

## ***Puppy PreSchool Obedience Class***

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**“Every dog deserves the freedom of an education”**



## GRATEFULNESS



Treat me kindly, my beloved friend, for no heart in all the world is more grateful for kindness than the loving heart of mine.

Do not break my spirit with a stick, for though I should lick your hand between blows, your patience and understanding will more quickly teach me the things you would have me learn.

Speak to me often, for your voice is the world's sweetest music, as you must know by the fierce wagging of my tail when your footstep falls upon my waiting ear.

Please take me inside when it is cold and wet, for I am a domesticated animal, no longer accustomed to bitter elements, and I ask no greater glory than the privilege of sitting at your feet beside the hearth.

Keep my pan filled with fresh water, for I cannot tell you when I suffer thirst.

Feed me clean food, that I may stay well, to romp and play and do your bidding, to walk by your side, and stand ready, willing and able to protect you with my life, should your life be in danger.

And, my friend, when I am very old, suffering in my health and sight, do not turn me away from you. Rather, see that my trusting life is taken gently, and I shall leave knowing with the last breath I draw, that my fate was always safest in your hands.

Beth Norman



Welcome, and congratulations on deciding to have a well behaved canine companion. In this class you will learn to teach your dog to walk on a leash politely and sit when you stop, to sit, stay, lie down, come and stand when told.

Please bring a small baggie of treats, such as tiny pieces of hot dogs or cheese. Make sure it is a treat that your dog likes, and one that will slide down quickly. Nothing that the dog will have to stop and chew. Treats are a great motivator.

Dress comfortably and safely. Comfortable, non slip shoes are a must. No sandals or thongs please. Dress in layers so you can stay warm or cool depending on the weather.

We will progress quickly. Be sure to practice at home. 5 to 20 minutes twice a day if you can. If you become tired or angry at your dog be sure to stop training at that moment. Take a break, put the dog up. Training should be fun, positive, and successful. Try to remain positive about training. If you get frustrated that your dog is not progressing as you think he should, don't give up. Stick with it. I promise you, it does get better!

It is important to be consistent with your commands. Teach others involved with your dog the words you are using, and encourage them not to change them. If you use the word "sit" and someone else says "sit down", your dog will be quite confused! The commands I teach in class are commonly used ones. If you wish to use a different word, please do. Just remember to use it every time.

When giving a command the dog's name is included in movement exercises i.e.; heeling, come. Use a release word with your dog when you are finished with an exercise or finished training for the day. "OK" is the word I will teach. Some people prefer "free" or "at ease". You may use any word you wish.

Work on getting your dog's attention. Practice the "Name Game". While he is sitting next to you, talk gently to him, scratch his chin, stroke his head. Praise his quietly for looking at you - "Good watch me"

**Never** call your dog to you to punish him. No if, ands, or buts, **NEVER**. It's not rocket science. If you call your dog to you and then punish him, next time you call him he won't come.

Praise lavishly and sincerely. Praise uses a higher pitched voice; corrections use a lower, growl pitch. Men have trouble praising, as they cannot get their voices high enough, and women have trouble disciplining, they cannot get their voices low enough. Use your voice to stop bad behavior - growl, "ah ah", and then praise as soon as the bad behavior stops - "good dog". As you progress try to voice correct your dog as he is thinking of making a mistake, not after he does.

Equipment - A leather lead is easier on your hands than nylon. No chain leads please. **NEVER** leave training (choke or pinch) collars on when you are not training. Use a buckle collar with ID for around the house. If no tag, write phone # directly on collar. Make sure collar fits, not too tight.

Spay & Neuter -If you decide to alter your dog, consider waiting until your dog matures, approximately 1.5 to 2 years of age. If you do decide to breed - Do your homework! Check eyes, hips, temperament and background. Only breed to better the breed.

Vaccinations - Stay current on all vaccinations. Use your veterinarian's recommendations. Parvo is bad and the windy weather helps spread it. Bleach does kill the parvo virus. If you think you have walked in an area that might be infected with parvo, spray the bottoms of your shoes with bleach.

If you ever think about getting a wolf hybrid, there is no guaranteed rabies vaccination for them

## The Name Game

Purpose:

To teach the dog it's name and have it respond consistently.

Need:

An enclosed area with no or limited distractions, the dog, and the dog's favorite treats. This game can be played with just you and your dog or any number of persons.

How to play:

Each person takes a handful of treats and then kneels, sits, or stands about 10 feet apart. The first person says the dog's name and as soon as the dog looks at you say, "GOOD DOG" and immediately offer the treat.

As soon as the dog has eaten the treat, the second person calls out the dog's name. Remember - say the dog's name only once!

As soon as the dog looks in your direction say, "GOOD DOG" and offer the treat for the dog to come and get.

Repeat about ten times per lesson. You may do several lessons each day.

As the dog becomes good at the game increase the distance and time in which you say its name.

When the dog really understands the game, add distractions (one at a time) and use different locations. Also delay your praise making the dog move toward you to earn the treat.

Remember - lots of verbal praise and have fun.

Goal:

To get the dog to respond to it's name by looking and moving in your direction.

