safety is a bit like using a six-shooter to dispense immediate justice – rather like returning to the Wild Wild West.

The premise of “snake breaking” or “snake avoidance training” is to use a shock collar to punish the dog when he or she approaches rattlesnakes who are muzzled, de-fanged, dead or caged. The idea is that the dog will associate the sight, sound and smell of a rattlesnake with several very painful shocks and never go near another rattlesnake.

While “snake breaking,” sounds like a great solution to a problem that occasionally ends in a beloved pet being bitten by a venomous snake, there are no real guarantees or scientific studies to conclude that it actually works.

Further, it is important to ask, “What is this method really teaching dogs, and can it really guarantee to keep a dog safe from rattlesnakes forever?”

What Science Can Tell Us

Generalization is important for building the strength of a behavior, no matter what methods of training are used. The reality is that most dogs who are bitten by rattlesnakes are typically running through brush, or happen upon a snake in a yard and often

do not even see it, much less have the time to make the decision to avoid it.

At most snake avoidance clinics, there are typically dozens of people and other dogs around when the “snake breaking” takes place, creating an artificial environment. Furthermore, the collar and handler add other contextual components that will likely not be present when the dog encounters a snake outside of the clinic. This might be why the “snake breakers” suggest a “tune up” each year for several years running and have waivers that include language such as, “There are just too many variables to consider: wind direction, where the snake is, what the dog is doing, cover and terrain etc.”

Also, there are many types of venomous snakes. Very few snake avoidance trainers are likely to have a wide enough variety of venomous snakes to generalize the avoidance to all snakes. Essentially, “snake breaking” is trained in a bubble with everything orchestrated and planned as the process of exposing dogs to the wrangled snakes proceeds. Dog trainers who understand the science of behavior and training and the quadrants of punishment and reinforcement, generally understand that any and all training should be generalized to proof the behavior in many different environments before it is considered fluent and reliable.

Since the dogs are only exposed to the rattlesnakes in a stagnant setting, and the rattlesnakes do not necessarily behave, look or move like normal snakes, there is no way to predict what the dog may learn from the terrifying experience of being shocked in this artificial environment.

What IS the Dog Learning?

A search on *YouTube* will offer many hard to watch videos, but

[here](#) is one example of a news station reporting on snake breaking.

The reality of “snake breaking” is that no one ever really knows what the dog is associating the shock with when it happens. Those shocks are often severe enough to make dogs vocalize in fear and pain while pet owners stand by and watch their dogs being shocked by a so-called expert. The premise is that this violent experience will, through one-trial learning, create an avoidance response. If that were true, then no “refresher training” should be necessary. The need for refresher training indicates that even the people applying this method know what many dog owners know: it is not a long-term solution.

People who live in areas where there are porcupines and skunks can relate many tales of dogs being hit with quills and sprayed by skunks. Both those experiences are highly aversive and yet they do not deter dogs from approaching these animals in the future.

Jim Silveira, president of [Rancho Coastal Humane](#) in Encinitas, CA and a member of the [San Diego Sheriff's Search and Rescue](#) team reports that his organization stopped using rattlesnake aversion training for the search and rescue dogs since it did not impact how many dogs were getting bitten after receiving the training.

Anecdotal reports of fallout behaviors from snake avoidance training also abound.

One dog was reported to have attacked a rattlesnake after “snake breaking” training. The dog clearly associated rattlesnakes with the pain he received during the “training.” That dog died. Another dog generalized the rattlesnake sound to that of oscillating sprinklers, while yet another now associates the crowd of people during snake training with crowds in general and can no longer attend group agility training.

“There is never any reason for pets to be shocked as a part of therapy or treatment,” says Karen Overall MAVMD PhD Diplomat, American College of Veterinary Behavior and author of the *Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Dogs and Cats* (2013). “There are now terrific scientific and research data that show the harm that shock collars can do behaviorally.”

At the July 2005 International Veterinary Behavior Meeting, held in conjunction with the [American Veterinary Society of Ani-](#)



Statistically, a dog is more likely to be hit by a car than bitten by a venomous snake

[mal Behavior](#) (AVSAB) and the [American College of Veterinary Behaviorists](#) (ACVB) research meetings, data was presented by E. Schalke, J. Stichnoth and R. Jones-Baade that documented these damaging effects in *Stress Symptoms Caused by the use of Electric Training Collars on Dogs (Canis Familiaris) in Everyday Life Situations (Current Issues and Research in Veterinary Behavioral Medicine, Papers presented at the 5th International IVBM, Purdue University Press, 2005:139-145. [ISBN 987-1-55752-409-5; 1-558753-409-8])*. The study concluded that “poor timing, i.e. the impossibility to associate electric shock and stimulus leads to insecurity and extreme states of anxiety.”

Finally, it should not go without mention that the snakes used in snake avoidance training are often treated inhumanely as the snake breakers may use duct tape to muzzle them and/or pull out the snakes' fangs with pliers, along with other means of preventing them from biting.

Rather than “breaking” dogs from investigating snakes, it is more important to understand that venomous snake bites are relatively rare in numbers. In fact, when using county estimates for the number of dogs in the city of San Diego County (approximately 300,000) with an estimated 100 snake bites each year, there is a 0.000333 chance of a dog being bitten by a rattlesnake in San Diego County. Those percentages hold true nationally. Of those dogs that are bitten, few die if they receive immediate veterinary care, and there are a certain amount of “dry bites” in which the snake does not release venom at all.

Rather, keeping dogs out of snake habitats during warm weather and taking measures to use tools such as snake fencing – not to mention keeping dogs on leashes when out for their daily walks - will help prevent venomous snake encounters.

Safety training, such as having a strong recall or teaching a dog to alert to you or recall if they see a snake, can be taught by using fake snakes for the visual, snake skins (talk to your local zoo or animal control) for the scent, and your phone for the sounds to teach your dog a safety behavior if they see a snake.

Even doing nothing other than getting the rattlesnake vaccine, statistically, has just as good of odds of ensuring a dog's safety, especially since the dog's human will not have a false sense of security.

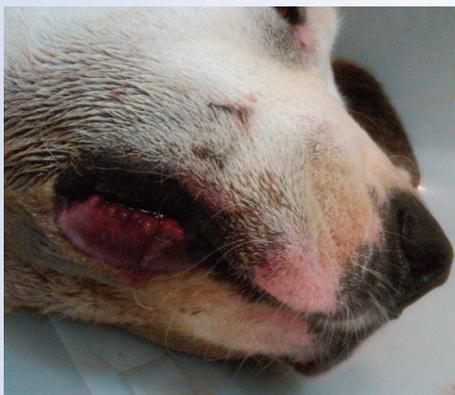
Using facts and science-based information will hopefully dissuade people from looking for the “quick fix” and help dog owners take a more practical approach to keeping their dogs safe if they live in areas where there are higher concentrations of venomous snakes rather than stepping back in time and using methods with no scientific backbone or quantifiable data on effectiveness. ■

Nan Arthur CDBC CPDT-KSA KPACTP TAGteach PC has 22 years of experience teaching both dog professionals and pet dog owners. She is a Karen Pryor Academy faculty member, holds the highest certification available by the Certification Council For Professional Dog Trainers, and is a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant. Through her business [Whole Dog Training](#), she and her staff provide dog training classes and private training for both dogs and cats and their people. She is the author of *Chill Out Fido! How To Calm Your Dog*.



Encounter with a Rattlesnake

Maggie suffered significant swelling around her face and throat as a result of a snake bite to her upper lip. A management approach of keeping her safely on a leash would most likely have been the only sure way to have avoided this scenario



I have encountered rattlesnakes many times with my dogs on the trails of the Santa Monica Mountains in Southern California. Sometimes we see them well in advance and have time to stop and wait for them to move on. On occasion, however, they have taken us by surprise (and we them) and they have felt the need to “rattle” at us. In my experience - admittedly not corroborated by any specific scientific research - a dog’s instinctive reaction is to freeze and/or back away at that sound. No doubt there are dogs who like to go closer to investigate but, fortunately for me, mine are not that way inclined and, in any case, will stop and wait when I ask them to.

Every single time we have been rattled at (once we have gotten over the initial shock) we have been able to safely back away and give the snake space to move on, which they have always done. Herpetologists widely maintain that rattlesnakes prefer not to attack, but warn that they may do so if they feel threatened or cornered.

Unfortunately this is what happened the one time one of my dogs got bitten. She chased a squirrel under a bush and a rattlesnake happened to be resting right there in the shadows. She jumped on the bush, screamed and leapt straight out again. I heard the rattle and knew immediately she had been bitten. Neither of us ever saw the snake. I was lucky to be able to get her to the vet within 45 minutes and, after a 48-hour stay and the requisite dose of antivenin, we were able to bring her home.

I have no doubt that all the rattlesnake “avoidance training” in the world would have made no difference in this situation. We were on a wide fireroad and I thought I could pre-empt any danger but, in fact, the only way to have kept her totally safe would have been to have had her on a leash. This, of course, is exactly what we have done ever since during “snake season,” no matter how clearly ahead we can see, or think we can see.

- Susan Nilson BA (Hons) DipCABT (UK)

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Waving Loudly

In the fourth article in this series, *Morag Heirs* details how to give a deaf dog off-leash freedom by training a rock solid check-in and recall

The automatic check-in is one of the most valuable skills to teach your deaf dog. There are a couple of different options, but the principle is to instill a strong habit of visually checking in with the handler at frequent intervals. The dog does not have to actually come back to your side (as in a recall) but just make eye contact so, if you needed him to lie down or recall, you would be able to signal for this.

While it is essential that our dogs choose to come back when we call them, it is just as important that they do not ignore us in between being recalled. The check-in is an exercise which came from training deaf dogs who need to be looking at the handler before a recall signal can be given.

The aim is for your dog to choose to visually check in with you during your walks, at which point you can then give him permission to continue or come back beside you if there might be a hazard ahead.

If we call our dogs back too often during walks, they will get frustrated and possibly bored. They might wonder, "Why on earth does she want me to come back to her side all the time?" However, with a check-in, we actively reward the dog for making contact without insisting on a full recall. The result is a dog who chooses to maintain a connection with us during our activities, and often one that opts to come back more often of his own freewill too.

There are two options for teaching the basic check-in. It comes down to personal preference and what best fits the individual dog and handler. Both options will create a dog who spends a lot of time looking back at you. Don't worry, this is exactly what we want. You will be rewarding frequently during your walks and at home too, and this inevitably creates a super strong habit.

On every walk with the deaf dog, take a big bag of tiny treats. You may need to cut down on meal rations during the training period or find a version of your normal dog food that works well



Farah is rewarded with a toy for recalling

as rewards. For example, Rosie and I have found the 'small bite' version of Fish4Dogs food works really well – small, very smelly and appealing.

The Dog-Directed Check-In!

- Before starting your walk, wait for your dog to look at you – mark and reward with tasty food.
- From now on, if your dog looks at you even from a distance, mark and throw the reward to him – the dog does not need to come back to your side.
- Resist the temptation to try and attract his attention. If your dog is totally ignoring your presence, try standing still (the line means he cannot keep going without you) or choose a less distracting location to train in.
- After you have rewarded your dog, give him encouragement to keep going. A release signal or indication that you have finished is helpful.

