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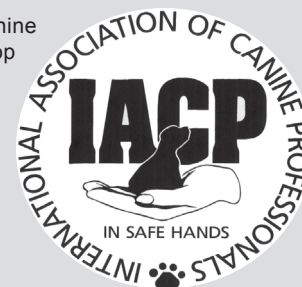
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The International Association of Canine Professionals' commitment is to develop professional recognition, communication, education, understanding and cooperation across the wide diversity of canine expertise and knowledge.

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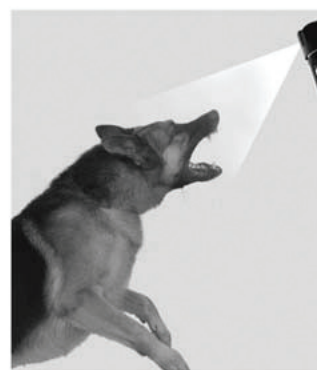
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President's Letter

by Marc Goldberg

We have some exciting news for you. Cesar Millan and Wendy Volhard will once again join us to present at our conference in 2011. Also, many members have been asking us to change the location, and we have done that. San Diego, CA will be the location for the 2011 Conference. More good news: conference prices will include catered meals and the banquet. So be sure to check the IACP web site for details. Next Conference is not to be missed!

Also, we are now taking nominations until December for the IACP Membership Hall of Fame.

The IACP Membership HOF was established to recognize and honor those within our membership whose dedication to the organization made a lasting legacy from which all will benefit.

It is awarded to a member whose dedication, commitment and work accomplishments left a durable influence of value and integrity to the IACP, and/or were a solid influence on the path of the IACP as a significant organization.

Candidates are chosen by nominations submitted from the general membership, which are given to the Membership Hall of Fame (MHOF) Committee, who reviews the nominations and make the final judgment as to whom receives the award.

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Candidates should meet the following criteria:

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Candidate nominations must:

- be made by a IACP Professional or Associate member.
- include a biography of the candidate you are nominating.
- include substantial reasons* as well as background as to why the candidate should be considered for admission to the MHOF.

- Include a photograph of the candidate
- be received by the MHOF Committee by December 30th of each year.

*Substantial reasons are investments of:

- time
- ideas
- energy
- and/or other resources

Nominations are also open for the IACP Hall of Fame recognizing those who have made extremely valuable contributions to dogs on an international level.

Finally, I am now writing what will be my final President's Letter for you and for IACP. This truly is the final page of my time in office. I have spent the last five or six years serving our association as best I know how. For the last two and a half years, I have been your president.

Governing dog trainers is a little bit like herding cats (have I said that before?). It's not an easy job. But it has been terrifically rewarding. I have been stunned at the dedication of my fellow board members and IACP volunteers. IACP makes it a better world in which to be a dog professional. We are not alone. We are stronger for our bonds than we would be without them. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Marc Goldberg



Pack your bags!

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Photo by Tricia Kunovic



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How to Stop Fighting Your Clients

by Marc Goldberg

The biggest mistake we dog trainers can make is to fight with our clients. Often we are tempted to argue that our perspective is correct, that theirs is wrong and ours is the only way to get a successful result.

I know this temptation all too well because I used to regularly do battle with clients who were approaching their dog problems all wrong. Every dog trainer knows that dogs are easier to train than people. But I have found a new pathway to successful client communication: I no longer fight with my clients.

This does not mean that I never disagree. I do. However, I no longer believe it is my God-given duty to convince my clients that they must follow my directions or fail. Let me use a couple of recent situations as examples.

Binky is a 70-lb. pitbull mix who was lunging on the leash toward people and dogs with evil intent. He had already bitten an invited guest or two when they entered the home. He came to me for board and train, and spent the first four days considering whether or not he should bite me any time I handled him.

Good handling soon convinced Binky that we should be friends, and he came to trust my decision-making authority. Within two weeks, he was running off leash without running away, recalling off distractions, and polite on leash walks. I prepared his owners with written protocols for life in the first few weeks back home. These protocols included tethering him in the house, and exposing him to guests while tethered and muzzled.

I met resistance from the owners only on the point of the muzzle. They just didn't like the idea. Yet

Binky was one of those dogs who was very aware when the bite option was ruled out, and I thought it would be very useful to give him exposure to people when he knew he couldn't bite them. Taking away the option for a time allows the training to take root and work in the home environment, and that was my plan for this specific dog.