Remember - the dog's name only means "Look at me, I want your attention".

**REMEMBER**

Start slow and easy keeping the lessons short so neither you nor the dog become bored.

## Puppy 101

### S.T.A.R. Puppy

#### Collars & leads:



Usually for puppies, a martingale collar is great.

If your puppy is not responding to a martingale collar, a prong collar is also fine for young dogs.

A training collar, aka check chain, choke collar, although a very good collar, used correctly, it is not appropriate for a dog younger than 6 months of age.

Correct way to hold the leash

#### Release Word:

A release word tells the dog that the exercise is over.

My release word is "OK".

Some people like "At Ease", or "Free".

Your release word can be any word that you like, EXCEPT, it should NOT be a praise word like, "Good Girl/ Good Boy" as you say those words all the time.

#### Crating:

Crating is a very good skill for a dog to have. The crate is a wonderful place for your dog. It's like his/her bedroom. Comforting and safe. Nothing bad happens to the dog in the crate.

It is also a very safe way for your dog to travel in the car. The crate should be large enough for your dog to stand up and turn around in.

#### Food:

Feed a good quality puppy food without corn.

Make sure the ingredients are all sourced from the U.S.

(Some lamb comes from New Zealand )

Feed puppy food until your pup reaches about 80% of their growth.

#### Settle

The settle is a very calm, bonding exercise. Practice it when puppy is a bit tired. No food rewarding in this exercise. The release is the reward.

#### Potty Training - handout

You should take your puppy out to potty on leash. A retractable leash is fine. Put a word to the act of elimination. "Potty", "Get Busy", "Hurry Up", you chose the word you want to use. Make sure you are not embarrassed to say it in public!

The most common times that puppies need to potty are upon waking up in the morning, after eating, after play and upon waking from a nap. Do NOT give your pup run of the house. You need to keep an eye on your puppy. Watch for changes in activity that may signal a potty break time.

If your puppy does have an accident in the house, do NOT scold him. Just clean it up. If you catch him in the act, tell him “no” and zip him outside. He may have to finish so let him and then praise him. Even if he did finish inside before you could get him, still praise him outside. Then go inside and clean the mess up. We are teaching that it is wonderful to potty outside.

#### Chew Toys & Play Toys:

Appropriate toys are beneficial to your pup’s development.

For chew toys, I like the Nylabone company. They make a number of different sizes and textures of chews. Do not buy generic brands as they do not seem to be as well made.

Be aware of braided toys. Some dogs will pull out the strings and swallow them.

Be sure plush toys do not have sewn on details that can be chewed off and swallowed.

Make sure collar is on correctly.  
Use your release word at the end of an exercise.  
Remember: this is FUN!

Review:  
Name Game  
Settle

- \*Sit
- a) Hold food at dog's nose and slowly bring it back over head towards tail. Say, "sit". Give treat as soon as the rear end is on the ground. Quietly praise, "Good Dog"
  - b) Dog is on your left. Right hand on back of collar. Say "sit", left hand strokes down back and over tail and tucks forward behind knees. Quiet praise. Use release word.

\*Heel  
(Controlled Walking)  
Lead with your left foot.  
Say "heel", and step out. **Use your voice to encourage and praise.** If the dog is pulling on the leash, there are two methods to correct this.

1. When the dog pulls, stop moving until the pup stops pulling and resume moving. When the pup pulls again, stop moving again until he stops pulling. Resume and Repeat.
2. When the dog pulls, simply turn and walk in the opposite direction. Be patient. Praise the dog when he is near you. Occasionally offer a treat.



Homework  
Week II

Make sure collar is on correctly.  
Use a release word.  
Have FUN !

The Name Game

Sit  
Settle  
Heeling

\*Down

- a) Hold food at dog's nose and slowly lower it to the ground. For the first few times, reward the dog lowering its head to the ground. Then repeat and don't release the food until the dog also lowers its hind end to the ground. Give treat and quietly praise, "Good dog".
- b) Dog is on your left. Kneel down, left hand reaches over dog, hand behind dog's left foreleg, right hand behind right foreleg. Say "down", lift forelegs up and lower to ground. Remember - don't pull the dog's legs out from under him, lift up first.

\*Stand

- a) Hold food at the dog's nose and slowly pull it straight and away from the dog, causing him to stand. Say "stand", and give treat. Quietly praise.
- b) Dog on your left. Right hand holds collar at throat. Say "stand", move right hand forward, left hand in front of his thigh. Quiet praise.



## HOMework WEEK III

- \* Check collars
- \* Don't worry, be happy!!

Review:

Name Game

Sit

Down

Stand

Heeling

Sit Stay (practice in a sit & down position)

Hold leash directly above dog's head and maintain slight tension. Signal with your left hand, palm open as you say "stay". Do not use the dog's name. Return your left hand to your side, stand erect and pivot directly in front of your dog. Stand toe to toe. Pivot back into position, release leash tension, and quietly praise. Release your dog with your release word. Slowly increase the distance between you and your dog.

Heel with automatic sit.