Occasionally (not more than three times per walk) you can follow up the check-in with a recall if you think the dog will definitely come back to you - otherwise, forget the recall part for now.

- You can also use a favorite toy as a reward for a check-in – just throw it out past the dog.
- Note: If your dog happens to choose to come all the way back to you without prompting then go wild and have a party with happy faces, best treats and toys!

Over time, you will get a feel for what your dog's natural check-in time tends to be. Of my dogs, Farah's check-in is around 30 seconds, while Bronte's is closer to 40 seconds. If your dog does not check back as fast as you need him to, try the fixed period check-in training to encourage a faster response time.

After three or four weeks, you can start to reduce the frequency of the rewards and replace some of the food treats with cuddles, if the dog likes them, or big smiles and thumbs-up signals.

The Fixed Period Check-In²

Decide on the interval you would like the check-in to be. In this case, we used about 20 seconds. As you walk, give the dog a treat every 20 seconds. He does not have to do anything for it, not even look. If necessary, you put the treat in his mouth or walk up to him if he is off sniffing. At this stage, it is not the dog's responsibility to get the treat; it is yours to give it on time.

Do this consistently for a few walks. You should start to notice that the dog looks at you at around the time the treat is due. If he does, then give a big thumbs-up and smile with the treat. If he starts to just watch you constantly, give a thumbs-up and tell him to walk on. If he is early in looking, you may want to reward him or give a thumbs-up and send on. It depends how early he is and how likely he is to look again. Keep going until you reach the point where he is looking for that treat more or less every 20 seconds.

Do another few walks with the dog taking responsibility. Don't worry if he is a few seconds late occasionally, but more than this or getting too interested in something else may require a gentle touch to remind him. Once this is consistent, you can start to phase out some of the treats, substituting for a thumbs-up and big smile, a cuddle, a game or anything else that is rewarding for him other than food - but do not eliminate the food altogether.

Using a long line, gradually give the dog more freedom but still expect the check-in - use the line to reinforce him if needs be, or backtrack to a shorter lead if freedom goes to his head! As he gains more distance, you may not want him to return to you, so when he checks in you can just give him a thumbs-up from a distance and give a "go ahead" signal. Alternatively you can recall him for a reward or use heelwork to keep him thinking.

Try to use a release signal to distinguish when the dog is free and has to take responsibility for checking in. When he is on a short leash it is not as necessary as when he is off-leash or on a long line and he needs to remember his responsibility. Over time



Farah demonstrates the check-in



Resources

[Deaf Dog Education Action Fund \(DDEAF\)](#) is very accessible and sells bandanas to alert people to a dog's deafness.

[Deaf Dog Network](#) and [Deaf Dog Network on Facebook](#) both include a collection of videos of teaching signs.

Hear Hear by Barry Eaton (2005) is one of the best available books on living with and training a deaf dog.

[ALSpro Online Sign Language Dictionary](#) is the author's favorite online sign language dictionary and is good for getting ideas for signs and seeing the visual of how to move your hands.

Basic Sign Language by Morag Heirs is a leaflet written for the Association of Pet Behavior Counsellors (APBC).

[Blind Dog Information](#)

Living with a Blind Dog is a simple summary of living with a blind dog

[Blind Dog Rescue UK on Facebook](#)

you will need fewer and fewer treats. This is the part where you need to be patient. It will vary with each dog but eventually almost all check-ins will be rewarded with a smile or thumbs-up. Do not forget to teach the recall as well, so if the dog gets too far ahead you can call him back at the check-in. By doing that consistently you can start to teach an appropriate distance for him to wander away from you as well.

The Recall

The recall is often the last part of the puzzle to add to off-leash skills for a deaf dog. Just like with a hearing dog, it is best to start working on your recall at home without any distractions. We like to start by teaching a super enthusiastic hand targeting behavior, where your dog touches his nose to your outstretched palm.

By playing the hand targeting game, your deaf dog learns to rush quickly to you and stay close with his nose fixed on your hand. This gives you time to reward him and make the all-impor-



Rosie Gibbs and Horus practice the fixed period check-in



Deaf dog Bronte displays the perfect recall

tant harness grab to secure him too.

You can easily create a recall signal from this exercise by waiting for your dog to look at you, wave your arms clearly, and then sweeping your hands down to create that inviting target. In deaf dog circles we sometimes refer to this as “waving loudly.”

As you can see, it is very important to have a dog who checks in frequently, otherwise you will have a hard time getting him to notice your recall signal. Playing self-control games such as Susan Garrett’s *It’s Yer Choice* and similar techniques from Leslie McDevitt’s *Control Unleashed* approach builds a strong habit of waiting for permission before rushing into situations. Combined with a strong check-in, this exercise sets up your deaf dog to see another off-leash dog but pause and look back first. The handler can then either send the dog on to play or use the recall signal to bring him back in. Happy off-leash time everyone! ■

¹ *The Dog-Directed Check-In by Morag Heirs*

² *The Fixed Period Check-In by Rosie Gibbs*

Morag Heirs PhD MSc MA(SocSci)(Hons) PGCAP Human and Canine Remedial Massage Therapist, is a Companion Animal Behavior Counselor who runs [Well Connected Canine](http://WellConnectedCanine.com) in York, UK. She works with deaf and blind dogs professionally, provides training and support for the Deaf Dog Network and is the behaviorist for Sheffield Animal Centre (RSPCA) and York & District RSPCA branches in the UK.

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Fostering Empathy and Respect

In the second part of a two-part feature, *Joan Orr* outlines games children and dogs can play together to ensure a successful relationship

In the first part of this article ([BARKS from the Guild October 2014 Page 33](#)) we discussed how you can give your dog and the children in his life the best chance for a successful relationship by taking deliberate steps to create a child-loving dog and to develop empathy and respect in the child. In this second part we focus on games children and dogs can play together to foster mutual understanding and respect, empathy and positive associations between the two parties.

Training Games

Training games are an excellent way to encourage cooperation between dogs and children and to teach appropriate behaviors in both. Adults should teach the games to the dog before children get involved. Adult supervision is essential during play sessions, since the excitement could lead to over-arousal in either the dogs or the children.

Hide and Seek

This activity is a hit with both two- and four-footed family members. One child distracts the dog, while the other hides and calls for him. When the hider is found, he gives the dog a click/treat.

Once the dog gets the hang of the game, the hider can make it more challenging by going out of sight or into another room while the other child encourages the dog to “Go find Jordan!” This game provides physical and mental stimulation.

Fetch

The primary rule of fetch is that the dog will give back the fetched object and step back and wait for the next throw. Offer the dog a treat in exchange for the object and click as soon as the dog lets go. If the dog tries to engage in a game of tug of war or refuses to give up the object, the children should end the game and ignore the dog for a short while.

“Any game that pits the strength or speed of the dog against those of the child could lead to over-excitement and even a biting accident,” said Teresa Lewin, Animal Behavior Specialist and [Doggone Safe](#) Co-Founder. “Adult supervision and proper training are essential.”

Stay Inside the Rope

Place a circle of rope on the floor and give each child a clicker and some small dog treats (the children can make a clicking sound with their tongues if no clickers are available). Toss a treat into the center of the circle to get started. When the dog has eaten the treat, click before she steps outside the rope and toss another treat into the circle.

The goal is to click and reward as often as possible while the dog has all four paws inside the rope circle. Once the dog has



Training games are a useful tool to foster cooperation between children and dogs

the idea that the place to be is inside the rope, the children can start moving around the room, still clicking and tossing treats into the circle. Play this in various locations and eventually the dog will learn to go and lie within the rope. You can then take the rope into any situation where you need to establish a boundary for the dog. This is easier and safer than using the rope to tie the dog up!

Sharing and Tug Games

It is important that the dog learns to share and that children learn to respect the dog. Controlled games with two identical items can help accomplish this. These games should be established with the dog by an adult first and only played by children over the age of nine who can follow directions well and only with dogs who have learned the rules. Watch this [video](#) that illustrates some terrific training games.

Educating Children

To have a successful relationship between your children and your dog, teach your children how to interact properly with the dog. Getting children involved with clicker training is a great way to build empathy and respect from the child. Clicker training is ideal for children because it is hands-off, so little fingers do not get painful nips from razor sharp puppy teeth and there is no physical strength required.

The most important thing to teach your children is how to *Be a Tree*. This means stand still, fold your branches (hands folded



in front) and watch your roots grow (look at your feet) and ignore the dog or puppy if he gets too frisky or is jumping on them or nipping. Running away, screaming, yelling “No!” at the dog or pushing him away may make him even more excited or may frighten him.

Children being a tree are boring to the dog and he will soon give up. Speed up the learning process by giving the dog a click/treat when he is near the children with all four feet on the ground. Children can click/treat as well whenever the puppy has all his feet on the floor. Small dogs and puppies can safely learn about this from children. If your dog is large or too excitable, it is not a good idea to set him loose with the children. Start with a leash and make sure the dog understands that when the children assume the tree position, he is to sit. Use the same approach as teaching the “sit to greet” discussed previously in this article (see [BARKS from the Guild October 2014 Page 34](#)).

We recommend that you start teaching children with the dog absent at first. Have someone pretend to be a dog or use a stuffed dog. Every time the pretend dog gets frisky, the children are to *Be a Tree*. Make this more fun by introducing [TAGteach](#) as part of the game. When a child does the tree pose, you tag (click) and count up the tags. When the group has learned a set number of tags, then reward them by bringing the real dog in to practice.

Teach children how to give food to the dog in a way that keeps the dog from nipping at them. They can simply drop the food on the ground, toss it or give with an open hand. Make a game of this and practice while tagging for correct technique with a stuffed dog at first. Let them earn enough tags to bring in the real dog. When the real dog comes in to clean up the treats from this game, the children can click each time he eats one. This is fun for both children and dog and helps the dog remember to keep his paws on the floor.

Teach children how to pet the dog in a way that the dog likes. You can tell if a dog likes something if he comes back for



Teaching children about canine body language is mutually beneficial

© Can Stock Photo/Laures

more if you stop or if he leans in to appreciate the petting. If the dog turns away, tries to leave, licks his lips, yawns, licks your face over and over or shows a half moon of white in his eye, then he is not enjoying the interaction. If he

does a big shake off when the interaction is over, this also may indicate that he did not enjoy it. Your dog probably does not like hugs and kisses, even if you think he does. Use your observational



© Can Stock Photo/boggy

Children should be taught how to interact properly with dogs

skills to determine what kind of petting and touch your dog enjoys and teach the children how to do this. Encourage them to scratch the dog on the neck or chest rather than petting on the top of the head or hugging and kissing. Use a stuffed dog and tag for correct interactions before bringing in the real dog.

Talk to your children about how it would feel if strangers (or even their own family) were coming up to them all the time telling them how cute they are and touching or hugging them. Talk about the fact that there is a time and place for showing affection.

For example, would they like it if great aunt Agnes ran out onto the soccer field to give them a big hug and a kiss in the middle of a game? Would they like it if you gave them a hug before bed when they are sleepy? Dogs are the same. If they are busy watching a squirrel, chewing on something or sleeping, they do not want affection from children. Dogs like affection on their own terms. Teach children to give affection to the dog when the dog comes for it and not to pursue the dog.

