

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

The Canine Professional Journal



Volume 18
Issue 1
SPRING 2017



The Canine Professional Journal *is the official journal of the...*

Newsletter Staff

Editor Mailey McLaughlin
Publisher IACP
Design Evelyn Albertson

The editors reserve the right to refuse any advertising or any article or letter submitted for publication. Copy subject to editing for grammar/length.

Legal Notices

The Canine Professional Journal of the International Association of Canine Professionals is intended as an education and communication vehicle for fostering learning, cooperation, exchange of information, and networking across the canine professions. The Canine Professional Journal is published quarterly. The IACP does not assume any legal responsibilities for published articles. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IACP, its officers or editorial staff.

Reprint Permission/Submission

Copyright 2016 IACP. All Rights Reserved.

No items may be reprinted without the written permission of the IACP and authors. Members should mail requests to the journal Editor. Original letters/articles may be submitted to the Editor for consideration. Email submissions to Mailey McLaughlin at iacp.creative@gmail.com

Advertising and Application Address

Per issue Rate:

Business Cards \$45.00, 1/4 page \$350.00, 1/2 page \$450.00, full page \$750.00. Send high resolution files (JPG or PDF in CMYK) to the above email address, and a check made out to IACP to:

IACP Journal, P.O. Box 928, Lampasas, TX 76550

Deadlines

March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, December 1st. Submissions will be considered for the next available issue.

IACP Membership/Journal Information

International Association of Canine Professionals
P.O. Box 928
Lampasas, TX 76550
(512) 564-1011; Fax (512) 556-4220
www.canineprofessionals.com

Officers

President	Tyler Muto
Vice Presidents	Mailey McLaughlin, Melanie Benware
Secretary	Amanda Nepomuceno
Treasurer	Jack Clark
Executive Director	Martin Deeley

Directors

Melanie Benware, Brian Bergford, Jack Clark, Martin Deeley, Cyndi Graham, Nelson Hodges, Mailey McLaughlin, Tyler Muto, Amanda Nepomuceno, Jason Vasconi

IACP International Hall of Fame

Frank Inn, Vicki Hearne, Carol Lea Benjamin, Lois Meistrell, Winifred Gibson Strickland, Edi Munneke, Weatherwax brothers, Dr. Ian Dunbar, Arthur "Captain" Haggerty, Jack & Wendy Volhard, Bill Koehler, Captain Max Emil Frederick V. Stephanitz, Will Judy, Monks of New Skete, Barbara Woodhouse, William E. Campbell, Dr Bonnie Bergin, Cesar Millan, Martin Deeley, Scott Mueller, Dr. Daniel F. Tortora, Dr. Bruce Fogle, Konrad Lorenz, Bart Bellon, Sylvia Bishop, John and Sandra Halstead

IACP Member Hall of Fame

Jay Stull, Dick Russell, Mary Mazzeri, Vivian Bregman, George Cockrell, Cyndy Douan, Lorraine Smith, Aimee Sadler, Pat Trichter, Tawni McBee, Marc Goldberg, Bob Jervis, Leslie Horton, Dody Dunning, Chad Mackin

Honorary Members

Brian Kilcommons, Bash Dibra, Gary Wilkes, Cesar Millan, Ilusion Millan

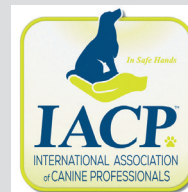
International Association of Canine Professionals

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The International Association of Canine Professionals is dedicated to the education, development, and support of dog training professionals world-wide. The IACP provides a community where experienced dog trainers mentor, guide and cultivate members to their full potential. Our commitment to the highest quality training increases our members' skills and abilities, develops professional recognition, and improves communication on training best practices. We support our members' rights to properly use and promote effective, humane training tools and methods to create success for each dog and owner, while expanding the understanding and cooperation among canine professionals and dog owners across the full spectrum of the canine industry.

In achieving these aims through education and training, the IACP works actively to reduce cruelty and abuse to canine partners.

**For Those Dedicated to
the Well Being of Dogs**



How to Join IACP:

PROFESSIONAL MEMBER — At least five years experience as a canine professional. Can vote on IACP issues and use IACP name and logo on business materials.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER — Less than five years experience as a canine professional but practicing as a professional. Can use the IACP name and logo on business materials. May not vote.

AFFILIATE MEMBER — An active interest in a career as a canine professional but lacking the experience to be an Associate or Professional member, i.e., apprentices, students of canine professions, trainees, volunteers, part-time, and devotees of canine related occupations. Cannot use the IACP name or logo for business purposes and may not vote.