The owners were very pleased with the results of training. When they objected to the concept of the muzzle I gave them a detailed explanation of my reasoning. It was like talking into a black hole on that point. A few years ago, I would likely have argued, becoming insistent that they should see things from my perspective.

This time, I applied my current approach to such situations and explained my thinking, presenting their choices as exactly that: choices, decisions that only they as owners get to make. All the protocols, including the bit about the muzzle, were written out and I gave them to the couple. I simply asked them to sign my copy of their "Go Home Instructions" under a notation attesting that they had received them, not that they necessarily agreed to apply each of them. Those protocols included a warning that Binky is a bite risk and that following each of the recommended approaches would make him as safe as possible.

I sent Binky home with a follow up appointment for the next week. The owners did very well with all of their homework...with the notable exception of the muzzle that they were not using. I know this because I asked. I did not chastise them for this failure to comply, but mentioned it again and made note of it in my records. All in all, the clients

were happy. Things were good both in and out of the house.

A week later the client called me crying. She permitted a guest to approach Binky while she tethered him. This greeting step was called for in my protocols, although he was to have been muzzled for the two previous weeks and for the initial greetings. The only reason Binky didn't get a serious bite on that guest was because my client had at least tethered him and deflected as he lunged for the bite. I recommended she make an appointment, which she did.

At the meeting she asked me what was the next step. I pulled out my copy of her signed protocols and pointed to the muzzle instructions.

"I can help you if you are ready to follow these guidelines," I told her, "but if you prefer not to follow them, then I'm afraid I don't have a next step I can share with you," I said.

Because I had never argued with the client, because I remained consistent but unemotional, she was able to hear my words without taking offense. And isn't this how we trainers become successful with dogs? We rule out failure and guide unemotionally toward success. This is what I did with the client, and it worked. She committed to the muzzle and so far there has been much improvement. I hope to phase the muzzle out after a period of time, but she can now expose this dog to visitors and remain in control without communicating her fear to the dog.

Had I fought initially with this client, she would never have called me back to report her problems because she would have felt judged. In this case, she rightly believed that I would be non-judgmental, but would assist her to improve her results. **Being right in the first place got me nowhere.** Remaining on point without emotion allowed me additional chances to change her mind.

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Here is another case. Clients came today for a paid consult with a four-month-old German shepherd puppy. In short order we fixed the poor leash manners and stopped the biting and jumping. Now it was time to talk about the housebreaking problem they had reported.

The clients are gone for eleven hours at a time most days of the week. They gate the puppy in the kitchen, which she is not destroying. She is not barking incessantly, nor becoming neurotic.

They leave her loose in that gated kitchen with a large crate lined with newspapers. They leave the door open, and this puppy enters that crate to poop and pee whenever she has to go. She almost never has an accident outside the crate while gated in the kitchen.

Of course I was thinking how lucky these people are. In many respects they have the dream puppy. But when they are home, they let her roam and she'll occasionally poop in another room. Because of this, they want to remove that crate and have her hold everything until they come home. They believed that letting her poop in the crate was causing her to become "confused" and think she could poop elsewhere in the house when they are home.

I talked nutrition with the clients and found they were feeding a diet filled with corn and by-products. I recommended a new diet for the puppy, which should help clear up the regular diarrhea she suffers. I explained the concepts of scheduling and drag line so they can have her out in the house with them, but prevent her from pooping in the forbidden zone.

Here's the problem. While they were fine with the idea of a new food and the drag line, the clients were committed to the idea that this puppy should just stop eliminating in the house altogether. I just smiled to myself as I formulated a response to that. I smiled because I know that some years ago I would have gotten harsh with them, and asked them why they even bought a puppy in the first place. I might have told them they should have bought a goldfish.

But I kept my cool and explained that sometimes life is a game of "What Would You Rather." Here's how the game works. You're presented with two tough choices, and you have to pick one. Death is not an option. For example, would you rather never eat your favorite food again, or would you rather eat it three times a day every day for a year? Remember, death is not an option. It's a fun game and you can learn a lot about your friends by playing it.

I played "What Would You Rather" with this family. In this case, I gave them three choices:

1. Would you rather quit your job and stay home with the puppy so she doesn't have to poop in the house?
2. Would you rather remove the crate as planned and come home to urine and feces all over the kitchen?
3. Or would you rather clean the soiled papers out of the crate?