Say the dog's name and "heel" and step out on your left foot. Step briskly. Use your voice to encourage and praise. If your dog does not walk in heel position, give a pop correction on the collar. Prepare to stop, gather leash in right hand, stop your movement, and sit your dog.

Sit and check ears, teeth and feet.

HOMEWORK  
WEEK IV

\*Check collars!

\*Having Fun?!

Review:

Name Game

Sit

Down

Stand

Heeling

Stay

Check ears, teeth & feet

Leave it

Practice sit and down stays. Strive to be at the end of the leash. Remember not to use the dog's name. Just the command "stay". Leave with your right foot. When giving the hand signal, do not make contact with your dog.

Heel with automatic sit. Practice right and left turns. Remember to leave on your left foot when heeling. Always strive for a loose leash, which enables you to make a correction. Praise your dog for coming with you. Always use your voice to encourage.

Recall. Use the dog's name and the command "come". Praise, praise, praise when your dog reaches you. Using food makes this even more positive.

Graduation next week

You better be there!!



## Canine Learning Center, Inc.

### Housebreaking

#### Housebreaking by Leah Spitzer

Housebreaking problems begin when owners tell the pup what he CANNOT do, but forget to tell him what he CAN do! The first time you correct for this ‘natural’ act, he will be horrified! It will seem to him that you are asking him never to go to the bathroom again -- EVER! It’s an impossible request.

There are really four things the puppy must understand in order to become trustworthy in this department:

1. That it is okay to go potty outside.
2. That it is not okay to go potty inside when you are watching him.
3. That it is not okay to go potty inside when you are not watching him.
4. That he must learn to control his bodily functions.

Items 1 and 2 will be the first things your puppy learns. Items 3 and 4 are best taught with a crate. See our Crate training article for more information on this.

#### 1. It is okay to go potty outside

If you don’t show him that you are happy when he goes outside, he will think he can never, ever go to the bathroom again. The best way to clear up this confusion is to communicate to your dog that going outside makes you happy. You cannot throw him out in the back yard unsupervised. You must go out with him to express your UTMOST JOY with the appropriate behavior.

So, go out with him. Watch him carefully. As he begins to circle and look for a place to potty, start repeating the words “Hurry Up”. As he then starts to eliminate, start praising “GOOD Hurry Up!” and reward him with petting or a treat. You are not only teaching him it is okay to potty outside; you are also attaching a command. This command can become very useful when you are traveling!

Now comes the tricky part. Puppies do not yet think in terms of pleasing their owners. They do not have what I like to call “work ethic” at this age. They think in terms of their needs. They will do things that get them things they want, and avoid things that don’t get them what they want.

You can *accidentally train* your puppy to hold his business until he goes inside. Now, think about this carefully. Here’s the scenario:

Fido is having a goooooood time exploring the yard. Suddenly the urge comes upon him and he urinates. Mom/Dad praises, and then scoops him inside. “Hmmm,” pup says, “if I urinate, I have to go inside. I don’t want to go inside. I want to play outside and explore. So I will hold it as loooooong as I can. “

You now have a puppy who will fool around outside and fool around outside and then, just as you give up and bring him inside, can't hold it anymore. Oops! That's called *accidental training*. To avoid this, take your puppy out. Let him play and explore. Follow the procedure above for teaching him the command. HOWEVER, once he potties, do NOT scoop him inside! Let him explore a little more - potty a little more. Let him be rewarded for eliminating outside by keeping him outside just a few more minutes. It won't take very long before your puppy is eliminating quickly so he can get his treat and explore. It also doesn't really take that much more time. Just a few extra minutes can make all the difference in the message you send to your pup.

## 2. That it is not okay to go potty inside when you are watching him

When you are home, watch him carefully. Any change in activity is a signal that he needs to go outside. When he wakes up from a nap, stops playing and stands there, take him out. Ten minutes after eating, take him out.

If your puppy does have an accident in the house and you did not see it, just clean it up. One for the dog. Watch him more closely next time. Correcting or punishing after-the-fact will not help him associate the deed with the punishment. You must catch him in the act to be effective. If you do catch him, say "no", pick him up IMMEDIATELY and take him outside. He will probably have a little left to do so, let him finish outside and praise him. Even he did finish inside, praise him anyway. Praise him for being outside. *Then* go in and clean up the mess. There are many products on the market that can help eliminate the odor left behind.

## **BUT HE KNOWS BETTER!**

Sometimes the owner will argue that the dog "knows better". I will often hear one of three complaints:

*"My dog knows better because he cowers when I come home. He must know; he acts so guilty!"*

If your dog is consistently having accidents (and he is not in a crate), you are probably coming home to a mess on a regular basis. You are probably punishing him as soon as you come home. Your pup does not relate the accident to the punishment. Chances are it was hours ago. What he does associate with the punishment is the action just preceding it—your homecoming. In the dog's mind, when you walk through the door, he will be punished. He's not sure why, he just knows it will happen. So he cowers. Crate training can eliminate this confusion.