Annual Fees:

Professional \$125.00; Associate \$100.00; Affiliate \$65.00

An additional \$30 fee applies for initial processing costs of Professional and Associate members only.

Benefits:

All IACP members receive an electronic copy of The Canine Professional Journal, have access to our email list, seminars, educational materials, business support materials, events and activity calendars, regional group participation, and our Certification Programs. Discounts for sponsor services are available to members.

Applications and renewals can now be paid through MasterCard, Visa, and AMEX.

International Association of Canine Professionals

P.O. Box 928
Lampasas, TX 76550
(512) 564-1011; Fax (512) 556-4220
www.canineprofessionals.com

Cover photo: Mako and Bolin by Karen J. Roddy

IN THIS ISSUE...

President's Letter.....	Tyler Muto	4
Fostering Fear	Julie Hart.....	6
Balancing Independence with Handler Focus.....	Jerry Bradshaw	10
The Peace of the Woods.....	Derek Bryson	17
Get Ready to ACT	Kim Greco	19
Negative Reinforcement and the Curse of Sisyphus ..	Tyler Muto	22

The IACP is proud to announce that Members
Angela Bentley, Julie Hart, and Ike Iacovino

*have successfully completed their Certified Dog Trainer examination and are now able
to add the designation IACP-CDT to their names.*

We know how much work goes into this and we are proud of your achievement.

Well done!

The Board of the IACP



IACP Insurance Administrator

DOG TRAINERS BOARDING KENNELS DOGGY DAYCARES
GROOMERS WALKERS/SITTERS



Providing the Following Coverages:

GENERAL LIABILITY BUSINESS PROPERTY WORKERS COMPENSATION
COMMERCIAL AUTO EQUIPMENT UMBRELLA BONDS

**Call us at 1-800-962-4611 or visit us online at
www.dogtrainerins.com**



President's Letter

by Tyler Muto

The year 2017 has come in like a lion, and we at the IACP are poised to have one of our most active and influential years to date. As spring approaches we are looking forward to renewing our energy, and growing in both size and scope.

As a whole, we kicked off the New Year with a bang. January brought the largest number of new members since our beginning, and member renewals are consistent and steady. Exciting new sponsors have come aboard such as Doggie Don't and Impact Kennels because they are aware of our growing influence in the professional community.

In addition to these positive indicators of growth, we have also been expanding our offerings. The Certification Committee has been working hard, and we are pleased to announce that after several months of reviewing and refining, the Dog Trainer Foundation exam is back up and running. I have personally taken the exam and I have to say it is fantastic. Although it is an entry-level certification, it is not easy, which keeps it consistent with the IACP's standards of excellence in all things dog. Now more than ever it is becoming increasingly important to have credentials as a dog trainer. If you don't have a certification yet, this is the place to start.

Many of you are aware of the various legislative issues that have recently arisen, from the proposed licensing in New York, to the BSL in Atlanta, and the Choke/prong collar Ban in Toronto. While intervening on policy may seem like a major challenge, I prefer to view it as an opportunity. This is the reason the IACP was formed 18 years ago, and we are perfectly positioned to take the lead as the organization that will advocate for open-minded canine professionals everywhere.



To this end, I am currently in the process of writing a charter, for Board approval, to form a new committee to assist me in accomplishing these legislative and policy goals. I will be starting small, with only a few members who are proficient in the areas of behavioral science, legal reasoning, and writing. If you are interested in volunteering your time to help safeguard the future of this industry, please send a brief message with your relevant background info to tyler.muto@canineprofessionals.com.

Even if you cannot volunteer, you can still help our collective cause tremendously by convincing everyone you know who loves dogs to join the IACP. The more members we have the more influence we have, it's that simple. Remember, people don't need to be professionals in order to join. We have Affiliate levels of membership to welcome anyone who loves dogs and believes in the value of an open mind to join our family.

Lastly, don't forget that now is the time to get yourself registered and ready for the 2017 Educational Conference. We have an excellent lineup of presenters this year and we are back in St. Louis at one of our most popular venues. Just like last year, we have also added a tour of the Wolf Center on Wednesday. We are expecting record-breaking attendance again this year, so don't miss out on early bird registration for the most exciting event in the canine industry.