They chose door number three, of course. And that was the correct choice. But if I had used a confrontational approach, the clients would not have given me the opportunity to help this poor puppy stay out of trouble. They wouldn't have listened to me as I explained the puppy's perspective on life to them. And they certainly wouldn't have signed up for board-and-train when the puppy is six months old. But they did listen to me because I talked to them without fighting. I remained supportive and never told them to give away their puppy...which they never would have done.

In a couple of months that dog will come in for full training. I'll be able to make her off-leash reliable. At least when her people come home, they'll be able to run her and play fetch to productively work off some of her energy.

The two cases I mentioned worked out well for me, for the dogs and for the clients. It doesn't always end up this way, because no trainer is always going to get as much cooperation as he or she wants. But when we fight with the clients, we exhaust ourselves emotionally, get touchy too quickly with the next set of clients, and accidentally

create distance between ourselves and those we're trying to serve.

Let your clients know that you respect their right to make choices, and that you're giving advice with a proven track record. A happy aside is that you'll feel energized by client meetings rather than exhausted.

Marc Goldberg, CDT is President of IACP. He teaches his ForceFree Method™ of Dog Training to other trainers. Visit him on the web at ChicagoDogTrainer.com.

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Photo by Tricia Kunovic



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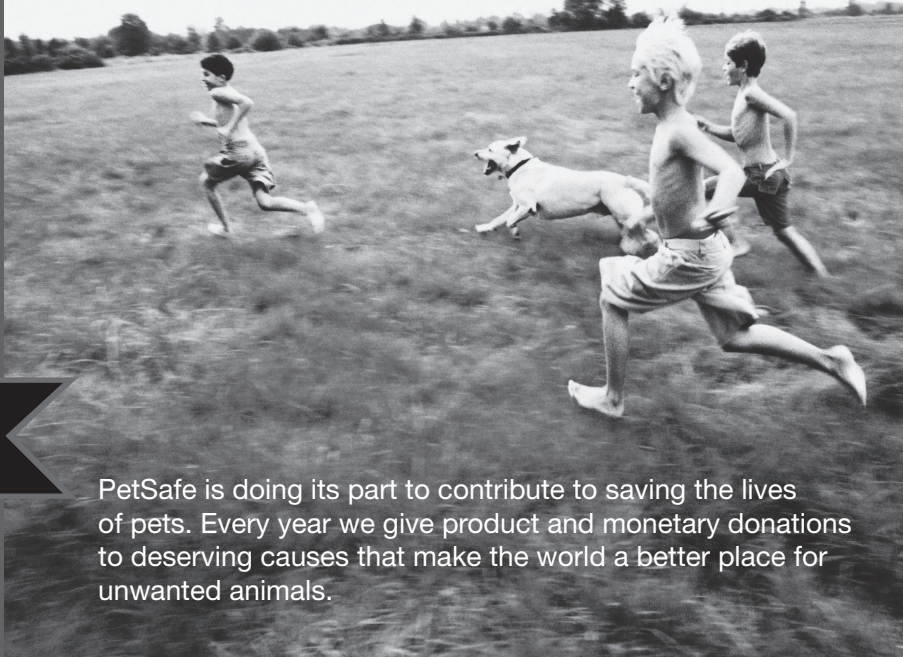


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Space and Situation:

Two Key Ways Clients Can Communicate With Their Dogs

by Sarah Wilson

When I started in this profession, way back when, I thought about communicating with dogs in three basic ways: Sound, Signal, or Sensation. I either gave a verbal command or a whistle (sound), used a hand motion (signal), or used some form of physical pressure/action to create the behavior I wanted (sensation).

And all this worked okay--for me.

But I became increasingly frustrated that my human clients consistently had difficulty learning and then replicating these cues. And even worse, even when they were able to successfully replicate what I did, they often were still not able to create the sort of day-to-day life with their dog that I enjoyed.

So I got to thinking. What was it that I was doing that they were not? That turned out to be a key question--with many answers. For the purposes of this article, I noticed all the things I did with dogs that were not based on Sound, Signal or Sensation. The most important things I did with dogs day-to-day was rooted in Space and Situation.

Now, I suppose one could consider those both a form of signal, but they are unique enough to warrant their own definition, awareness, and use.

Space

There is an old saying that "Fish are the last to discover water," meaning that the things that are around us all the time are sometimes the hardest to recognize. That idea has many applications, but here it means that space is so primary to social animals that we rarely even consider it.