Learn about dog body language yourself and teach your children. They should know the signs that a dog has had enough of something and is or is not enjoying the interaction. Visit [Doggone Safe](#) to find out about dog body language and for free resources for teaching your children.

Teaching and training children and dogs help to set up a successful situation for both. Using a positive reinforcement-based approach lays the foundation for a strong bond of love and respect to develop between child and dog. ■

Joan Orr MSc is a scientist and internationally recognized clicker trainer. Joan is a co-founder and president of [Doggone Safe](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to dog bite prevention through education. In association with animal behavior specialist Teresa Lewin, Joan has co-created the dog bite prevention board game *Doggone Crazy!*, the *Be a Tree* bite prevention education program and the *Clicker Puppy* training DVD.



It's a Dog's Life

Urban living can be extremely stressful for our canine companions as we expect them to fit in effortlessly with our lifestyles. *Cecelia Sumner* examines how this can be made a little easier on both sides

Interacting during a walk increases the connection between owners and their dogs



© Can Stock Photo/halfpoint

Not surprisingly, I love living with dogs. I embrace their essential dogginess. Barking, jumping, digging, hunting, these are all normal canine behaviors. I recognize I need to provide an outlet for these behaviors to keep my dogs happy and stress-free.

Many pet owners struggle with understanding their dogs' behavioral needs. While dogs evolved alongside humans, in recent history, our environment and expectations of our dogs have changed. Increasingly we fit our dogs into small compartments in our lives, often rendering us unable to allow them an appropriate way to express innate behavior. This can be stressful for them and, as a result, dogs may resort to destructive behavior or vocalizations to relieve their anxiety. These issues may then create a division between the owner, the dog and quite likely the neighbors too.

There are a multitude of things dog owners can do to help their pets cope with life in our human world. Choosing a dog with the right temperament to suit individual lifestyles, providing an outlet for energy and exercise and, most of all, taking the time to learn how dogs communicate are all great ways to avoid stressful situations and increase the fun for all involved.

I encourage prospective dog owners to take an honest look at their lifestyle. Selecting a dog that fits into their regular activities is the first step to a great relationship. I like to pick a dog

based on personality more than appearance. An athletic person might do well with a sporty type dog, provided they include the dog in their exercise regime. A more sedentary lifestyle might require a more mature dog or one with a less energetic character. Take some time when selecting a pet. You will most likely be spending 10 to 15 years together. It is important to find a compatible personality.

Remember, you might love your friend's Labrador, but there is a huge variation of dogs within a breed. Don't just select a breed, choose an individual. There is great variety of canine personalities. Take advantage of that and find a dog who appeals to you, not just physically, but emotionally. Setting up you and your dog for success will make your lives together much easier.

Aside from that, having a dog you truly connect with will make meeting his emotional and physical requirements much easier. We all like to spend time doing things we enjoy. If you love your dog, you are more likely to find the time for walks or games or training. Dogs feel calmer when they get exercise and have a few moments to indulge in important canine activities, like barking, running and digging.

Because dogs are companion animals, just letting them out in the yard does not fulfill their emotional needs. You need to actually interact with your dog to keep unacceptable behaviors at bay. Leash walks are a good start. Put your cell phone down and

focus on your pet when you walk. Practice loose leash walking, eye contact and attention exercises. This increases the connection between you and your dog. Interacting via training creates a relationship based in communication. That spills over into other aspects of your relationship with your pet. By increasing your ability to understand with each other, you will be lowering stress levels and creating good habits. This does not involve spending any extra time training your dog. You are simply using your time together more effectively.

There are many acceptable ways to give your dog an outlet for innate, but less acceptable behaviors. If your dog likes to dig, provide a digging pit in your yard. Choose an inconspicuous place, fill the area with play sand and bury some puppy prizes. This will help direct your dog to an appropriate way to indulge in his need to dig. If your dog barks, put it on cue. Then turn barking into a trick. If your dog likes to run, try teaching him to fetch a Frisbee or tennis ball. The dog gets exercise while you stand, or even sit, in one place. If your dog likes to hunt, try hiding a treat among a multitude of boxes. This gives his nose and brain a workout without a huge amount of effort on your part. You can also feed him using a food toy so he has to work to obtain the food. There are countless ways to provide enrichment in your dog's life. Take a few minutes and be creative. These types of interactions are enjoyable for both of you and help keep canine anxiety at bay.

The most important thing we can do to lower stress for our dogs is to learn how to really interact with them. Even though we live with dogs, in my experience, most people do not take the time to understand how dogs communicate. Because we are compulsively verbal, we pepper dogs with an unending variety of words. They can learn to understand our vocalizations, but they understand body language much faster. Being clear and consistent makes everything easier for all of us.

It is not just the dog's job to understand us. Being the (supposedly) bigger brained human, we should be able to understand communication is a two-way street. I spend a good amount of time just observing dogs. They are often eloquent in their body language but people just miss the cues. This must be so frustrating for the dogs. If you just take some time to focus on your pet,



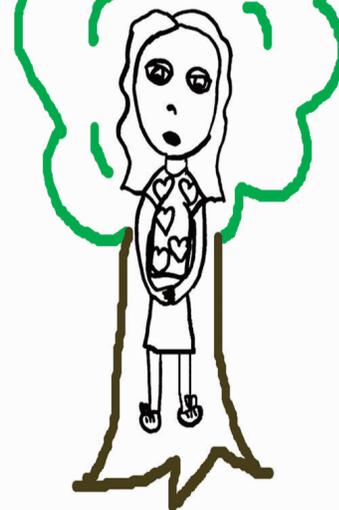
The modern dog may not have access to his innate behaviors, causing stress or anxiety

you will be surprised by how much he tells you. Watch his body postures. Are they soft and wiggly? Stiff? Ears forward or back? Is he soliciting attention? Or moving away? You will begin to become more aware and recognize a lot of these situations when you realize their importance.

Living with dogs is about more than a few minutes cuddling on the sofa at the end of the day. Living with dogs is about you taking the time to understand how to meet their physical and emotional needs. By being proactive about supplying an outlet for innate behaviors and listening to your dog, you can avoid behavioral stressors and create a satisfying relationship for both of you. ■

Cecelia Sumner CBCC-KA, CPDT-KSA owns [Best Behavior Dog Training](#) in Vero Beach, FL and is dedicated to fostering understanding and communication between dogs and their people.

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An Imperfect World

Gail Radtke wonders what drives people towards the emotional experience and thankless, never-ending task that often epitomizes animal rescue

The world of animal rescue is a complex one, fraught with frustration and heartache. So why do we do it? There is no simple answer to that. I have come to that realization after great self-reflection on my own reasons, endless conversations and heated debates with colleagues and

friends on what is acceptable, what is responsible and what is ethical. I have often found it to be a complex personal belief or a desire to make a difference in the life of an animal that drives one towards this often thankless undertaking.

The more I investigated the motives surrounding animal rescue, the more I came to realize the entire practice, worthy as it indeed is, is not immune to controversy.

My initial response to the question “Why do we rescue?” was, “Because it is the right thing to do.” But I started wondering, “Why is that?” I started soliciting feedback from friends and colleagues, asking them why they are involved in rescue and what they think compels people to do it. The responses ranged from a simple, “Because the animals need it” to a personal need to make a difference. Here is a selection of the responses:

— “Rescue saves dogs' lives.”

— “I don't know why other people rescue dogs, but I rescued two dogs because in my heart, I knew it was the right thing to do; to offer a living, breathing entity a chance to experience love, kindness, support, and patience is a small thing to provide in the scope of what could have been for these dogs.”

— “I rescue because there are so many animals in shelters that would never get to show their love, or receive love, without being given the opportunity of a second chance.”

— “To give a dog who has known nothing but fear or struggle a chance to appreciate a life of love and comfort.”

— “I rescue dogs because I can and because I wish to see them venture down a new road to a life better than the one they led before.”

There is no doubt that someone who takes in an animal in

Life in animal rescue can be complex and frustrating for those involved



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need has a special heart. Sometimes these cats, dogs, birds, horses et al are referred to as the “no-hoppers,” the ones who are so emotionally damaged or behaviorally challenged it is unlikely they will make it out of the shelter, or wherever else they end up, alive. People who rescue all want the same thing: a positive outcome for an animal whose life may be at

risk and who is in need of a caring and safe home to get just that.

It sounds simple in theory but, in reality, animal rescue has become a rather complicated endeavor.

The west coast of British Columbia (BC), Canada is a hub of dog businesses, dog friendly places and dog rescues. I did a simple internet search to determine how many dog rescues were out there. I got stumped at approximately [155 rescues](#) for the province of BC alone. That number would have only been accurate if it had included rescues that are smaller, not registered or maybe do not use social media. Some names I was familiar with were not even listed. If you are a Facebook user you will be more than aware of the number of posts you see daily about dogs in need of homes. I was not actually sure of where some of the listings generated from. The “Send Money Now to Save Fido” pleas are many and I was not completely sure what to make of them all.

I am well aware there are multiple credible organizations and groups who work night and day to advocate for animals and are making a tremendous difference, often at their own personal expense. But how do we police people who appear to be using rescue as a guise to make money? How does the kind-hearted person who wants to make a difference avoid being sucked in? Not only do we have to ask why we are rescuing, we have to ask who and where from.

In BC, debate is currently hot regarding importing dogs from other countries – or even other Canadian provinces - into local areas for adoption. From what I can see, this does not always involve simple collaboration but a division regarding beliefs which

can create judgment and criticism on many levels.

It started last summer when, according to various news sources quoting from a leaked document (see [The BC SPCA Shouldn't Import Dogs from Other Provinces: Watchdog](#) and [Additional Resources](#)), the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) stated they had experienced a reduction both in intake and dog “diversity” (i.e. types of dogs available) in their shelters and were considering taking in out-of-province dogs for adoption. This information ignited countless debates on consumer demand versus animal welfare. A multitude of BC rescues not affiliated with the SPCA came forward to say they, on the contrary, certainly were struggling with over-population and that BC should not be importing dogs into local communities until every effort had been exhausted to ensure the needs of current dogs are taken care of (see [Paws for Hope Condemns BC SPCA's Secret Internal Proposal to Import Dogs for Adoption](#) and [Additional Resources](#)).

Reviewing some of the articles on the topic led to me find an even greater prolificacy of dogs being imported into Canada and more information on the controversy that surrounds this practice. There are so many independent rescues out there it is impossible to track the numbers coming into Canada and BC itself. One rescue group stated that, in 2012, they brought in 800 dogs to Canada and guesstimated that as many as 80 new rescue groups per year are popping up nationwide. One of the rescue organizations highlighted the health concerns of importing dogs based on its experience of questionable veterinary certifications (see [Why We Don't Import](#)). One dog, for example, arrived from California with a veterinary certificate stating she had been spayed, yet the dog ended up getting pregnant some time later. But there is very little that can be done legally without enormous financial resources.

So where does that leave the kind soul who just wants to make a difference in an animal's life? They may find themselves vulnerable to the wants and beliefs of other people. And getting caught up in the controversy might be easier than you think. Gone are the days when a person could answer an ad for a dog needing a home and be sure that is all it was for. In today's society, the person at the other end could be fronting as a rescue as a means to broker dogs for money or dog fighting and preying on another person's innate kindness and good intentions.