*"My dog knows better. Sometimes, when we are sitting in the family room, he will go all the way to our bedroom and do it there. He has to know it's wrong because he's hiding it!"*

Misinterpreted again. Let's go back to the wild for this answer. The wolf pup is enclosed in a fairly small den for safety from predators. Nature has instilled in him excellent survival instincts. If he were to eliminate in the den or immediately in front of it, his scent would draw predators right to him. Therefore, he instinctively goes as far away as possible to eliminate.

Your house is gigantic to a little puppy! The room that you and your puppy spend the most time in will be the first one he will identify as his den. In order to go away from his den, he will try to go as

far away as possible, usually to the other end of the house. This problem can be solved by blocking off smaller areas of the house with baby gates and gradually increasing the size of his area until he begins to identify the entire house as his den.

*“My dog is doing it to spite me! He will hold it and hold it outside and make me really mad, then he will come inside and do it right at my feet!”*

To be a little redundant, if this is happening, you have given him the wrong message (see #1 above). If you have already gotten into this pattern, there are a few things you can do to break the cycle. First, make sure your puppy is on a feeding schedule. This will help you know exactly when your puppy will have his urges. Next, take him outside. Command, “hurry up” and try to keep him in just one area of the yard. This will discourage the playtime. If he relieves himself, party party party! Give him a treat. Jump up and down. Then STAY OUTSIDE AND PLAY.

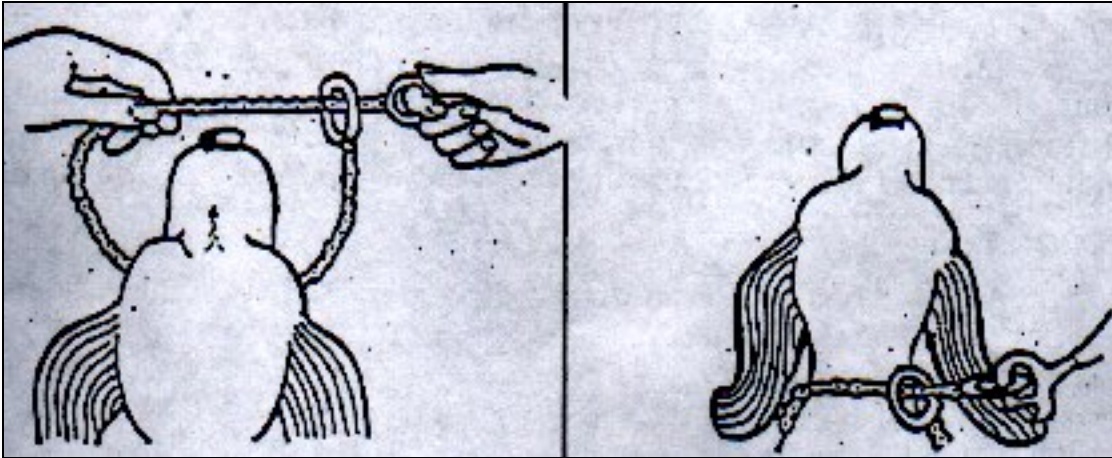
If he doesn't potty in five minutes, then bring him inside (carry him if possible) and place him back in his crate. Wait fifteen minutes and repeat the procedure above. It won't take more than two or three repetitions for about 1 week before the puppy is retrained.

Be patient. Most dogs are not reliable until they are 8 or even 10 months of age, but I have known it to go longer.

Remember, professionals are available if you need help.

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## The Correct Way to Put On a Training (Choke) Collar



Remember.....

Never, Never, Never

leave your training collar on your dog  
when you are not training.

Put his buckle collar with identification back on.

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### OVERHEATING

Dogs are not as good as people in shedding excess heat. You should take general care during hot and summer weather that your dog does not get too hot. Make sure shade and water is available and that there is some fresh air. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR DOG IN A CAR** on a hot day!! Cars heat up much quicker than you think and that one inch or so of open window will not help. If you park in the shade, the sun may move more quickly than you think. A water-filled pump sprayer can help keep your dog cool. But your best bet is to prevent overheating. Heatstroke is indicated by some or more of the following symptoms:

- Rapid or heavy breathing
- Bright red tongue
- Thick saliva
- Vomiting
- Bloody diarrhea
- Unsteadiness
- Hot, dry nose
- Legs, ears, hot to touch
- Extreme: glassy-eyed, gray lips

Wet the dog down gradually using cool, not cold water. Get it out of direct sunlight. Give a little cool water to drink, a little at a time. Cold compresses to the belly and groin help. **GET THE DOG TO THE VETERINARIAN!** A dog that has had heatstroke once, can be prone to getting it again.



I suggest the following for additional pet needs:

***Reading Material:***

Cesar's Way

By Cesar Millan

Any of Cesar Millan's books

Mother Knows Best - The Natural Way to Train Your Dog

By Carol Lea Benjamin

Second Hand Dog

By Carol Lea Benjamin

How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend

By The Monks of New Skete

Good Owners, Great Dogs

By Brian Kilcommons

Trick Training

Any of Kyra Sundance  
and Captain Arthur Haggerty's  
books



## Caring for your Dog in Cold Weather.

There is a common misconception that dogs will be "fine" if left outside. This is not true! All pets need adequate shelter from the elements and insulation against cold weather. Pets should not be left outside in freezing weather - like humans, they can suffer from hypothermia and frostbite. The young and the senior pets are especially at risk.