It is the first language we learn and the one we listen to the most. Want to test that theory? Stand a few inches too close to someone in the grocery line, set your glass down a few inches too far into someone else's space at the dining table, and watch. It will be noticed very quickly by most people.

Dogs have their own spatial rules that are not that different from ours. The one who follows is a follower; the one who leads is the leader. The one who "stands his ground" has more status/authority/rank/power (pick the word that is least offensive to you) than the one who "gives ground."

Behaviors
cued by a
situation can be
incredibly useful
to pet people.

Language about the power of space is woven throughout our conversations: "She lets him walk all over her," "she is pushy," "he gave in," "he pushed back." Dogs share many of our general spatial rules and so, once people become aware of this, they can start lessening general confusion and creating a better relationship with their dog almost immediately. Here's an example:

Dog Rule: The one who maintains control over an item owns the item. This "control" is usually maintained by standing over, hovering over, putting their head over the item--controlling the space around the item.

Implications in Day-to-Day Life: If the dog is allowed to intrude into your client's space toward a resource, e.g. grab at a ball out of his hand, climb onto her lap uninvited, or put his head near the full dinner plate, then the dog cannot help but view the client as less than capable of controlling her resources, and that is a message that can undermine other work being done. Keeping the

message to the dog consistent is key to creating good progress, and that consistency must extend to all areas that the dog considers relevant, not just to the areas we humans want to consider relevant.

Useful Game: “Mine” from *My Smart Puppy*, and available for free over at MySmartPuppy.com, is a game where the human drops an item behind them and then blocks the dog, immediately rewarding any pause with praise and food.

Goal: For the dog to immediately and happily sit and wait politely whenever any human moves toward any item at any time.

Relational Payoff? Dog immediately sees person as capable of controlling a resource without drama or emotion. Dog knows and has been rewarded for an alternative behavior to “lunge and grab.” No verbal cue is used, so this is a space exercise that becomes a situational one quite quickly. Spatial and situational cues seem to be more readily transferred between family members than verbal. Example: A long time “Mine” practitioner’s infant son crawled up to her dog while her dog was eating. Her dog stepped back, sat, looked at her person with a relaxed expression and a wagging tail. Priceless!

Situation

Behaviors cued by a situation can be incredibly useful to pet people. By allowing the situation to create the behavior, verbal cues can be largely eliminated from the chain of events. Now, I love a good verbal cue, but once you really start to integrate situations into your work, you’ll never look back.

Two of the ways I currently use situational cues: environmental distractions create attention, and distraction in hand (treats, toys, food bowl) creates sit. With very little effort you can teach a dog to automatically look at you whenever a distraction appears. Attention is no longer contingent on you seeing the distraction first and verbally cuing the dog but rather the dogs seeing the distraction and instantly looking at you.

This seems particularly easy for my beginner students to grasp. They enjoy the process and are proud when their dog does something seemingly by “magic,” which means they are reinforced by the process as much as the dog. And since owner follow-through is one of the main limitations on all our success, anything that gets them happily involved is for the greater good.

In real-life, we pros mix-and-match various modes of communication all the time, sound and signal, sound and sensation, space and situation, and doing so allows us to create clarity for both ends of the leash. But taking the time to thoroughly think through the various spatial and situational cues has allowed me to become more effective for more teams more often and that creates the win/win/win I look for in this work.

Sarah Wilson, M.A. is a trainer, teacher, author of numerous books, and a student of the human-animal bond. She owns and runs mysmartpuppy.com.

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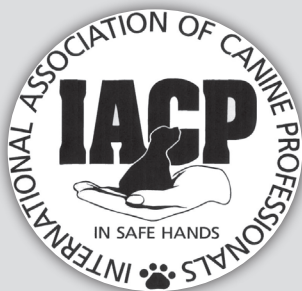
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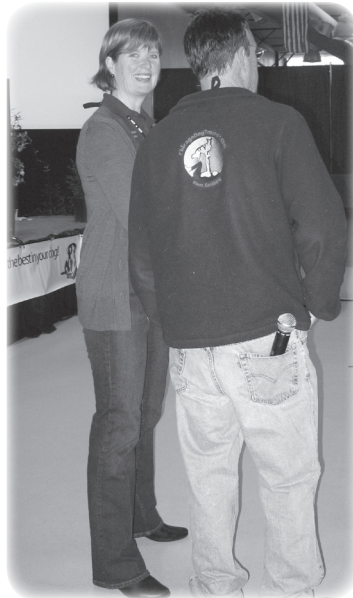
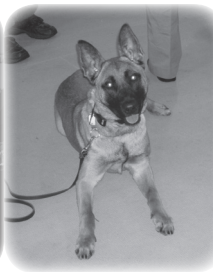
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Yoga and Dog Training

by Rachel Becker

When I tell people that I am both a yoga teacher and a dog trainer, I am inevitably asked if I teach “doga,” or yoga to dogs. The answer is no, I do not teach yoga to dogs. I teach yoga to people and I teach dog training (primarily) to people. For me, teaching yoga and dog training are actually quite similar. Here are a few reasons why:

You have to breathe

One of the first things you learn in a basic yoga class is how to breathe and how to use the breath skillfully. Yes, breathing is reflexive, but part of that reflexivity is that breathing patterns change to reflect our emotional state. Fear or discomfort can cause us to hold our breath. Anxiety or excitement can cause us to quicken the breath. As we move through yoga asana (postures), we are likely to find ourselves in some unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable positions, both literally and figuratively. By maintaining steady, deep, rhythmic breathing, we are better able to mitigate these emotional responses. We can essentially trick ourselves into calm by breathing like we are in a relaxed state.

Likewise, working with our dogs (and our clients' dogs) inevitably brings up frustrating, uncomfortable or even scary situations. We get flustered that we didn't give a command correctly or that the dog appears not to be listening; the dog pulls at the leash, causing us to lose our balance and perhaps get angry; we see a distraction ahead that we aren't sure we and our dog can handle. One of the first things we do is shorten our breath either in a quick, excited rhythm or by holding it altogether. Not only does this increase the physiological emotional response we are experiencing, but it is felt on the other end of the leash. We get nervous and our dogs get nervous. But if we can catch

ourselves and just breathe – long deep inhale, slow deep exhale – we can calm ourselves and let our dogs know that we're in control and everything is all right.

Relationships are key

One of the greatest joys in watching a well-trained dog is not how she sits immediately on command or rolls on her back when her owner says “bang,” or even how she waits at the threshold of an open door until invited to pass through. The real beauty is in the relationship between the dog and the handler. As with any relationship, the strongest relationship between a dog and her person is marked by exceptional communication.

You can see the trust, the respect, the matching of movements, and the conversation in the eye contact and body language. Sure, we train dogs to teach them important life skills that make it easier and safer for humans and canines to cohabitate.

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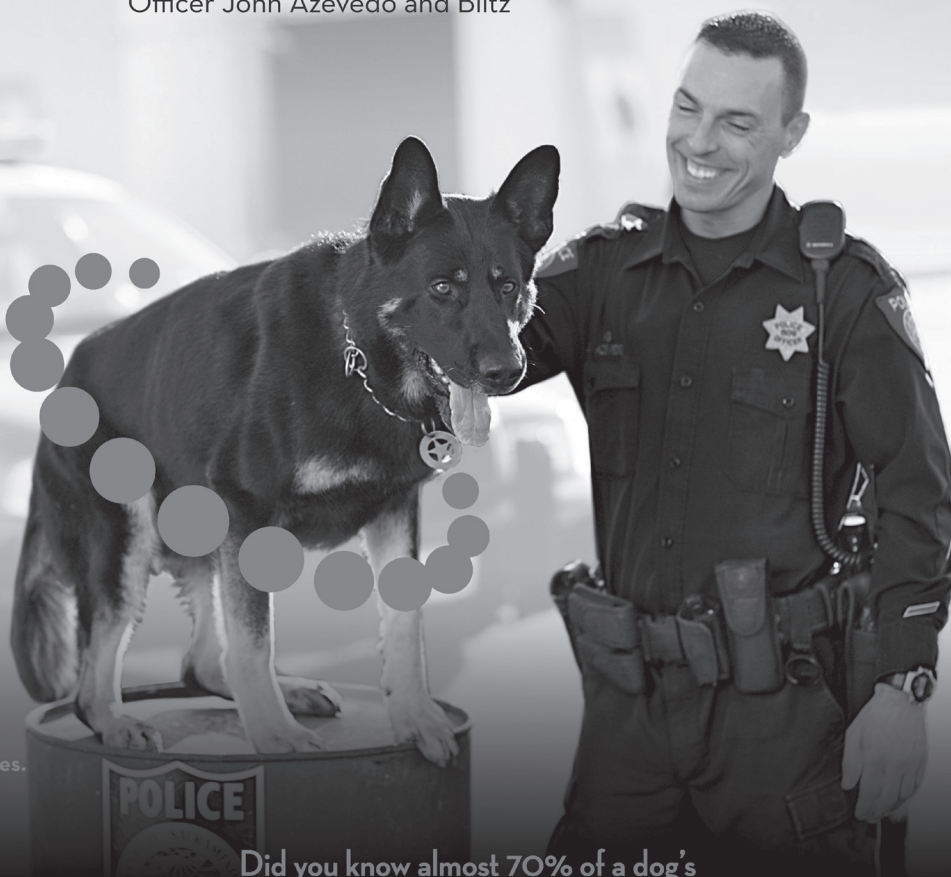
But no one gets a dog so they can teach it to come when called. We get dogs because our relationships with them bring joy into our lives. And as any experienced trainer will tell you, the more they work their dogs, the deeper their bond grows.