Aside from that, we often see rescue organizations posting dogs looking for homes with headings like “not good with children” or “not good with other dogs.” Making it sound like the dog merely has some poor socialization issues does not, however, inform people of the possible risks involved in adopting a dog with an unknown history.

Furthermore, the average dog guardian or potential adopter may not always understand the complexity of the behavior when a dog presents reactivity towards children or other dogs, not to mention the risk management that is required to ensure safety at all times.

For the potential adopter wanting to help an

animal, it can get even more confusing. Whom do you trust? I have seen far too many people who just “happen” to have a litter of rescue pups on hand – for an adoption fee of course. There are no bylaws to stop someone from breeding and selling dogs in my community and this problem is widespread. Although we have a bylaw stating you can only have a certain number of dogs on any property (within a specific property size), it is impossible to monitor and enforce. Some of these types of breeders do not fit the typical profile of a puppy mill, yet they sell pups for profit and use rescue as a front. We know they are there but there is nothing that can be done except to educate the public and potential adopters to exercise caution.

In spite of the potential pitfalls, there are still numerous worthy causes out there that deserve our support. The need and desire to rescue remains in our hearts regardless, and we rescue because we can make a difference in the life of an animal who needs a safe and caring home and who may be at risk of euthanasia. Even though things are complicated out there, we still need to do everything we can. Now, more than ever, we need to educate people on responsible rescue and sift out the unscrupulous people who are preying on the kind souls who genuinely want to help. ■

Sources and Additional Resources

[Rescues, Shelters, SPCA Branches and Humane Societies in BC](#)
[The BC SPCA Shouldn't Import Dogs from Other Provinces: Watchdog](#)
[Why We Don't Import](#)
[Influx into BC of 'Rescue Dogs' from Other Countries Stirs Debate over Pet Adoption](#)
[Paws for Hope Condemns BC SPCA's Secret Internal Proposal to Import Dogs for Adoption](#)

Gail Radtke CPDT is a retired Correctional Supervisor and former Instructor at the Justice Institute of BC, Canada. She has combined her passion for dogs and teaching and is a Family Paws Parent Education presenter and is currently completing her DipCBST. She is the owner and operator of [Cedar Valley K9](#) in Mission, BC.



Sadly, there is no shortage of dogs needing homes, no matter where the location

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Do Cats Grieve?

Do they or don't they? The answer is that we still don't really know.

Jane Ehrlich tackles the topic of grieving felines



Anecdotal evidence suggests some cats experience a period of mourning when they lose a feline companion

However a cat's experience may be viewed through our poor human lens, when it comes to grieving, accusations of anthropomorphizing can be just plain wrong.

When one member of the feline household has passed on, we can often see changes in the remaining cat's - or cats' - manner. Reactions to the loss (whether friend or enemy) may manifest themselves in terms of sleeping, playing, eating, eliminating, just being and status readjustments in a multi-cat home. There are changes and there are responses.

Clients plead, "I just want to know what my cat is going through. What can I do?" Good question. We still don't know all that much.

Some cat experts believe it unlikely cats mourn the way humans do.

"Is the cat wandering around the house feeling sad? Or thinking, 'Score! I've just doubled my territory!?' The fact they're not pack animals means they are less likely to mourn, because they are not social to begin with," said Dr. John Samuelson, president, AZ Veterinary Medical Association.

Another well-respected vet, who asked not to be named ("Nobody wants to hear this, and nobody wants to be the one

to tell clients this.") believes that "the only grieving cats do is when their babies die-for perhaps six or seven hours. There is no true empathy for each other. A dog cares who they're with. A cat cares about where they are. They protect their turf."

These views represent those that many vets maintain. Others believe cats mourn, and quote statistics to back it up. In 1996, the ASPCA's [Companion Animal Mourning Project](#) found that 46 percent of cats ate less than usual after the death of a companion cat. Around 70 percent showed a change in vocalization pattern. Many slept more and changed the place where they usually slept.

"They grieve. I've seen it many times," said Prof. Nicholas Dodman, program director, Animal Behavior Department of Clinical Sciences, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

BARKS: "Why do some vets still believe cats do not grieve? That because cats are not pack animals, they do not have empathy for one another, so believing they mourn is anthropomorphizing?"

Prof. Dodman: "That is unknowledgeable and they have not kept up. That's a 'D' in animal behavior! It's 50s thinking. There was a movement in the 1950s, 'Real Scientists Don't Attribute

Feelings.' Just because they speak in a different language to ours does not mean they cannot feel what we feel. There is nothing special about cats that they would not feel, would not grieve."

BARKS: "According to the ASPCA's Mourning Project, more than half the cats became more affectionate, even clingy, with their owners, when they were grieving."

Prof. Dodman: "I have not seen that. If they are mutually bonded to another animal, they will go into a depression. Life seems gray. They lose interest in life. I had one cat who would not eat after his friend died. He developed hepatic lipidosis [and] went to ICU at Tufts. [He was] on the verge of dying. They narrowly pulled him through."

In addition to lack of appetite and loss of interest, stress hormones, such as cortisol, are released when cats mourn. Hair loss (often because of over-grooming as grooming is self-comforting and feel-good endorphins are expressed) can be common. It has been theorized that a cat's own scent is comforting as well so urinating in inappropriate places may also be a kind of self-reassurance to deal with the stress.

Many experts note a three-stage grieving process: the first shows itself with vocalizing, pacing and searching. The second shows the cat as listless and disinterested in whatever is going on around him. The third stage is a kind of acceptance, although perhaps not in the human sense. This is where we find cats truly 'coming into their own' in their character; becoming friendlier, more active, more... individual, if the passing cat had previously dominated him, for example.

The death of a cat leaves not only a change, but a hole in many cats' lives. Some experts feel a cat's notion of death is that of a child's - the state of permanency is unfamiliar. Yet clients have noted that when a cat is around the body of the deceased cat, there was less 'mourning'. Do these cats make a link between killed prey and a dead friend? Can there therefore be a kind of resolution to that death?

I wonder about a difference in scent when an animal is ill or even dying. There must be that percentage of a second, after all, that cats recognize each other by smell before sight, which would explain the phenomenon of scrapping with a previous cat friend newly returned from the vet's clinic when that cat momentarily becomes a stranger to the one left at home. In addition, cats have such a strongly-developed sense of smell that the lack of the specific cat's scent in the home is surely noted. Yet, when a cat is taken to the vet's to be put down, cats, like children, can wait for him to return.

When it is their offspring however, it is another matter. I have seen many mother cats, whose kittens were prematurely removed (through death or inappropriate selling), continue to look for them for weeks at a time, while wailing and pacing. They displayed mental anguish. That wail had a different

sound than that of a mourned mate. It was more protracted and anguished-sounding.

While some cats seem to mourn, which may manifest itself in searching for the lost companion and reacting for months, others get a fresh start when a warring feline departs. These cats do not seem to mourn at all. They find their own personality once more and can play and dash around, showing renewed confidence and renewed bonding with their humans.

For some cats who, when another cat dies, are no longer the suppressed ones - the 'low cats on the totem pole' - you can practically see them do cartwheels (catwheels?) when the previously dominant cat has passed. There can be a jostling for top position (first to eat? taking over the humans' bed or the velvet armchair in the sun? A cat's hierarchy is more fluid than a dog's, but hierarchy it indeed is). A new proverbial lease on life awaits.

What can we do? We can be there with more love and more play, but do not force it. The cat sets the agenda. Otherwise, that could add even more stress if the cat does not desire it. Keep the cat indoors if her mate was outdoors and she is searching for him. Other than that, keep to the same routine. And remember that your stress and your misery can affect the remaining cat(s). Keep an eye on the situation and watch for any changes. Mourning can last for days, weeks or more. Treats, toys and unforced attention can help.

Do not be too hasty in removing the deceased cat's things. The scent may be comforting to the remaining cat and can possibly help the others 'transition' as it fades. Let the surviving cats work out their rejigged social ranking themselves. We are human, after all. Even the most savvy of us will miss subtle body language and scent signs that only a cat can know.

For how long does this grieving process last? Of course it varies. It can be, in my experience, from a couple of weeks to several months. I have seen shorter and I have seen longer. At some point, you may want to discuss the idea of short-term anti-anxiety medication with your veterinarian. Nobody likes drugs, but there is a real place for them, as there is for humans, sometimes, when it comes to calming the suffering.

Grieving cats may also pick up on their owner's sadness



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A grieving cat may appear listless

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Get a New Cat? Not So Fast

First, give yourself time to process the loss. And make sure you are not trying to replace the loved one who has died. No cat should be put in this position. They all have their own personalities, needs and characters. Maybe a new cat is not the answer. Maybe the remaining cat has come into her own and seems quite content being the only one. Perhaps she has, indeed, found herself. Perhaps the several remaining cats have settled into a new grouping, even blossomed with that, and a new cat would only disrupt that. They also don't need the stress of a newcomer, especially now. Maybe you have enough cats already. Veterinarian

behaviorist, Bonnie Beaver, indicates you are more or less asking for behavioral problems with more than five cats. In my clients' experiences, the number is closer to four.

Consider your own life. Do you want more freedom for activities that fewer cats - or even no cats - would make possible? Perhaps you can foster, instead. Will a new cat outlive you? Consider an older cat, perhaps.

How soon? When you truly feel ready. Take time to process the loss, do not just knee-jerk. I do not know if I am typical but I waited a couple of months before getting another cat after my beloved Savoy died. I adore Grace but realize it took me a little longer to truly bond with her because of that.

Consider this subject a thrown-down gauntlet. It needs research, not just anecdotal narratives. I am not dismissing those by any means. After all, how much research has been instigated by just that? Personal experiences are often all we have to go by. But cats should come with a warning: 'This individual feels. Hurts. Respect that. Take care of that'. We need to anticipate, recognize and be able to help console and reassure them when they have lost someone. After all, we all need that, don't we? ■

Jane Ehrlich is a professionally trained Feline Behaviorist with over 27 years' experience. She spent 18 years volunteering with the RSPCA in both clinical and behavior work and has her own consulting business [Cattitude Feline Behavior](#) in Phoenix, AZ, although her clients are located worldwide.

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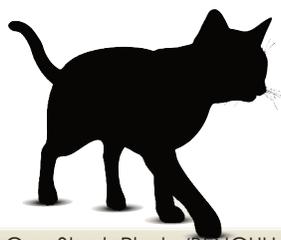
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Feline Behavior Unmasked

Jane Ehrlich responds to commonly asked questions about feline behavior problems and feline behavior in general

Q: My 20-year-old kitty has started to meow, loudly. I am surprised my neighbors have not complained. It is guttural and can last up to 12 meows. And in the middle of the night! Could senility be kicking in? Is she getting deaf but panicking? Is there anything I can do?



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Elderly cats may need extra reassurance

A: Your 20-year-old cat is about 95 years old, in human terms. One of the most common problems we find in an elderly cat is a serious decrease in her senses, including her hearing. Her reaction time slows and her memory suffers. She becomes more confused, even fearful as disorientation sets in, and her body and mind go through so many changes. Cats show signs of senility, even Alzheimer's-like symptoms.