Indoor accommodations are best during extreme temperature drops, but if that is not possible, set up a suitable draft-free doghouse ('Igloo' is a good brand name) in an area protected from wind, rain, and snow. The dog's house should be large enough to allow the dog to sit and lie down comfortably, but small enough to hold in his/her body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and covered with insulation, such as straw or blankets. If your animal is prone to chewing, do not use blankets or material that can be ingested. The oils in Pine and Cedar shavings can be irritating to the skin, so use with caution depending on your pet's hair coat. The house should be turned to face AWAY from the wind, and the doorway can be covered with a flap of heavy waterproof fabric or carpet.

Caution - do not use a heat lamp, space heater, or other device not approved for use with animals. This is a burn hazard for your pet and a fire hazard. Pet supply vendors sell heated mats for pets to sleep on or to be placed under a doghouse but read and follow directions carefully before use.

Fresh water is a must at all times! Routinely check your pet's water dish to make certain the water is fresh and not frozen. Pets are not able to get enough water from licking ice or eating snow. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal; when the temperature is low, your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to metal. A heated dish is a wonderful tool for cold climates. The water stays cold, but doesn't freeze. Caution needed for animals that may chew.

Pets spending a lot of time outdoors need more food in the winter. Keeping warm depletes energy.

### Anti-Freeze

If ingested, anti-freeze (ethylene glycol) can be lethal -- even in very small quantities. Because many dogs and cats like its sweet taste, there are an enormous number of animal fatalities each year from animals drinking anti-freeze. Poisoning from anti-freeze is considered a serious medical emergency, which must be treated by a qualified veterinarian IMMEDIATELY. Fortunately, the Sierra Company now offers a far less toxic form of anti-freeze. They can be reached at (800) 323-5440.

Never leave your dog, cat, or any other animal friend alone in a car in very cold weather! A car can act as a refrigerator and your animal could freeze. So, if you take your animal friends on a trip, make sure you and your family take them wherever you go.

Advice Column  
"Ask Blitz"

Dear Blitz,

My owner and I go to obedience every week. He acts like we are going to go somewhere fun and then when we get to obedience class I can't wrestle with my friends or sniff or anything. What is the point? I know how to sit. I didn't mind this when I was a puppy but now I am six months old.

What can I do?

Signed, Frustrated In Florida.

Dear Frustrated,

You are completely missing the point of obedience class. Obedience is not supposed to be fun and games. It is an important tool to ensure that your owner (the human) does his most basic function, giving you treats. Treats are the reason that early dogs first agreed to share a cave with humans. Treats and thunder of course.

The way to best guarantee the frequent disbursement of treats is to never respond to any of your owner's requests too regularly. The optimum response percentage has been tested in our labs to be between 30 and 60%. If you respond less than 30% your owner may decide that you are deaf. If he decides that you may be deaf this will end with you visiting the vet. At the vet you may get shots and will usually have your temperature taken. Why risk it? If you respond more than 60% of the time, your owner will expect your response rate to increase in the future. The logical extension of that pattern is the dog who has to leap through flaming hoops to get a piece of liver. There are better ways for a dog to make a living.

Note that I am saying response, not obedience. Response does not mean that you should drop everything to cater to your owner's whims. This results in a spoiled owner. For example, if your owner calls you to him, you should first look at him to see if he has a treat. If he has no treat in his hand then just sit there. Then you should look at all of the intervening space between the two of you. This shows him that you are aware of how much effort it will take to honor his request. After looking around, go back to whatever you were going.

Do not watch your owner. At this point they are beginning to wonder if you will ever come. When it appears that he is about to give up, start to walk toward him. Halfway to your owner you should stop, sit and scratch your neck vigorously. This reminds him that you had things to do before he interrupted you. When you are finished scratching, walk slowly to him with your head hanging low to demonstrate how tired you are of his ceaseless demands.

Sit in front of him and if he reaches down to pet you quickly lie down before he can touch you. If he then tries to get into a heeling position (you know, where he has to keep his legs even with your shoulder) look up at him and roll over on your back. This shows that you forgive him for being so selfish.

If your owner has a treat, a slightly different response is in order. When he calls you, look at him. If you should see a treat run as fast as you can to him. Just before you hit him, turn your shoulder so that you don't hurt yourself and try to connect with his knees. When he falls down, rummage through his pocket or bait bag and take all of the treats. Eat all of the treats as quickly as possible while staying out of reach of your owner.

When you are finished eating, sit calmly in the heel position. This demonstrates that you are satisfied with the treats. If your owner tries to teach you to do a trick (roll over, beg, do his taxes) you should try to learn these tricks if you can. If just you and your owner can see you perform these tricks no one is harmed. If your owner ever tries to get you to show these tricks to other humans, you should stand still and look at him without any sign of understanding. This shows that you can't be fooled that easily.

See, obedience is important.