Similarly, the most impressive yogis are not the ones who can stand on their heads for hours or contort their bodies into fantastic shapes. The most remarkable yogis are the ones who seem the most grounded, centered, aware, and exude a calm confidence that is neither passive nor egotistical. Through examination of the temporal realities of the external world and fearless examination of the individual's thoughts and behaviors, the yogi learns to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. Just as

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with the dog and her handler, this way of being in the world is the result of cultivating a strong relationship, in this case with the nature of the world and with one's self.

No one can do it for you

One of the most revered yogis of the modern age, Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, is often quoted as saying, "Do your practice and all is coming." The key to this quote is that you have to do the practice. No one can do the work for you. Sure, I can lead you through a set of yoga postures and I can give you cues for refining your alignment and reminding you to breathe. But only you can choose to commit to the practice, to show up on your mat, to continuously focus your mind on the moment and not allow it to wander while you practice. I can show you the postures and breathing practices and meditations, but I can't do them for you. I can tell you what benefits you might receive from these practices, but I can't manifest them for you.

Sure, many people pay professional dog trainers to train their dogs and I see nothing wrong with that. The board and train aspect of our industry helps many trainers to keep this profession financially viable. But even four weeks with the world's best trainers cannot develop a bond between the owner and the dog. There is no amount of work a professional trainer can do that will absolve the owner from all responsibility. At some point, the owner must do the work. All the money and all the professionals in the world will not develop that deep bond, understanding and mutual respect that we all want with our dogs.

It's all about the journey, man

As cliché as it sounds, the truth is that it is all about the journey and not about the destination (or at least in my humble opinion.) Yes, yogis talk about attaining enlightenment, but the message that is more prevalent is working on continuously bettering yourself so you can contribute to the betterment of others in some way. Every difficulty, whether it be a physical injury or a bad relationship, is considered a guru, a teacher. There is always something more to learn, a deeper understanding to be gained. In yoga we talk about our practice:

"I am going to unroll my mat and practice." You can be a student of yoga for 20 years and still you practice. Your mat is your laboratory and you can always refine your studies further. You never "arrive," you keep working.

Dog training is not dissimilar. Of course, there are benchmarks and checklists for basic commands and skills which we want dogs to have. I am sure many would say a dog has completed training once they have their basics down. But seasoned pros know there is always room for refinement. Sure your dog will sit if you say the command to her standing right in front of her with your hands in your pockets ready to give a treat. But what about when you take your hand out of your pocket? What if you whisper? What if you don't make eye contact? What if you are lying on the floor? There are always holes in training to be found somewhere. But even more to the point, there is always more joy to be had as you and your dog refine your relationship, become a stronger team and deepen your bond. Whether you do that through agility classes, flyball tournaments, morning runs in the woods, or a good game of fetch, your relationship with your dog is, like any good relationship-dynamic. You never just arrive, although you might settle into some pretty good patterns. There is no final test to see if you and your dog have completed forming your relationship, you just keep going down the path together. And that path – sharing your life with a beloved companion – that's what it is all about.

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Photo by Rachel Becker





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Prevention and Alleviation of Noise Phobias

A Review of Audio Discs Offered by Calm Audio

by Karen Palmer

Those of us who have owned a working companion dog appreciate the value of a dog's ability to use their sensitive noses as they do tasks for us. Unfortunately, I believe that we have not been nurturing these senses as much as we could. What Dean Lake has done is provide canine professionals and dog owners with a unique set of tools to help us help our dogs, from puppies to adult dogs with noise phobias.