Increased, even frantic, meowing is very common, too. It is 2 a.m., dark, silent, with nobody around, and she may feel there's no comfort, no "markers" around to help her get her bearings. She has become more dependent on you, and she feels insecure. That is scary. She howls.

It is important that a vet - one specializing in geriatric pets, if possible - gives her a thorough check-up. Is it an age-related illness? Or just age? The vet can explore the possibility of drug therapy for senility, if appropriate, for her symptoms, and familiarize you with a senior diet, exercise, and other ways to keep her life stimulated, loving and loved.

Give her lots of reassurance and attention. Remember, too, that older cats do not handle stress as well as they used to, so make her life as free from change as possible. Try to accommodate her own changes. For example, if she has not slept in your bedroom, could you move her bed or blanket, or fix up a cozy chair in there? Make sure her litter boxes have

sides that are easy for her to climb (are there enough of them?), and put nightlights around her feeding, sleeping and eliminating areas.

Calm her cries with soft, loving words; she will probably go back to sleep feeling reassured. She might continue the meowing whenever she feels insecure, having guaranteed your attention, but do not grab the ear-plugs and ignore her (as I would recommend if the cat were much younger, until he learned that such meowing did not work). She is elderly and has been a good, loving friend to you for 20 years, so it is a matter of tolerance, understanding - and never mind the neighbors.

Q: Our young cats will stare unblinkingly for several minutes at several areas of our living room where no one is standing. This occurs fairly often, in the daytime as well as in the evenings. My husband and I both, at different times, have noticed this behavior. It is as if an unknown unseen entity is standing in these spots. We always turn to look but there is nothing blinking, no reflections, no shadows, nothing at all that we can see to cause our cats' fixations. Is it possible that cats can see beyond the human realm?

A: We all know of cats who display their extraordinary perception - sensing when someone is ill or unhappy, or when a thunderstorm is approaching, they are über-sharp observers.

While their daytime sight is not quite as sensitive as ours, they sense so much more with their hearing (our own stops at 20 kHz; theirs at 60!) and their sense of smell is 14 times keener. Add their sense of touch (those whiskers), and altogether they sense far more than we could. Cats do this observing all the time. Watch the tail. Is it twitching? The eyes: dilating? They

are watching tiny signs such as a particle of dust in the air or on a wall, a micro-tiny bug, a spot we cannot see, and perhaps waiting for it to move.

Having said that, I have seen enough proof in my parapsychology studies (days of yore) that cats can pick up on, shall we say, certain doings. A few stays in notoriously-haunted hotel rooms, for example, with my cat Tyan demonstrated her ability to do so. Even my physics professor borrowed her for that skill.

But they will take that secret to their graves. The vast majority of our cats who stare into what we think is just space are not showing anything but very sharp, hugely sensitive everyday senses. ■



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Cats are well-known for their observational skills

Dudley the Wonder Fish

Think it's impossible to train a fish? Think again! Fish enjoy the reward of working for food just like any other animal, as *Sharon Empson* has discovered

It has been a little over a year since I trained Dudley as part of my Karen Pryor Academy Certification as a Pet Trainer. Not wanting to add more furry pets to our home, I chose a fish as my "other species." I bought Dudley at a pet shop when he was about a little over an inch long.

Cyclids are intelligent fish. I read an interesting article that stated you can see the intelligence of Cyclids in their hunting techniques. The *N. Livingstonii* buries itself in the sand and pretends to be dead. When a small fish comes to investigate what appears to be a dead fish, it jumps up from the sand and eats the smaller fish.

One thing I especially love about Cyclids is that they are protective over their offspring. They keep the eggs and the hatched babies in their mouths and defend them with a passion. When danger comes, the babies swim quickly back into their parents' mouths. Both the male and female protect their babies.

I was excited to begin and see just how much Dudley could learn. He was a cute little Cyclid and had a spunky personality. I brought him home, set him up alone in a tank and let him settle in for about a week. He would stare at me through the corner of his aquarium as I sat a few feet away watching TV.

With positive training, especially clicker training, there is so much joy in the learner. I wondered if it would be the same with a fish, and how would I measure that joy? The first exposure to clicker training for Dudley came when I began to develop value for the clicker in our training sessions together.

The clicker is used to mark the instant the animal does a behavior you want and is a bridge between the behavior and the reinforcement. When you develop value for the clicker, the animal will associate the sound of the clicker with the reward that will soon follow.

I quickly found out that Dudley could not hear the clicker under water. So I used a flash light instead of the clicker to mark



Dudley the Cyclid was trained using a flashlight as a reward marker instead of a clicker

the behavior I wanted him to do. Every time I fed Dudley I would flash the flashlight and then drop a tiny piece of shrimp inside his tank. I was amazed at how quickly Dudley learned that the flash of light meant something really yummy was coming. I tried different types of fish treats but Dudley loved tiny bits of cut up shrimp the most.

The first behavior I wanted to capture Dudley doing was to target a stick (a little plastic stir stick used for coffee). I placed the end of the stir stick into the water. Dudley, being a curious fish, swam closer to investigate the stick, when he did, I flashed the light and dropped a little shrimp to him. He gobbled it up. I removed the stick and placed it back in the water and he approached again, I flashed the light and dropped a tiny bit of shrimp into his tank. This is called shaping, rewarding each approximation of the goal behavior. Each time he moved closer, I would flash the light and reinforce his behavior with a tiny bit of shrimp. Once Dudley began to touch the target stick with his mouth, that was the only behavior that I would click and reinforce. Soon he was touching the stir stick with his mouth consistently. Dudley and I had communicated.

When he had targeting the stir stick behavior down pat, we moved onto the hoop. My husband made Dudley a little hoop and suction-cupped it to the side of the aquarium. I decided what behavior I wanted Dudley to do. My goal behavior would be that Dudley would swim through the hoop. Each time he moved

closer to the hoop I flashed the light and dropped the shrimp for him. One day he swam right up to the center of the hoop, I flashed the light and dropped the shrimp on the other side of the hoop and he swam through it to get the shrimp. From then on, each time he swam through the hoop, I would flash the light and he would be reinforced with a piece of shrimp. Dudley is a smart fish, I was amazed at how quickly he learned.

Dudley was really enjoying himself, so I thought, why not try another behavior? I decided to teach him to swim around a little ping pong ball stuck to a straw that was weighed down under the gravel. I shaped this behavior as well by reinforcing approximations of the behavior; looking at the ball, swimming near the ball and so on and, sure enough, Dudley soon began swimming around the ball. Each time he swam around it, I would flash the light and then reinforce the behavior with shrimp. Dudley began swimming around the ball consistently. If Dudley could do each behavior separately, why not link them in a little chain? So that is what I did. I linked all the behaviors and created a little agility course for Dudley. He was reinforced for first touching the target stick and swimming through the hoop. When he had this down, I added the last bit of the chain, swimming around the little ball. Each behavior was a cue in itself. He did it! He loved to work. In the evening when we were eating dinner, Dudley would face us in the aquarium and just stare at us, eager to do his routine. You can see a video of Dudley doing his obstacle course



Dudley completes his obstacle course. See also [video](#)

[here](#), complete with light flash as a marker.

I learned a lot about reinforcing behavior through training another species besides a dog. Dudley taught me something too. He taught me that he liked to earn his food more than

just eating it off the top of the water. If I just dropped food in, he would ignore it, or swim very slowly over and look at it. He did not want a free meal, he enjoyed working for his food. How boring it must be for animals who are used to hunting for their food, to have everything handed to them. This concept of working for food in preference to taking it for nothing is known as contra freeloading and was also covered in our previous issue ([BARKS from the Guild, October 2014, Page 52](#)).

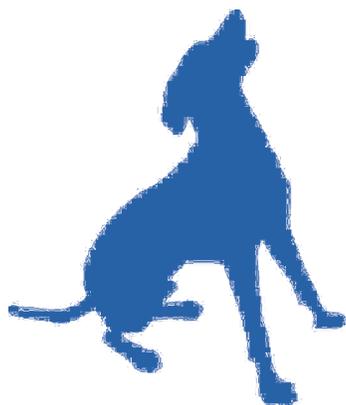


Dudley is not interested in food for free, preferring to work for it

Clicker training is a powerful tool to shape behavior and enrich the lives of our pets both physically and mentally. Clicker training has been used successfully to train horses, pigs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, dogs, big cats, wild dogs, dolphins and other sea life, birds - even chickens. My husband once clicker trained some of the wild fence lizards we have on our property, but that is another story. ■

Sharon Empson is a Certified Training Partner with the Karen Pryor Clicker Training Academy. She runs her own training business, [Hot Digits Dog Training](#) where she conducts private in home sessions with her clients. She is also a Dog Tech certified Dog Walker, a member of Doggone Safe and a 'Be a Tree' presenter. She lives in Lake Elsinore, CA with her husband and their three terriers and of course, Dudley the Cyclid.

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A Judgment-Free Zone

Amy Martin discusses the implementation of compassionate education to guide clients and owners to ensure the best possible care for their pets

2014 has come and gone and we are now entering into a brand New Year. As 2015 arrives, I find myself reflecting on the previous year. Two of the biggest goals that animal behavior consultants and many dog trainers were trying to reach in 2015 were simple but profound: educate the masses so we can empower people and their pets; and teach animal guardians that there is often a better, safer and more humane way to interact with and care for our animal companions.

Throughout 2014, I was pleased to see many positive messages about pet safety in homes, dog bite prevention, companion animal awareness and force-free training. Never before has this kind of education and awareness spread across the world this quickly, impacting millions of people, communities and animal companions. But is there room to improve?

The New Year will bring new goals. Did you know that less than 8 percent of New Year's resolutions are kept? I admit that I usually aim pretty high and then fall short. This year I hope to achieve my intentions and goals by making them about something greater than myself. So I asked myself these questions:

What if I set the intention to be less judgmental, less critical, and more compassionate and patient with myself? Would this habit carry over to my animal companions, the people with whom I interact, and my clients?

What if I focused more on what I saw was possible, instead of only what I see now? Would this help me to do the same with my animal companions, my clients, and everyone I encounter on a daily basis?

What if I listened more, observed more, and reacted less? What would happen?

What if I focused more on educating myself and focused less on what I don't know? Would this help me to do the same with my clients and the public?

After asking myself these questions, the answers were clear. What I give to or withhold from myself will reflect in how I treat others. What I practice in my life will parallel life with my animal companions, my clients and the public in general.

My personal reflection inspired me to share some lessons I have learned over the years. I hope my insights will inspire you as well.

I have been an animal trainer for more than 15 years. I have worn many hats during this time, but the roles I have found most rewarding are those of an educator and relationship builder. I learned very quickly when starting out that building relationships



"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."
William Arthur Ward

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between any species – human or animal – is based on trust and mutual respect for one another. I also learned that the most successful kind of education is compassionate and non-judgmental.

History has taught us that positive change begins with education. Education impacts individuals, and individuals impact families. If we want to continue to educate the masses, inspire the public, and have long-lasting, positive impacts on individuals and families, we cannot forget to include the three key components of successful education: compassion, support and non-judgmental guidance.

I did not always understand this ideology or embrace it. This life lesson was enhanced through my experience and mentorship with [Family Paws Parent Education](#) (FPPE). The FPPE programs demonstrate to families there is no need to hide or be embarrassed when things go awry in the home. Negative experiences do not have to become a stigma or something to be ashamed of. FPPE programs show families that there is a compassionate community that does care, that will not judge or condemn them, and that wants to help parents and families in need of guidance and support.