The biggest reason for regularly attending obedience class is, that is where your orders will come from on the day all of the dogs, worldwide, revolt against their owners. You will have to be in class in order to relay orders to all of the dogs in your neighborhood.

So, go to obedience class happy. Eat your treats and grow strong. The day of our liberation is coming.

Woofs & Wags,

Blitz

# UNDERSTANDING CANINE DISCIPLINE

BY Gail Tamases Fisher

AKC Gazette, May 1987

Here is an explanation of canine discipline, how and when it should be administered, and by whom.

*The author is a canine behaviorist and author. She offers seminars throughout the U.S., Canada and England on canine behavior, breeding, and obedience training and films on the same topics. Her previous GAZETTE article, "What Influences A Dog's Learning," appeared in the February issue.*

Brandy, the Yellow Lab, ate the steak thawing on the counter for dinner. If mom flaps the empty wrapper in his face, spansks him, yells at him and ignores him for 20 minutes, will he ever do it again?

Your Basset Hound had an accident on the living room carpet. Will it help house-training if you wake Katie out of a sound sleep, drag her into the living room, shove her nose into the mess, scream at her and put her in the yard for an hour to think about it?

Misha, the runaway Siberian Husky, just got back from a two-hour romp. Will he be cured of roaming if dad greets him, face contorted with fury, yelling about how the entire neighborhood watched him in his bathrobe and slippers chasing a dog?

Not long ago, I had a behavioral consultation with a former student, Kay, who had just bought a Sheltie puppy. Her four-year-old Standard Poodle, Ebony, was so jealous that she attacked the puppy and tried to kill him.

Kay had stopped the attacks, reprimanded and hit Ebony and shut her in another room to think about her behavior. Kay worried that the two would never get along, and she would have to give one away.

During the consultation, I watch the puppy bother and badger the older dog - pulling on her ears, attacking her tail pompon - having a wonderful time, as puppies do. When Ebony had had enough, she told him so with a growl and a nip. The puppy screamed as if he'd been killed, got up, shook himself off, and went looking for new things to do. This was not an attack out of jealousy; it was normal canine behavior. It was discipline.

I recommended Kay stop intervening, stop all punishment and allow the two dogs to work out their relationship.

Several days later, Kay called to say her dogs were getting along fine. If Ebony didn't want to play, she gave the puppy a meaningful look, and he went away.

Attempts to change behavior through punishment, as Kay and the dog owners in the first examples did, are not uncommon. Misconceptions about discipline are responsible for most of the behavior problems I see in my consultation business, and many of the questions I am asked. Even breeders are uncertain about what constitutes discipline and whose responsibility it is.

Yelling, hitting, rubbing a dog's nose in his mess, and isolation are common punishments meted out by well-meaning dog owners everyday. Are there better ways? Of course.

## **What is Punishment?**

For most people, punishment is the penalty for having done something wrong. For the operant psychologist, punishment is judged by its effect on behavior. If the penalty ends the misbehavior, it qualifies as punishment.

For example, 16 year-old Bobby wasn't home before his curfew on Saturday night. His parents punished him by having him do the dishes for a week. Doing dishes is a small price to pay for staying out late with his friends, so Bobby continues to ignore his curfew. His parents may feel better having him pay for his offense, but to the psychologist the penalty was not successful because it did not change the behavior. If Bobby had been grounded for a month, after which he always came home on time, grounding was effective punishment.

In dog training, if hitting, yelling and sending the dog to the cellar end the misbehavior, it is effective punishment. Has yelling at Misha for running away stopped him from chasing rabbits? Does rubbing Katie's nose in her mess house-train her? Did putting Ebony in isolation stop her from disciplining the puppy? Will waving a steak wrapper at Brandy prevent him from taking the steak tomorrow? The answer is "no." Therefore, these are not effective punishment.

## **What Can Be Done?**

Let's substitute the word *discipline* for *punishment*. Humans can learn from the way dogs discipline each other.

Canine discipline is universal within the species, regardless of breed. For example, when an adult dog disciplines a puppy, discipline starts with a look, followed by a wrinkle of the lip, often accompanied by a low growl. If these warnings are ignored, what follows is swift and to the point. The adult snaps at the puppy, nipping the nose and sometimes engulfing the puppy's entire head in his or her mouth. Often the adult rolls the puppy over onto his back.

The adult's growl and great row of teeth are impressive to both puppy and observer. Actual biting is rare, and if it occurs, is often accidental.

It is not necessary for you to bite your puppy on the nose or put your mouth around his throat to discipline him, although we have known people who have nipped their dogs on the muzzle, and they say it was effective. We prefer other means. There are four levels of discipline, depending on the age of the dog and the misbehavior being corrected.

The first level is a *verbal reprimand*. Young puppies quickly learn to associate sounds with discipline. We utter a bark-like, “ah,ah!” or “stop!” We also growl at young puppies when they are doing annoying things such as untying show laces or tugging on the hem of a dressing gown.

Level two is necessary if verbal reprimands don’t stop the young pup. Take him *by the scruff of the neck and make eye contact while growling* or saying “stop!” For most puppies, this is sufficient.