I have listened to all of the discs currently offered at www.calmaudio.com, and provide this review with no financial compensation or other promises. If anything, this review has made me more interested in the topic of noise phobias in dogs. The review was shortened for this Journal, but a more thorough version is available at www.calmaudio.com or through the "Articles" page on my website.

The short story is that Dean Lake's audio discs, in my opinion, are a great tool for dog owners and professionals in all areas of the canine industry. All dogs could benefit by being exposed to these quality sounds.

All discs come with brief instructions to play sounds at low volume during meal times or other pleasurable times for the dog, and to turn it down or off if the dog shows signs of stress.

The instructions also include a comment that a puppy or phobic dog should never be left unattended while the CD is playing. The goal is to play the sounds so the dog is never stressed, but is desensitized to these sounds and is able to handle other strange sounds with ease. My advice is to start any disc at a very low volume the first time through, so you can observe your dog for

signs of stress, and build up over time from there. It may not take much at all to trigger some noise phobic dogs. A player with a volume level you can measure can be a great way to help you keep track of your progress as you provide consistency with each listening event.

"Puppy Sounds"

This CD has a total of 25 tracks. The main categories are: travel sounds, things that go boom, animal sounds, home sounds, child noise, and show sounds. It includes recordings from a variety of environments where a pet dog or working dog may find themselves at some point during their lives. This is the real world in valuable sound bytes, all rolled into one audio disc.

The inscription on the inside cover suggests that a breeder can play this CD once a day for a litter of puppies as soon as their eyes are open, preferably when they are having a good time. By starting with a low volume and gradually increasing it over time, closely observing them for any signs of stress, a good owner can play the disc loud enough to bother people but not the pups at seven weeks of age. A mother dog should be removed from the litter for a while if she shows signs of stress, so she is not able to transmit her fear to her litter. The same general idea can be used with all of these discs with dogs of any age.

Many dogs
every year escape
confinement or become
injured or even killed after
being frightened by the
sudden and loud sounds
of firework displays or
private parties.

Lake has put together this disc first for the working dog and the "show puppy," and secondly for the pet dog. I propose that it can also be used to help those working with feral dogs or greyhounds taken off the track, as well as with dogs with already

established noise phobias. If I were to suggest one disc to start with for any purpose, this would be the one.

“Obedience Trial Sounds”

This disc has four tracks. The first is just over an hour long, and I can imagine a dog sitting in a crate, listening to these sounds of obedience trials being held indoors. Because this was recorded during an actual trial day, anything you can imagine being heard during an indoor competition can be heard here.



As Dean Lake is no stranger to the obedience ring herself, she put together an audio disc for the competitor based on experience. The first track is meant to be played during a training session. But as dogs also spend much of their time at trials crated, I could see plenty of value in playing this track while a dog is resting in a crate before and after training as well. Imagine how much easier it could be for the competition dog when he hears these sounds from the time he is a few weeks old, while resting, playing, eating or training.

Tracks two through four have several minutes of various types of applause. These were added to help a dog which has a particular sensitivity to applause.

“Indoor Agility Trial Sounds”

This audio disc has four tracks. The first two cover different types of courses, the first being more than twelve minutes, the second one more than 48 minutes. These are similar to the obedience trial track, as they provide all the background



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sounds of an indoor agility trial. This could be what your dog would hear while crated inside a building where agility trials are taking place, or in an outdoor field or training barn. Both of these first two tracks are designed to provide background sound for training periods, or to help handlers whose dogs are sensitive to the sounds in this exciting kind of environment. Again, I can also see value in this disc being used at while a dog is at rest, starting at a low volume and increasing with tolerance.

The last two tracks provide contact equipment sounds. This is what your dog might hear if he was sitting near the equipment as another dog went over, or going over the equipment himself. These two tracks are meant to help a dog which has fear related to certain types of equipment.

There is great value here for the competitive dog owner who wants to prepare or rehabilitate their dog so it can enjoy agility competition events rather than become stressed or exhausted by it. I would recommend playing the first two tracks for dogs before they ever enter a competitive arena, simply to help a dog avoid potential problems.

“Fireworks”

This audio disc has five tracks. There are small firecrackers, whistlers, all kinds of big and little bangs, and large city fireworks displays with deep booms. The variety of sounds, and the “distance” effect you can hear—some farther away, some nearer—give it that authentic feel. It has been “digitally mastered for maximum realism” for that purpose. Also noteworthy is an instruction to not play this CD too loudly as the explosive sounds could damage speakers. Of course, you don’t want to get too loud for your dog’s sake anyway. The idea is to help them through desensitization over time, without overdoing it.