Thank you all for supporting the IACP, and being a part of our family during this exciting time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Muto".

tyler.muto@canineprofessionals.com



**Have YOU
Registered Yet?**

**2017 ANNUAL
EDUCATIONAL
CONFERENCE**
September 13-16, 2017



BUILDING BALANCE

LEARNING • GROWING • NETWORKING • SUCCEEDING

Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel • St. Louis, Missouri

Not Being Nosey But You Don't Want To Miss

**THE CONFERENCE OF THE YEAR
FOR CANINE PROFESSIONALS!**

Early Bird Registration Is Open! Save \$100 on Full Conference Pass
through July 15th!

Endangered Wolf Center Limited to 100 - First Come First Served

REGISTER NOW! WWW.CANINEPROFESSIONALS.COM




**Your one-hand wonder in
dog obedience training:**

For dog lovers who take their pet training seriously, the Garmin Sport Pro™ simplifies everything. A settable BarkLimiter™ function helps deter unwanted yapping and noise-making, while the handheld's quick-turn thumb dial gives positive clicks for easy "no look" control. Use momentary or continuous tone, vibration and stimulation to train and correct at a range up to 3/4 of a mile.

[Shop Now](#)

Fostering Fear

by Julie Hart, CDT

"Are you sure you want this dog?" asked the rescue of the old redbone coonhound named Lucky. "He's been returned twice for failure to bond." How silly. Of course I wanted him. He leaned into me that day at the adoption event and I knew he was my dog. Unbeknownst to me, I was about to get my crash course in fearful dogs. At the time I had zero dog training experience. I brought Lucky home and soon realized why the rescue was concerned. He was terrified of everything; men, fast movements, noises, and life in general. Luckily, there was no aggression in him. Two weeks later, he was happier and had bonded to a human (me) at last, to the point of escaping from a pet sitting friend and running home to our house and sitting on the porch. I was flattered. Maybe I was on to something...

In my seven years of fostering and training fearful dogs since Lucky, I found many dog rescuers, fosters, and even professional trainers have a hard time helping fearful dogs. I have inadvertently specialized in "fostering fear" and rehabilitating it. I am a sucker for the fearful, shy dog in the shelter giving me a pleading look. At first I would take any fearful dog the rescue needed help with. I had lots of successes, but also a few failures. The failures were dogs I could maintain, but were not good candidates for adoption because they would fall apart without leadership, and ultimately become aggressive.

For dog rescuers, it is important to know which fearful, shy dogs are easy to rehab and which aren't. For trainers, recognizing which kind of fear you are working with will help you provide your clients with an accurate prognosis and timeline. I categorize fear into two categories: environmental, and innate. If

the fear is environmental, meaning the fear is due to past or present environment, it is fixable. If the fear is innate, genetic, or caused by instability or lack of socialization as a young puppy, it is more difficult to get full recovery, although significant progress can still be made. An environmentally fearful dog will likely show a love of people in a subdued way. The dog may lean into a person, or move towards the person ever so slightly, usually with submissive body language. After petting, a fearful dog that likes people may either stay in the same spot, or move towards the person. I look for soft eye contact, not scared "go away" eye contact (see photo below). I don't expect fearful or shy dogs to be running with joy to people, but I want to see an innate desire to be with humans. (Fearful Dog that Loves People: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4PNB0Tj07c&feature=youtu.be>) Dogs who try to get away from or are scared of people are a harder rehabilitation case. They may woof while backing away from a person or object, or growl at people.

Another trait present in successfully rehabbed dogs is a normal recovery time from fear and an ability to overcome fear of environmental things like noises or flooring. Most dogs will startle by a noise or movement, but how they deal with that scary event is key. Some dogs I have fostered or trained would not investigate and could not snap out of a fearful state in a reasonable amount of time. In my experience, dogs that are slow to recover from fear, who growl and woof under their breath are not likely to make a full recovery from fear, and may become fear-biters. These dogs' fear has an innate or unstable quality.

Compare these two dogs exhibiting fear and insecurity. The first dog has a soft look even though she is scared. The second dog's body is completely tilting away from me, tail is tucked, and his eyes are hard and staring.



The "go away" look.

I have worked with dogs that are fearful of people, dogs, noises, items such as flags, balloons and flooring, cars, bikes, collars, leashes, and toys. Thanks to foster dogs with multitudes of issues, I have developed a protocol that focuses on building trust with the dog. I also want the dog to change its opinion of scary objects, not just obey a command.

1. Do nothing. Give the dog food, water, and potty breaks. I let the dog hang out with me without trying to touch or pressure the dog. I will have the dog follow me around the house either on short leash or on a long line. I may walk the dog if it's not too much. I do not try to touch the dog at this point.