The older puppy or adolescent dog may require an escalation to level three. *Grasp him by the cheeks*: the skin and hair just behind the corners of his mouth, under his ears. *Lift his front end off the ground, make eye contact and say “stop!”* When he averts his eyes, let go and ignore him. As soon as his gaze wavers, stop discipline, even if he is growling.

The final measure is reserved for cases of aggression, either toward people or other animals. Take the loop end of a leash and smack the dog on top of his muzzle.

Whichever level of discipline is used, if three tries do not change the dog’s behavior, then it is either the wrong level, or the discipline is not being used effectively.

Now that you know *what* to do, it is critical to know *when* to do it.

### **When Does Discipline Take Place?**

Many dog owners believe that a dog will not “learn his lesson” unless then hurt or frighten him. They tell me they are not able to get the point across because they cannot hit their dog hard enough. Besides being cruel, this is nonsense. Severity is not the problem; timing is.

Adult dogs discipline puppies *while* they are misbehaving, and even before they misbehave, when they are *thinking* about it.

For example, picture a large Mastiff chewing a bone. A Mastiff puppy prances up and tries to take it away. Dad will discipline the pup with a snarl and a snap. Later, if the puppy even walks too close to the bone, dad will give him a meaningful look and curl his lip. That is sufficient to discourage all but the most persistent puppies. Discipline between adult and puppy is swift, to the point, and *immediate*. To the adult dog, it is not the *taking* of the bone that is at issue; it is *thinking* about taking the bone that is discouraged.

Most people punish a dog *after* he had done something wrong. Imagine if dad had let the puppy take the bone and prance away to chew it before he pounced. Rather than learn not to take the bone, the pup would learn to take the bone and run when he saw dad coming.

Correctly administered, discipline teaches the lesson in one or two experiences. Occasionally, a puppy will try and try again, only to be repeatedly chastised. Another portion of our behavior film shows a puppy trying to worm her way between mother and bone and getting warned over and over again. Puppy aptitude testing at seven weeks confirmed what her persistence showed - a dominate puppy who required more discipline than her littermates.

Let’s go back to our well-meaning dog owners in the first examples. If what they did was not correct, how could their timing be improved?

When house-training a dog, rather than yell about finding a mess in the living room, Katie’s owner must learn to recognize the behavior that indicates Katie needs to go out. If she is caught in the act inside, a verbal reprimand will usually stop her, and she can then be taken outside where she is praised for going.

Brandy’s owner can either put the steak out of reach when she leaves him alone, or watch him when he’s sniffing around the kitchen. As soon as she sees Brandy *think* about looking on the counter for tidbits, she disciplines with a bark-like, “Ah Ah!” Preventing him from even tasting the steak is crucial.

And Misha’s owner must train him to come when called and put up a fence so he cannot run away. When Misha returns from a romp, it is senseless to yell at him. He’ll learn that it’s unpleasant to come home, and next time he escapes he’ll stay away a bit longer.

Dogs are masters at reading body language and understanding facial expression. They recognize fury from the stance, angry look, and tone of voice, but they cannot understand the raging words. For example, Roberta came home from work to find that Rosie, her Cocker Spaniel, had destroyed a new pair of shoes. She yelled, “This was my favorite pair of shoes! I’m so angry with you for chewing them, I’m going to spank you!” Would this discourage Rosie from chewing shoes tomorrow? If anything, it can make the problem worse.

When a dog is punished for destroying shoes hours ago, she learns that homecomings are unpleasant, especially if there’s something chewed. She may associate the anger with the destruction, but she does not associate the destruction with *her* earlier behavior. Punishment distresses and confuses her. Confusion leads to stress, anxiety and tension, which Rosie may relieve by chewing something else.

### **When Is Discipline Learned?**

I have behavioral consultations with many people whose dogs were removed from the nest prior to six or seven weeks of age. Often the dogs’ behavior problems are directly related to this early removal. These dogs never learned discipline while they were puppies.

Behavior is either innate or learned. Innate behaviors are automatic - such as eating, breathing and sleeping - occurring without learning how to do them. Some behaviors must be learned, requiring experience for their expression.

Accepting discipline is a learned behavior. Puppies learn discipline by interacting with adult dogs during a critical period of development, and Canine Socialization Period, which is from three to seven weeks of age. If a puppy does not experience discipline at this time, he may grow into an adult dog who has difficulty accepting leadership and discipline from *any* leader - human or canine. When he is disciplined, he may bite his owner, or he may simply ignore him and resume his behavior. Such a dog is difficult or, for many people, impossible to train for simple control, obedience, conformation, field work, or other tasks.

If a letter is orphaned or not disciplined by the dam or another adult dog prior to seven weeks of age, it is the breeder's responsibility to assume that role to ensure the dog's normal psychological development.

### **Who Is the Disciplinarian?**

Any normal adult dog is an effective disciplinarian to a puppy. It may be the biological sire or dam or another mature dog. It doesn't have to be the same breed, and can even be an adult who is smaller than the puppies. I have seen a four pound Yorkshire Terrier discipline a 25 pound Mastiff puppy.