Many dogs every year escape confinement or become injured or even killed after being frightened by the sudden and loud sounds of firework displays or private parties. These tracks can be used to help desensitize puppies to these sounds so they can keep their cool when sudden bursts of sound happen, or to help adult dogs who have already

developed a noise phobia of fireworks or thunder cracks. Don’t “test” your dog, but put these discs on at a very low volume first, regardless of how you expect your dog to behave.

“Thunderstorms”

There are two tracks of about 26 minutes each on this disc. These are recordings of real storms, with the sounds of wind blowing in the trees, rain, and of course, thunder. There are lulls in the storm, leaving mostly the sound of rain falling, and then intermittent thunder rolls, just like a real storm often does. Again, the listener shouldn’t turn it up during quieter times, as the intermittent thunder may seem too loud.

I found neither of these storms to be overwhelming or frightening for myself or my dogs when played relatively low, and this can be helpful for a very sensitive dog. The dog that panics at the first hint of the sounds of a storm could benefit from this disc played low. The Fireworks disc may actually provide a better alternative for desensitization in dogs which seem to react only to the loudest thunder rolls and booms (and ignore most other factors involved in storms). Regardless of what triggers YOUR dog, it is likely that this disc will produce a response if you turn it up just too much.

“But my dog knows the difference between a recorded sound and the real thing.” While that may be the case, the quality sounds on this disc and the others can still be used to help desensitize a dog to one of the most frightening aspects of a thunderstorm and other events—its sounds. So why not give it a try?

Karen Palmer is a dog trainer located in Twin Lake, Michigan. She is a professional member of IACP, and a member of Protect MI Dogs, the Michigan Association of Pure Bred Dogs, the Australian Shepherd Club of America (for obedience competition purposes), Muskegon Lakeshore Obedience Training Club, Greater Muskegon Kennel Club, and Community Toastmasters Club #3009. Visit her website at www.BalancedCanineTraining.com and blog <http://gooddogowners.blogspot.com>.

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The Last Word

by Mailey McLaughlin, M. Ed., CDT

As I was putting together this issue, I saw the Petsafe ad for the back cover and it got me to thinking. Honestly, I think it's brilliant, and I'm like most people in that advertisements usually swish through my brain and disappear. But I can't stop thinking about this one.

Can you imagine how different your life would be right now if you had never become a canine professional? What if you never actually had a dog? I mean, really think about it. Wherever and however you grew up, you never had a dog for one reason or another. Your toys never got chewed; you never stepped in a puddle on the way to the bathroom in the middle of the night. Your mom badgered you to pick up your clothes and do your homework, but you never had to feed or walk the dog. You didn't have to come home right after school to take care of it. When you went off to college, or off to find a job, you said goodbye to your family and you were gone. While you were away, you didn't have to mourn the dog's passing. No dog missed you. And you didn't know to miss a dog.

In college you majored in a subject that interested you but had nothing to do with dogs. Then you got a job that met the same criteria. You became self-supporting in accounting, the law, as a doctor, clerk, manager, gardener, teacher, civil servant, car mechanic, carpenter, or something else "respectable." You entered and exited relationships, maybe married, maybe had kids. But you never had a dog. Your life was just like millions of other people's lives, full of the same sadness and joy over big things and everyday things.

Your car was always clean. There was no dog hair on your furniture, your clothes, your food. You didn't spend anything on vet bills (emergency or otherwise), training, dog toys, or dog food. Your business clients or customers were compliant and normal. You had decent clothes, a nightlife, friends. Your weekends were not spent competing or training. You had time off. You could pick up and travel at a moment's notice.

And you were a completely different person than you are now—perhaps a successful person, but yet completely different. Can you imagine such an existence? Can you imagine never having connected with the dogs in your life, and the people attached to many of them?

Your whole life, from career to home (including location and acreage owned) to car to weekend activities to friends to kids (or the absence of kids) to significant other to emotional and psychological state, would be vastly different. Can you imagine all the good, and sad, you'd have missed?

The best years of all our lives, dear readers, have absolutely been measured in dog years. Here's to not being able to imagine it any other way—and celebrating them every single day.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, is Editor of SafeHands Journal. She has worked professionally with dogs and their people for nearly 30 years. Read more at www.carpek9.blogspot.com.

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