2. Use a leash. Using a leash allows me to guide the dog without having to touch or grab the dog. I use a long line on very scared dogs and reel them in sideways to get them in the house. I can step on the leash if I need to. I don't need to invade the dog's space when using a leash, and it allows me to stop the dog from practicing flight. I allow the dog space, but I don't allow him to hide or run away.

3. Be aware of your body language and approach in a non-threatening way. I do this for friendly and unfriendly fearful dogs. Also be aware of your energy. A softer, confident energy is better with fearful dogs than a dominant one. If you come on too strong the dog will tell you by its body language. Dominant energy with a fear biter may elicit the biting response. I will squat down, sit down, or approach the dog sideways or backwards as shown in the video "Zero to Hero."

4. Don't push the dog too fast. I will not progress with any kind of training or conditioning until the dog trusts me. When the dog is eating, drinking, and using the bathroom regularly, I know we are making progress. When I can approach the dog without the dog being afraid, it is time to move forward in baby steps to overcoming other fears.

5. Listen to the dog. Let her tell you when she is too scared to learn. There is a sweet spot of pushing the dog past its comfort zone just enough to make progress. If the dog is shutting down or trying to run away, slow down.

6. Use helper dogs. I encourage my dogs to help me with my project dog. I will call them into rooms, have them get affection, or take

them on walks or outings with my fearful dog. If my dogs think its ok, the fearful dog will follow them into those spaces and interactions. It is important that the helper dogs respect the space of the fearful dogs. My dogs give scared dogs space when the scared dog asks for it, and if they don't I tell them to back off.

7. Use crate rest. I have my fearful dogs out of the crate about 30-60 minutes at a time, and then allow two to three hours of rest time. Being out in a scary environment is stressful and the dog needs a safe resting place. A crate also allows a place the dog can watch from a distance. Getting a fearful dog out of the crate may be difficult. Sometimes I may leave a leash on the dog so I do not have to crawl into the crate to leash it. See my video "Getting a Fearful Dog Out of a Crate."

8. Provide rules. Rules still apply to fearful dogs. Examples of rules are no jumping, waiting for food politely, and no pulling on walks. Fearful dogs are extremely sensitive to space intrusion, so usually a soft "uh-uh" or slight turn towards the dog is enough to stop the dog from doing an unwanted act. I will not use my hands to correct a fearful dog. I always use a leash until that dog is totally comfortable with me touching them. Then I might use a calming touch, but never a quick poke or harsh touch. Hands need to be positive with a fearful dog.

9. Provide leadership, not dictatorship. Fearful dogs need to feel secure because you provide leadership--not afraid or forced into compliance. I do not withhold food to get a dog to approach me. Feeding the dog



from a bowl still instills trust (my main goal). I never teach a fearful dog any obedience until that dog is comfortable with me. To do so is to ask the dog to go into a submissive posture with me when there is no trust. Typically the dog will trust me in three to five days. (It can be longer for severe cases). That is a short time to wait for a positive influence on a dog. Lately I have seen fearful dogs that were forced into compliance or trained too harshly. These dogs act aggressively with the owners, so the dog has been trained as a dominant aggressive dog might be--with harsh corrections. But these dogs are actually fearful (you can tell when the owner is removed), and harsh corrections have no place in their rehabilitation. I build their trust in me first, then address their fears with leadership. Lastly, I will add in obedience, and corrections if needed, after the fear issues have been resolved.

10. Encourage the dog to use its nose. I allow the dog to explore its environment the way a dog would, by sniffing. On walks the dog is allowed to sniff things. The dog is not expected to heel until it has made progress with its fears. In the house I present the dog with items it is either scared of or interested in. If the dog won't sniff the item in my hand I lay the object on the floor and step back. When the dog sniffs I give encouragement by saying softly "good girl."

11. Condition the dog to like touch. Some dogs I rehabilitate are uncertain of being touched. Since most humans want their dog to enjoy petting, I condition the dog to like it. I sit on the floor and start under the dog's chin with short scratches. I often couple this with food. After a few sessions the dog usually enjoys the affection and relaxes enough to sit or lay down. Gradually I will give the dog a massage all over. It may take days to get to this point after earning trust.