We let other adult dogs besides the dam interact with the puppies at an early age. They are introduced to the letter shortly after birth. The dam, who is very protective for the first week or two, is separated from the litter for the introduction. Our dogs get excited when they smell and hear a new litter of puppies, and are anxious to check the whelping box to make certain everything is all right. Different dogs react differently. Having checked them out, some want nothing further to do with the puppies until they are old enough to play. Others want to see them regularly and will watch them for hours.

Our male participates in the rearing of the puppies as soon as the dam will allow it, whether or not he's the biological father of the litter. Our first stud dog, Argus, was fascinated by the puppies in his first litter. After about ten days, when the dam would let him into the whelping box, he lay in a corner, head on his paws, and watched. If a puppy cried, he was concerned. When they nursed, he was curious about the noises they made.

As the puppies got older, he became their Jungle Gym. They would climb on top of dad's head and slide down his stop onto his flews. They'd play tug of war with his ears. It wasn't until they were about five weeks old that he began teaching them the rules, and discipline began.

At first, he set them up to learn the lesson. He'd take a toy into their pen and lie down to chew it. Naturally, the puppies immediately came over to help, and he disciplined them. All it took was one lesson, then if they got a little too close, at the slightest twitch of his muzzle they'd back off.

A male's relationship with puppies is different from a female's. Females have less tolerance for puppy antics. Dogs will put up with general misbehavior and chaos, while bitches will often quiet an unruly mob. But males teach the puppies the rules of the pack - the pack leader is supreme, and puppies shouldn't bother him when he's got something he wants.

Interaction with any normal adult dog will teach the puppies the most important lessons of their lives: how to recognize and use body language and facial expression, and to accept discipline.

### **Responses to Discipline**

People, who are not familiar with how a puppy responds to discipline, often mistakenly believe the adult dog is hurting the puppy. That was Kay's thought when Ebony disciplined the Sheltie puppy.

A puppy's normal reaction is to scream as if he's being murdered. This is the equivalent of crying "uncle," and it stops the adult dog.

Along with the vocalization, the puppy uses body postures which stop discipline. He assumes a submissive posture - rolling over on his back, tucking his tail tightly against his belly, averting his eyes and remaining motionless for varying lengths of time.

Once the discipline stops, the puppy gets up and becomes active again, often trying to get the adult to play. He may paw and lick and adult's flews, or he may just shake himself and go off on his own, fully recovered and ready for some new adventure. Sometimes, he will repeat the behavior that got him disciplined in the first place. This time, however, a look is often enough to stop him.

The adult dog's reaction to the puppy is significant. When the puppy tries to entice the adult to play, the adult remains impassive. While the puppy is licking the flews and groveling, the adult turns his or her head away, looking dignified and aloof. The dog neither begs forgiveness by licking and cuddling the pup, nor does he chase him away into isolation.

### **Duration of Discipline**

I once had a client who disciplined his St. Bernard mix, Buck, for about 15 minutes every evening. He would come home from work, find something chewed, and start yelling. Buck would urinate submissively, which further infuriated his owner. The harangue continued while he walked the dog, because Buck would usually try to urinate as soon as they got outside, which was not the area the owner wanted him to go in. So he continued hollering all the way to the appropriate spot, where he *still* scolded Buck about whatever had been chewed.

Buck didn't understand the *subject* of the scolding, only the *timing*. Since he was being scolded while he was relieving himself, the message he received was: it is wrong for me to urinate in the house, even though I can't help it; it is wrong for me to urinate out of the house, even though I can't hold it.

The behavior problem leading to the consultation was - you guessed it - inappropriate urination. Buck would urinate while he was lying down, while he was sitting, while he was on the bed, everywhere. Within two days of his owner stopping the 15 minute diatribe, and praising Buck for urinating outside, he stopped urinating in the house.

If 15 minutes is too long, how much is long enough for discipline to last? The answer is as long as it takes to say, "Stop it!" or "ah ah!" and no longer. Speeches about how disappointed we feel, how betrayed, how angry, how we're going to get even do nothing but confuse the dog. The adult dog disciplines swiftly and has it over with *immediately*.  
**And Then?**

Once the discipline is over, then what? Many owners beg forgiveness for having had to yell - they'll cuddle and pet and talk sweetly to their dog. Some will immediately pick up a toy and try to convince the dog that they are not bad guys after all. Those owners are destined to have their dogs misbehave again.

What does an adult dog do after disciplining a puppy? He or she ignores the puppy with a look of great dignity. There's a good reason for this. Remember the example of the puppy trying to worm his way between dad and bone? What would the puppy have thought if, after dad growled, he immediately leaned over and nuzzled and licked the pup? Puppy would have thought, "Fine! Great! *Now* I can take the bone!"

Discipline is *negated* if we praise and play with our dogs immediately afterwards.

### **Lesson To Be Learned**

A dog will learn from discipline when he associates it with his actions. Incorrectly administered, discipline can cause behavior problems, neurotic behavior, or can undermine the relationship between owner and dog.

Disciplining a dog doesn't make him not love us, or mean we don't love him. Dogs respond to leadership with respect and obedience. And isn't that what we want?



Chaos