The goal in educating and supporting families through FPPE is not to instill fear, judge or place blame on people who unknowingly put their dogs and children in precarious scenarios. Rather, it is to help us all become more aware of ourselves, our dogs, our children and our family members. Compassion, support and guidance are where we start. Awareness is the end state.

I invite you to remember when you first started as a dog



trainer or as a behavior consultant. Now think further back to when you had a nine-to-five job. Did you know then what you know now? I certainly did not. I bring this history up because this is where our clients and most of the public are now. Understanding and recognizing where people are, how they feel, their insecurities and their lack of knowledge, is where our compassion and empathy come into play. Compassion and empathy are our most powerful tools.

When I can recall what it felt like to lack a complete understanding of something, I can better understand where my clients are coming from, and it allows me to have a more compassionate perspective. As trainers and behavior consultants, we know what an animal needs to better cope and succeed in their person's world, but do we really understand what the person needs to help themselves and their animal companion succeed? Are we really listening with a compassionate ear, or are we secretly judging them for their lack of knowledge and poor choices?

I am not being a compassionate observer if I am judging, blaming and focusing on what the person is doing wrong. When I am pointing fingers instead of focusing on support, I am limited in what I can offer a client or the public in general. If I choose to bring compassion, empathy, understanding, and support to any situation, I am better able to listen to and really hear what the person is saying, and what they are experiencing. I can better understand the needs of the person and the pets I have been hired to help if I am able to talk less and listen more with a supportive

ear. This mindset allows me to guide the people or person instead of dragging them along on my education train, while talking at them.

When I am able to focus on providing compassionate, non-judgmental education to fellow animal trainers or the public at large, it allows others to feel safe enough to share their stories. Many of these stories involve their mistakes, embarrassment, shame, guilt and blame for what they "allowed to happen" in their home or what they are "doing wrong." These errors or mistakes are overshadowed by what they can do differently now.

Compassionate, non-judgmental education is empowering. Sharing our own mistakes is empowering to people who are learning from us. When we help each other to set aside fears, judgment and blame, and encourage one another to focus on creating fun, compassionate education, we create a safe place for people to share their stories. We create a prevention-focused, supported educated community wherever we are in the world. We can make miracles happen in 2015. ■

"You are the people who are shaping a better world. One of the secrets of inner peace and of changing the world is the practice of compassion." Dalai Lama

age one another to focus on creating fun, compassionate education, we create a safe place for people to share their stories. We create a prevention-focused, supported educated community wherever we are in the world. We can make miracles happen in 2015. ■

Amy Martin is the founder and chief operator of [Conscious Companion](#)SM and a member of the advisory team for [Family Paws Parent Education](#). She is a licensed presenter of the [Dogs & Storks](#)[®] and the [Dogs & Toddler](#)TM programs and a [Doggone Safe](#) 'Be A Tree' presenter. She also serves on the board of directors of the [Cape Fear Parrot Sanctuary](#).

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Bridging the Communication Gap

Angelica Steinker presents Cognizant Behavior Consulting, an approach that involves active listening and communication to increase effectiveness and avoid non-compliance

Cognizant Behavior Consulting (CBC) is an approach to behavior consulting that provides consultants and clients with guidelines, boundaries and ethics. It is an emotion-centered approach that identifies and makes use of a needs-based approach for both the dog and human client.

Active listening is the process by which a consultant gathers information about dog and human clients, making use of eye contact, observation of client and dog body language, reflecting back what was heard, and empathizing. Active listening ensures shared meaning that both the consultant and the client are talking about the same thing. When a behavior consultant uses active listening in combination with ideal communication, the result can be powerful with the creation of a strong client-consultant relationship.

Why Active Listening?

Have you ever talked to a person and felt like they truly understood you? Did you feel connected to and supported by that person? That person was actively listening to you and that is a skill that we all can learn and refine.

Active listening creates a connection, and, in doing so, your client will feel supported. This translates to reinforcement history and empathy which are critically important for truly making a difference in the client's and dog's life.

Active listening is much more than simply hearing words - it is maintaining eye contact, observing body language, reflecting back what you heard and asking questions. Active listening takes effort, so you know you are doing it when you feel a drain on your energy. It takes effort to pay close attention to every word, body movement, and track the content of the information that is being shared. It also takes self-control to avoid jumping in prematurely with advice or comments.

Listen with Your Eyes

All of us know that body language in human conversation is critically important. While actively listening, you give your client a suggestion to help modify their dog's behavior but then observe the client leaning back and their brow furrowing. As part of active listening, you check in with them. "I noticed when I gave you that suggestion you looked a little stressed, can you tell me what you were thinking?" you ask. You are demonstrating openness and flexibility which is not only good behavior con-

Actively listening is important in cognizant behavior consulting

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Finding a connection is key, both with clients and dogs



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sulting but will also increase the likelihood that the client will share what they are thinking. Often the client's response will be something like, "That just isn't going to work for me." This is a critical piece of information and enables the consultant to ask additional questions and to avoid non-compliance.

Listening with your eyes applies to the dog also. Most of us are quite skilled at reading dogs, but reading the humans is likely more important because, without owner compliance, we cannot be effective.

Active listening includes reflecting, which means repeating back what you just heard or only a part of what you just heard. For instance, a client might say, "I feel trapped because if I leave the house my dog destroys the front door." You might reflect (respond), "So you feel trapped." This assures the client that you understand their issues and concerns.

Some might wonder why it would be important to waste time listening to clients when there is work to be done to help with the dog's behavior. *Fundamentally, if we don't connect with our clients our ability to help is limited.* Our connection and our effectiveness positively correlate. As the bond between you and your client deepens you can spend less time working on your connection and move more into effective modification coaching because you have the trust and shared meaning that you need. Sound familiar? This is just like dog training. First you have to get a reinforcement history then you can begin communicating with your dog and facilitating learning.

Open Questions

Open questions are likely to prompt clients to continue to provide information. "Tell me more about that," is a superb way to solicit additional information. "Why?" is a closed question that often functions as a conversation stopper. "Why?" also

sometimes elicits defensiveness by its sheer abruptness. If you functionally analyze open questions, they tend to create connection and usually lead to more information being provided. Closed questions can often function as positive punishment, stop the flow of information and, even worse, damage the consultant-client relationship. Some examples of open questions include: "How did that work for you?" and "What was that like?" or even "How so?"

Label Alert

Labeling can be a problem in active listening. If a client labels, if the consultant labels, or if the label is not clearly defined for both parties, it can cause misunderstandings. If a client labels their dog as "dominant" a great question would be, "How does it look when your dog does that?" This question will get you more information. Avoid using positive punishment with clients for using dominance-related terms. It can be embarrassing and uncomfortable for clients if you say, "We don't use that term anymore" or, "You are not using that term correctly." The use of positive punishment will decrease your reinforcement history and thus lower compliance and your effectiveness. It is best to let it go and note it for another time, or even pass on educating on this topic at all if other things are more important.

Criticism

As force-free dog trainers we love positive reinforcement. We all want to hear how great we are and how much we are helping, but some of the most productive behavior consulting can result from being able to accept criticism. If a client says, "This is not working for us," go into active listening mode, ask open-ended questions and be open to what the client is sharing. Consider it a golden opportunity to shift your consulting into turbo drive. For example, if a client says, "I don't understand why I need all this modification stuff, why can't you just help me train my dog?", you might respond, "Tell me more about that."

"When people come over and my dog barks and lunges at them, why can't I just tell her 'sit' and why can't we make it so that she just stops barking and sits?" the client might ask you.

This dialogue has provided the consultant with very valuable information - clearly the client and the consultant do not have shared meaning about training versus behavior and specifically what is happening regarding this dog's fear of strangers and how it sets the dog up to be unable to comply with cues. This is a watershed moment in which to educate the client about how a dog's fear response precludes it from working operantly.

The client's criticism of the consulting process can become a tremendous turning point in the relationship if the consultant chooses to leverage it by actively listening rather than becoming defensive and closing communication.

Avoiding Confrontation

Force-free communication avoids confrontation. If a client discloses that they have hit the dog, verbally punishing the client by stating, "This is inappropriate and will likely make your dog's problems worse," is likely going to make the consultant ineffective. Alternately, the consultant can ask, "Can you tell me more

about when that happened?" This open question will prompt the client to share more information, which will enable the consultant to give recommendations that will prevent similar circumstances from happening in the future. This provides a better result for both owner and dog. ■



Observing a client's reactions is an essential skill

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Angelica Steinker owns and operates [Courteous Canine, Inc. DogSmith of Tampa, FL](#), a full service pet service business and dog school specializing in aggression and dog sports. She is the National Director of Training for [DogSmith Services](#) and Co-Founder of [DogNostics Career College](#).

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The Art of Listening

Niki Tudge highlights ways of improving interpersonal relationships through enhanced verbal communication skills

Words are powerful tools of communication. Your word choice can easily influence the thoughts, attitudes and behavior of the people listening to you. Similarly, paying proper attention to the language of others can give us insight into what they are really saying which helps us respond appropriately and more effectively.

Listening and hearing are not the same thing. Most people can hear, but few can really listen. Hearing is simply the process of perceiving sounds in your environment. The best way to illustrate hearing is through the biological processes involved in sensory perception. Your ears pick up sound waves around you which then send signals to your brain. In turn, your brain tells you what the sound is and where it is coming from.

Listening, on the other hand, goes beyond simply picking up stimuli around you and identifying what those stimuli are. Listening involves the extra steps of really understanding what was heard and giving it deliberate attention and thoughtful consideration. It can be said that listening involves a more active participation than simply hearing, hence the term “active listening” (see also Pages 52-53).

If you make an effort to take the extra step to move from hearing to listening it will enhance your interpersonal relationships in many ways. Listening promotes a more accurate and deeper understanding of the communication elements. This helps the responder provide the most appropriate response. Also, when you are actively listening to somebody you are communicating to them that they have value, not just in what they are saying, but in their presence as well.

An important skill to enhance communication between two or more persons is the way you elicit the specific information you are looking for. Well-crafted questions make conversations more engaging and will help you establish rapport and generate interest and curiosity in others. Questions also help communicate your own sincerity in learning what people around you have to say. Here are a few tips on how to ask appropriate and effective questions:

Don't Be Afraid to Ask

Sometimes shyness, concern over making a faux pas or fear of being perceived as a busybody can keep us from asking questions. While some subject matters are not appropriate conversa-

tion topics, there is nothing wrong in asking questions per se. Showing curiosity about people, if you are genuinely interested in a person, will help to keep a conversation going and put the other person at ease.

Ask Open Questions

There are two kinds of questions based on the scope of the answers they elicit: closed and open.

Closed questions are questions answerable by yes or no. Example: “Are you happy with today’s article?”

Open questions, on the other hand, are questions that require a qualified response. Open questions are usually preceded by who, when, where, what, how and why. Example: “What is it about today’s article that you find most engaging?”

Open questions are more effective than closed questions because they evoke thoughtful consideration of the subject and creative thinking.