12. Reward bravery with encouragement and often food. I use food a lot for rehabilitating fear. I use it to get dogs over fear of cars, floors, noises, stairs and my husband. Dogs won't take food if they are too scared, so food doesn't work until the dog is in a reasonably trusting state. I reward bravery. If the dog is brave enough to put a paw on the shiny floor, she gets a treat, usually thrown onto the floor. See this video Floor Phobia Solved for Sweet Dog to see how I worked with floor phobia and also used helper dogs. If the dog will tolerate the clinking of silverware, she gets a treat. It works. I do these things over a week's time, breaking it down into baby steps. I generally do not use food with fear of people unless I have very obedient humans. I will have them hold food in their hand, stand still, and allow the dog to sniff them and take the food without any interaction, then build on that. More often I use distance, just allowing the dog to watch from a safe place, then gradually

"Our Customer Service will jump to serve you and your clients. Join our team and be a part of the fastest growing e-collar company in the World."



No Minimums - No Shipping Fees - Same Day Shipments - All IACP Members Qualify as Dealers

move closer to the people and getting the dog to relax before moving back a little, then forward again.

13. Expose the dog to new things after establishing trust. Would you follow someone you do not trust into a scary situation like a burning building? Probably not, but you might if that person has proven to be trustworthy and you know they would not allow harm to come to you. It is the same for a fearful dog. That garbage truck or shiny floor may be as scary as a burning building to the dog. The dog must see that you are trustworthy before he can follow you into scary places or past scary things. The dog must know that you “have his back.”

If at any time, the dog shuts down or is not making progress, then you are moving too fast. It is simple to remedy this by breaking the process down even more and taking smaller steps with the dog. Attention must be paid to the dog's state of mind. Just because a dog is sitting next to something scary doesn't mean the dog is getting over its fears. The association of the scary thing needs to be change in the dog's mind.

For example, the inside of the car needs to become a happy place for the dog instead of a scary container on wheels. A dog can be forced to sit in the car, but not to enjoy the ride.

Watch “Journey to Confidence for a Fearful Dog Named Olive” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pT-GU3UqMwA>. To see the videos referenced in the article go to Hart2HeartCanine YouTube Channel and find the title listed in the article. There are many other videos on this channel about fearful dogs and how to help them get over fears such as leashes, flooring and cars.

Julie Hart began fostering dogs over seven years ago. She started her business, Hart to Heart Canine Training, LLC a little over two years ago. Her interests include evaluating dogs for rescues, rehabilitating dogs, training rescue volunteers, and training client dogs and clients. She travels to train dogs with her mentor several times a year and enjoys learning by attending workshops.

iACP



KONG[®]
WOBBLER[™]

Feed a meal or just some treats.[™]

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a dog, likely a Weimaraner, interacting with a Kong Wobbler toy. The dog is shown from the side, leaning over the toy with its head down, sniffing or attempting to manipulate it. The toy is a dark, rounded, hourglass-shaped object with a hole on top and a small circular opening on the side. Several small, dark, round treats are scattered on the surface in front of the toy. The background is plain white. The text 'KONG WOBBLER' is prominently displayed in the upper left corner in a bold, stylized font. At the bottom, the slogan 'Feed a meal or just some treats.' is written in a clean, sans-serif font.

Balancing Independence with Handler Focus in Sport and Police Dogs by Jerry Bradshaw

Brain chemistry and biology have taught us that learning a new task creates neural pathways. The more deep practice those tasks receive, the stronger those neural links become, and thus the habits become stronger and less likely to be extinguished. Both the biology of learning and the theory of learning seem to agree on these principles. Conditioning takes place on a cellular level as neural pathways are linked and insulated with myelin, and as a result the cues that initiate these pathways to fire become faster and faster. Both humans and dogs can then access habitual responses to certain cues quickly and efficiently.

In my early days of IPO sport training in the 1980s, it was often agreed upon that one must wait until the dog is biting strongly and confidently before doing any obedience training, normally after the dog was at least around 10-12 months old. The idea behind this was generally accepted to be because, at that time, obedience training in general relied on more compulsive methodologies than it does now, and so pressure at a young age would shut down the dog and make him more worried about, and dependent on, the handler. This makes a lot of sense if your training invokes a lot of pressure. You want to allow more maturity and experience to evolve in the dog in order for him to handle pressure. For example, bite work, when done in a balanced manner including elements of prey and defense and drive channeling, is a great way for a dog to learn how to handle pressure successfully.

At present, available techniques for shaping behaviors, skills, and focus are much more motivational in nature. As these techniques for motivational obedience have evolved, most trainers will immediately embark on training obedience with puppies to shape many nascent forms of adult behaviors when the pups are at the peak of being able to absorb information and learn. This also makes a lot of sense, as new methods bring with

them more opportunities for learning at younger ages. The dogs are given very positive classical associations with learning itself, and the components of complex behaviors can be formed and shaped and thus key habits are created early to employ later as behaviors become more complex.