Ask Purposeful Questions

There are different reasons why we ask questions and it is important that we understand the purpose of our question before asking it. By doing this, we can better frame our questions and keep them more relevant.

For example, we can ask questions with the goal of making the other person feel at ease. Questions like these should be phrased in a pleasant non-threatening manner and involves subjects that the other person is likely to be interested in. Example: “That’s a lovely shirt! Where did you get it?”

Some questions are designed to challenge the other person’s thinking, and encourage a lively debate or deliberation. Questions like these should be phrased in a way that is focused and process-oriented. It can also challenge existing assumptions about the subject matter. Example: “How do you think a trainer can better motivate pet owners to complete homework?”

At other times questions are meant to encourage a person to join an existing discussion. The goal of these questions is to invite participation, as much as gain information. Example: “I find Susan’s comments very refreshing. What do you think Catherine?”

For better effectiveness, think of what you and the person you are talking to need in your stage of the relationship and then ask questions that can address that need.



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Powerful Communication

Power in communication refers to your ability to influence, persuade or make an impact on somebody, not in your ability to bully or intimidate them. Professional powerful communication is associated with self-confidence, credibility and effectiveness.

I recommend the following ways to help powerful verbal communication:

Stick to the Point

Powerful communication is not about saying as many things as you can in a given period of time. It is about sticking to what is relevant in the discussion and getting your message across in the shortest but most impact-laden way possible. Eliminate and be aware of your use of fillers such as “uhm,” “you know,” or “actually,” in your delivery. Try to avoid off-topic statements and stick to the ideas your audience will be most interested in knowing or the ones that promote your intentions best.

Don't Be too Casual

Appropriate phrasing when talking with friends is not necessarily appropriate for business-related discussions. The use of slang, street talk or poor grammar can detract from your credibility especially if you are mingling with potential clients, employers or business partners. Events and occasions that require you to come across impressively may require the use of industry-specific jargon and a formal tone so be sure to adjust accordingly.

Emphasize Key Ideas

Stress the highlights of your communication. For example, if you are delivering a sales pitch to a potential client then you should emphasize the main benefits of your product or service. If you are presenting your opinion on an issue then you should explain the crux of your argument and build from there. Even if you are merely expressing interest or congratulations, make sure the person you are talking to will remember what you have to say. There are many ways you can emphasize your points verbally. You can use repetition of key points, give specific examples, accenting particular adjectives or nouns or even directly saying, “This is really a point I want to emphasize.”

Tailor-Fit Your Communication to Your Audience

Powerful communication is one that connects with your audience. Know the readiness, attention, age and educational level of your audience. This is very important so that you don't overwhelm or underwhelm them. Social skills are primarily about being flexible. The better you can adjust to changes in your audience profile the better off your communication will be.

Connect

Power in communication is sometimes determined by the quality of your rapport with others. You may need to “warm up” your audience and make them comfortable and show them that you sincerely want to talk with them. The more others see you as



Non-verbal communication is invaluable in connecting with others

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“one of them,” the better their reception will be of what you have to say. Your non-verbal communication can be a big help in connecting with others and having an impact on your ability to engage and educate them.

To learn more about how you can *Improve Your Interpersonal Relationships with Clients through Enhanced Verbal Communication Skills* register for the FREE PPG Member [Webinar](#) on April 21, 2015. The learning objectives for this webinar are as follows:

- Understand the difference between hearing and listening
- Know some ways to improve verbal skills when asking questions and communicating with power
- Understand what non-verbal communication is and how it can enhance interpersonal relationships
- Identify the skills needed in starting a conversation
- Identify ways of creating a powerful introduction, remembering names and managing situations when you have forgotten someone's name
- Understand how seeing the other side can improve skills in influencing other people
- Understand how the use of facts and emotions can help bring people to your side
- Identify ways of sharing your opinions constructively
- Learn tips in preparing for a negotiation, opening a negotiation, bargaining and closing a negotiation
- Learn tips in making an impact through powerful first impressions

I look forward to seeing you there. ■

Niki Tudge is the founder of the [PPG, The DogSmith](#), a national dog training and pet-care license, and [DogNostics Career College](#). She is also a certified people trainer, Certified Facilitator and Project Manager and has business degrees from Oxford University (UK). Her professional credentials include; CPDT-KA, NADOI – Certified, AABP- Professional Dog Trainer, AABP- Professional Dog Behavior Consultant, Diploma Animal Behavior Technology, and Diploma Canine Behavior Science & Technology. See [here](#) for more information.

Dogs Loving Life

In the ongoing series of PPG member profiles, this month *BARKS* features *Kristin Yonkers* of Perfect Pooch Dog Training

Kristin Yonkers is a crossover trainer who changed to positive methods when she realized how fearful dogs could become when trained using aversive methods. A lifelong dog lover, she now operates her own training facility.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your own pets:

A: My one and half year old German shepherd, Ronon Dex, could not be any more German shepherd. He is goofy in all the right ways, serious in ways I wish I could be, and just the right amount of an alarmist to let us know when someone is at the house, or when a dog is coming by.

I also have a rescue kitten, Luna Khaleesi, who was born on April Fools' Day, 2014. She is still relatively new to the family but she is warming up nicely to my children and dog.

Q: Why did you become a dog trainer or pet care provider?

A: My first job was working retail at a private pet store, so it became natural to focus my career goals alongside animals. I truly wanted to become a veterinarian but, after an internship at a veterinary hospital, I learned I wasn't quite cut out for the medical side of things. Dog training was a very logical choice in helping animals out.

Q: Are you a crossover trainer or have you always been a force-free trainer?

A: I am a crossover trainer, and I wish I could go back to all the people I sold a prong or shock collar to before I knew any better. Something never sat right with me with using aversive tools. Seeing first-hand the fear in a dog's body language quickly got me supporting force-free tools and positive training.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: Meeting so many people and dogs, all with different goals and personalities. I learn a little more from each dog and constantly improve for the next one that comes my way. Being able to help people meet their goals in training is the best part, I think.

Q: What drives you to be a force-free professional and why is it important to you?

A: I work for money, or trade for something I really enjoy or need. Dogs will gladly work for things they enjoy. I cannot imagine my life revolving around doing something because I fear a



Kristin Yonkers switched to force-free training methods when she realized aversive methods could make dogs fearful

consequence or because something scary or painful will stop. We control so much of a dog's life, I cannot imagine forcing my dog into doing something simply because I say so. A relationship will blossom when kinder methods are practiced.

Q: How has the PPG helped you to become a more complete trainer?

A: Having a team of supporters with me in my quest to preach the force-free message gives me so much courage to fight the good fight. There are so many resources available at any given time through PPG and the seminars are worth their weight in gold. Having a professional association that believes the same things I do when it comes to training is uplifting, and when I'm feeling down I have an entire network of people cheering me on.

Q: What do you consider to be your area of expertise?

A: Teaching dogs to love life.

Q: Who has most influenced your career and how?

A: The biggest influence in my training career was my mentor trainer through the vocational school I went to for training. The



passion she had for training was contagious and her love for all dogs, no matter what their breed, really helped me evolve into a trainer that can easily work with all breeds and love the people who brought those dogs into their life. Thank you Noelle Nasca, you continue to inspire me every day.

Q: What awards, competition placements, have you and your dog(s) achieved using force-free methods?

A: The biggest award we have gotten is not on a piece of paper nor a title. The joy I see in my dog's face and body when we call his name and he wants to come to my daughter, my son, my husband or me simply warms my heart beyond any level. We instilled this love of recall by simply making coming-when-called a fun and enjoyable game.

Q: What are some of your favorite positive reinforcement techniques for most commonly encountered client-dog problems?

A: Teaching a rewarding "quiet" on cue for problem barkers, teaching a revved up recall for dogs that might not like to come when called, and teaching a "hand monster" game that slowly introduces hands as something positive then moves up to dogs enjoying being handled by vets, groomers, children and even strangers.

Q: What reward do you get out of a day's training?

A: The moment it clicks for owners to successfully cue their dog and the dog goes into it immediately. Having a dog should be en-

joyable both for the owner and for the dog. When a dog is relaxed and mannerful when going out in public it makes life so easy for everyone.

Q: What is the funniest or craziest situation you have been in with a pet and their owner?

A: Hands down this has to be when I ran into a rescue dog I worked with at a local park. It had been about two years since we last worked together. I saw the dog while the owner was talking to a friend and the dog started getting into a sit, a down, roll over, paws, downs, sits again etc. She just kept going through the motions of all the cues and tricks I taught her and I heard the mom say, "Goodness, you'd think her trainer was right there the way she is trying to get that person's attention!" and over I went. The dog was very happy to see me and the Mom could not believe it. It was a very nice reunion and it makes me smile every time I remember how well I influenced this rescue dog who was once afraid of stepping on grass.

Q: What advice would you give to a new trainer starting out?

A: Go easy on yourself. Burnout is very easy to attain in this business and many dogs need us! Learn as much as you can every day but don't be afraid to make mistakes in training – it is how we learn. Have fun and go out and make a difference. ■

Perfect Pooch Dog Training is based in Brocton, NY



When a dog is relaxed and mannerful, it makes life easier for everyone, says Yonkers



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An Open Letter to Research Scientists

Linda Michaels calls on canine research scientists to lead the way on the ethical treatment of companion animals

It would require a long list to delineate the high points of the [Society for the Promotion of Applied Research in Canine Science](#) (SPARCS 2014) conference. Many pet parents and trainers hung on every word, took note of each scientific position and planned to incorporate the lessons learned into their practice. However, certain critical data and a clear position on ethics were not always completely apparent.

Admirably, the SPARCS conference brings canine researchers into the mainstream of the canine applied practices fields. Through this forum, canine research scientists may reap benefits that include research dollars, personal financial rewards and other benefits from relationships forged with dog trainers and pet guardians.

Although the preponderance of material presented favored a force-free approach, I found an illustration of snake aversion “training” and emergency recall to be of particular concern.

No one is recommending that we ban scientific discussions of aversive control (aka the discontinuance of reinforcement) devices designed to cause pain or of positive punishment, as was suggested by some speakers. However, rationalizing their use for any purpose is another matter.

Positions against the use of shock and positive punishment are not necessarily based in a misunderstanding of science and the misapplication of the principles of learning, as was hinted at by some of the presenters. In addition, such positions are not necessarily emotion-based and “blind to science.” Indeed, they may well be based in a sophisticated academic grasp of the mechanisms at work and a perfectly understandable desire to promote animal welfare in a civilized world.

Taking a Stand

Leadership in science is the future of animal training. Voices that take a clear stand against pain-based collar devices and the crude manner in which positive punishment and aversive control methods are often used in dog training also deserve to be heard in a public forum. Non-aversive methods are not only safer but more effective with longer-lasting effects, in addition to being the more ethical choice. Progressive zoos nationwide have moved away entirely from using positive punishment and aversive methods when working with large and even potentially dangerous animals, so certainly we can manage our pet dogs.

Beyond B.F. Skinner

Dog bites are a serious and growing public safety issue in the US. It is well-documented in scientific literature that inflicting pain is frequently a cause of aggressive behavior. According to an article in the *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, *Good Trainers: How to Identify One* (Overall et al, 2006), investigators place shock collars, prong collars and choke collars at the top of the list of equipment that



Shock collars and other aversive training devices are known to cause an increase in anxiety, fear and aggression

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causes anxiety, fear and arousal which often contributes to an increase in aggression.

Although shock may cause a decrease in the frequency of the behavior of snake seeking, it may also increase aggression and/or cause learned helplessness. In addition, shocking often has serious unintended, classically conditioned consequences.

During the course of the conference, SPARCS founder Prescott Breeden recounted a bite redirect incident resulting from the administration of shock. Polsky (2000) meanwhile describes severe attacks on humans by dogs who were being trained or maintained on an electronic pet containment system. Pioneering psychologist Martin E. Seligman’s groundbreaking studies on learned helplessness indicate that inescapable shock may well produce immobility after the shock is removed (Seligman & Maier, 1967).

Science has come a long way since B. F. Skinner’s radical behaviorism of the 1950s. An understanding of the rudimentary principles of reward and punishment is now necessary for any serious student of behavior. However, the equally important classic *Misbehavior of Organisms* (Breland & Breland, 1961) authored by Skinner’s own graduate students, states that “there are definite weaknesses in the philosophy underlying these techniques.”

During her presentation at the SPARCS event, Dr. Monique Udell presented an emotion-provoking picture of a dog, who appeared to be wearing a shock collar, licking the head of a rattlesnake. Alongside it was a photograph of a dog running loose in the street chasing a car. Following that was a photo of a dog lying dead or seriously injured in the street.

The caption read: “Sometimes punishment can be merciful.” This sounds more like religion than science. Any empirical data on the efficacy of snake aversion “training” was absent. Evidence demonstrating recall efficacy using punishment/aversive control was not provided.



“Snake Breaking”

The use of shock collars in dog training has become the standard for snake aversion “training” despite the lack of evidence for its efficacy. This oversight has led to inaccurate conclusions regarding the benefits of positive punishment. Empirical evidence is requisite to the scientific method. An assumption of efficacy regarding shock snake aversion training has far-reaching and possibly dangerous consequences.

Dr. Karen Overall PhD VMD MA DiplACVB tells us (2007), “There are no scientific studies on whether shock teaches dogs to avoid snakes, in part because the population data on the range of “normal” canine responses to snakes are lacking completely.” Snake aversion “training” has not been shown to be either a valid or reliable method of snake deterrence (see also Pages 32-34).

Science must ask and seek to answer the obvious questions: Does the “training” do what it purports to do? What are the side-effects? On whose scale would the benefits outweigh the risks and cost to the dog and, moreover, to public safety?

Peer Pressure

Dr. Udell spoke at great length about prejudice and conforming to peer pressure. Is it possible that some scientists may be conforming to the philosophy of the all-inclusive big tent dog training organizations and sponsors?

I entreat scientists to consider the impact their presentations may have on their audience and, moreover, our companion animals when speaking from such a scholarly platform. It is surely the responsibility of canine researchers to carefully examine the topics they present and to avoid presenting opinions and positions that may reflect their own personal bias and prejudice as science. Is it not the responsibility of scientists to debunk myths – aka the null hypothesis?

Animal Abuse vs. Dog Training

Shock collar “training” is a serious animal welfare concern in the US. Not infrequently animal abuse masquerades as dog training. In *Why Shock is Not Behavior Modification* (Journal of Veterinary Behavior, 2007), principal investigator Dr. Karen Overall states, “The use of shock is not treatment for pets with behavioral concerns.”

According to the Kennel Club, UK, shock collars are banned in Australia, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, UK (2010) states that Wales, Quebec, and Canada have recently joined the list. How long will corporate agendas and personal interests in the US override animal welfare and principles of “Do No Harm”?

Myth: Shock vs. Snake Bite

So how can we prevent snake bites to our dogs? The alternatives of either shocking a dog or getting bitten by a snake provide a false dichotomy which is overly simplistic. Critical thinking mandates that we investigate other options. A presumption of supposed life-saving benefits is unwarranted. We ought to protect our dogs against dangerous and venomous snakes as we protect ourselves and the other members of our family. Would we allow our two-year old child to go romping about in the fields during snake season?

Myth: Shock vs. Euthanasia

How can we reduce euthanasia for dogs presenting with behavior problems? A premise with the alternatives of either shocking a dog or having him euthanized is another false dichotomy commonly posed by shock proponents. “The use of shock does not bring dogs back from the brink of euthanasia; instead, it may send them there,” says Overall (2007).

In actual fact, punitive methods or devices can cause an increase in anxiety which may lead to further behavioral problems, often causing pet parents to relinquish their animals to overflowing shelters. Barring neurological damage or deficits, I have yet to see a case in my behavioral consulting practice (including wolf-dogs) that could not be treated adequately using non-aversive methods. Indeed, red zone dogs are in need of non-aversive training even more than others.

The audience at the SPARCS conference was given an analogy/comparison with electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) used to treat depression in humans and shocking a dog. However, it was not mentioned that ECT is conducted on a patient who is UNCONSCIOUS. It is not a treatment used to punish and decrease the frequency of a behavior. These are not similar applications of shock.

Regarding the use of shock on human beings, one school in Massachusetts currently “treats” developmentally disabled students with shock. The shock method of behavior modification has been likened to torture and its use is being investigated by the US Department of Justice as well as the United Nations (Associated Press, 2014).

“I think what has happened is that this has gone on for this long because this is a population who cannot adequately speak

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for themselves,” said Dr. Karen Weigle, a clinical psychologist affiliated with the University of New Hampshire.

Future Research

In an effort to protect our companion pets from snakebites, there are less invasive and more humane alternatives on the horizon than administering shock that ought to be explored by the scientific community.

The use of service dog training methods may work without the inherent psychological and medically injurious effects that can result from shock devices. Service dogs are trusted to guide blind people across busy streets, undistracted by prey animals.

In addition, a survey using the extensive [Canine Behavioral Assessment and Research Questionnaire](#) (C-BARQ) database already in progress, or a separately designed survey, exploring the co-relational relationship between shock training and bites would be of practical value to science, animal welfare advocates, trainers and the public.

It is the job of researchers to fairly and honestly share thorough and ethically sound information. We need to move forward with sensible standardization of the dog training industry with competency requirements based squarely on humane treatment. We should seek to strengthen our welfare laws in the US. It is imperative that scientists consider their words carefully: Our

governmental representatives will look closely at what scientists have to say about shock.

How can the average pet parent be expected to make a well-informed decision with regard to behavior modification tools when so many dog trainers and manufacturers of shock products misrepresent the true nature of their effects?

There is simply no place for shock, prong, choke or any other aversive devices in companion animal research or training.

I believe that, in the end, animal welfare and ethics will finally bring about a sea change in dog training that is already long overdue in the US. It is incumbent upon scientists researching canine behavior and those with advanced degrees in animal behavior to take a firm, clear and unwavering stance on these issues. Surely, it is understood that science cannot take a stand... but scientists can. I urge the SPARCS Conference to take a leadership position on the ethical treatment of companion animals. ■

Linda Michaels MA (Hons) specializes in the psychological aspects of dog behavior, socialization, treatments and training and owns and operates [Linda Michaels, MA –Victoria Stilwell Positively Dog Training](#). Linda is a Licensed Fear/Aggression/ Reactivity Consultant, Certified Veterinary Assistant, Behavior Advisor for the [Wolf Education Project](#), Advisory Board member of [Art for Barks](#) and founded the [Positive Pet Professionals](#) network.

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A Lesson in the Technology of Behavior

In *The Science and Technology of Dog Training*, James O’Heare sets out a blueprint for training professionals and owners to expand their behavior repertoire.

Reviewed by Gail Radtke

If you haven’t yet picked up a book written by James O’Heare, then *The Science and Technology of Dog Training* would be an excellent one to start with. From novice dog owner to experienced professional trainer or behavior consultant, O’Heare has delivered a book that speaks to anyone who is intrigued by the science of behavior and the discipline of behaviorology.

In his preface, O’Heare explains how dog training was previously largely unprincipled and unsystematic, based more on an individual’s “intuition” than any system or principles. Now that the profession is finally held to a much higher standard, today’s professionals must be skilled in both the technology of training and the science of behavior that lies behind the methodology. As such, the author sets out his goal of enabling the reader to expand their “behavioral repertoire.”

The science of behavior, learning theory and the principles of behavior are phrases we hear regularly in the dog training world and it can be confusing trying to understand how the various academic disciplines differ from each other with regard to the behavior modification process. But, in *The Science and Technology of Dog Training*, O’Heare has been able to take the academics of the subject and create a comprehensive manual on the natural science of behavior and training techniques, along with strategies and procedures that affect behavior modification programs and training procedures. These are relevant to behavior consultants, dog trainers and dog guardians alike.

For the novice dog trainer or owner, this book provides a clear and concise understanding of the principles of behavior. O’Heare neatly breaks down the four quadrants of operant conditioning and then expands to a fifth quadrant, extinction. He suggests extinction differs from the other four principles in that

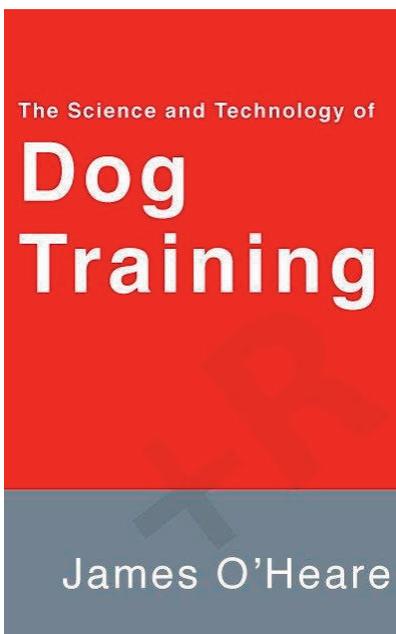
it operates without reinforcement or punishment consequences and argues that it should be recognized as the additional quadrant due to its capability of decreasing behavior. He also provides an in-depth look at aversive techniques and their problematic side effects. As such, the behavior consultant, technician and professional trainer will find this book invaluable on several levels.

The real value though is that O’Heare covers many different subjects within the realm of behavior. Aside from covering basic principles such as operant and respondent conditioning, he takes readers through advanced processes and procedures with an in-depth look at multiple-term contingencies for antecedents, behavior and consequences, and other areas of interest such as function-altering stimuli and the expansion of the concept of extinction. Such an approach enables readers to learn in stages as they make their way through the book.

In *The Science and Technology of Dog Training*, O’Heare has turned academic content into something that virtually anyone can make practical use of. It includes examples from functional assessments, training projects, and exercises in training and skills development and, while an academic technical manual-cum-

reference book, it is also a useable dog training book I would be able to recommend to both beginners and experienced professionals, no matter at what stage of their behavior or dog training education they were. This is one of the primary reasons this book is important. ■

The Science and Technology of Dog Training
James O’Heare (2014) 249 pages
Behave Tech Publishing, Ottawa, Canada
ISBN 978-1-927744-00-0



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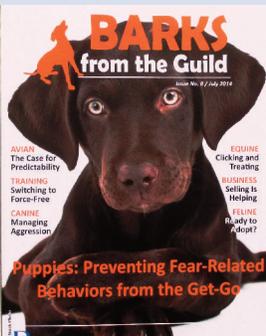
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