The purpose of this article is to reveal a potential problem even with motivational obedience work in young dogs, and provide some cautionary recommendations on how to avoid the problems. Compulsive techniques used early and often on young dogs certainly can bring about detrimental results on motivation, learning and create handler dependency as a habit. Bear in mind this article is about sport competition dogs where the quality of trained obedience behaviors are highly valued including fluidity, speed, and confidence in performing them, and police dogs where independence is highly valued in tracking, detection and searching functions. Through observation of young dogs (puppies to 12 months), I have seen even motivational obedience training, without direct pressure, have adverse effects on other areas of training where handler interaction and dependence is less highly valued, such as bite work, detection and even tracking.

Our working dogs, whether sport protection dogs or police dogs, at their optimum operate both independently and dependently with regard to the handler. When tracking, we want the dog to internalize his drive, and focus its hunting and prey drive to concentrate and follow the scent trail without becoming distracted by the handler or the environment. The same goes for a dog doing a building search for a suspected criminal, as we don't want the dog to be looking back for the handler saying, if you will, "are you coming mom/dad?" When the dog is operating and focused outside of the handler-dog dynamic, we call that, for simplicity, "outward focus," as opposed to a dog doing obedience where the focus relies heavily on

the tasks being performed at the direction of the handler, which we call “inward focus.” There are times the dog must toggle between the two, such as when the handler controls the police dog’s expression of aggression with “out” commands, recalls, or multiple subject redirects. There the dog must also balance his focus outwardly on the decoys and the biting behavior but inwardly as well, and be attentive to the handler’s commands. Dogs that come to detection training after having a lot of obedience can have a difficult time hunting fluidly without handler direction if they experience too much inward focus through obedience before starting independence work like hunting freely.

Perhaps the handler chooses to do Nosework™ for example, after having done many months of obedience, and sees the dog struggle with being independent of the handler or staying focused on the detection problem when the handler is close. This is often resolved by having the handler manipulate the dog’s focus through presentation, rather than teach the dog to be independent and hunt on its own, without reliance on the handler. Over time, if the dog has enough natural independence the dog may overcome the early obedience and be more independent in the presence of the handler.

Puppy Training

Too much obedience, even that which is completely motivational, can create inadvertent drive neutrality and a dog that is too inwardly focused. The puppy learns that the way to rewards is through internalizing drive with focus on the handler as the neural pathways are created in the puppy. These become strong defaults. So for instance, the handler without access to a protection club or decoys, or who waits a long time before introducing hunting exercises in detection, spends much of his time doing obedience training, and the learning creates strong inward focus (focus on the handler and rewards emanating from the handler), so the dog sees the environment as less engaging and the relationship with the handler as that which provides all his rewards.

For pet training, this default to the handler is a good thing, as the dog engages with the handler and becomes neutral to distractions. But in the multi-purpose performance dog, the dog becomes conditioned to engage the handler over all else. When that puppy is asked to do independent tasks such as hunt or chase the flirt pole and now play with the protection decoy, the dog prefers to engage the handler as that is the habit that his conditioning has created. The dog appears to not have much drive to hunt or do protection work. Although the handler may have an easier time engaging the dog in play, the dog eschews interaction with the stranger. In cases like this often the handler must start the process of getting the dog to engage in the hunting or take the bite materials and pass them along to the helper or decoy.

This looks from the outside, just like a young dog made too “polite” by compulsive obedience, where the dog is, for lack of a better term, “afraid” to not pay attention to the handler and fully engage in the interaction with the decoy, as play with the decoy becomes an obedience distraction in the dog’s perception. In these cases we normally tell the handler lay off obedience for a while and allow the “dog to be a dog” and become more outwardly focused. We tell these handlers to stop being so over-bearing, commanding, and be less of a focus for the dog. When I see new handlers of either young sport or police dogs I have to call attention to them being “helicopter moms,” and give their dogs some space to work independently, and



not try to control everything, even if with spatial influence. Doing obedience work also conditions the handler to be involved with everything the dog does, and so handlers tend to hover, talk too much, and the cycle of dependence continues.

Notice how these two situations look similar from a 3rd party observer's standpoint. The lack of independence is the prominent symptom, but the causes are completely divergent. Bear in mind that there is also a "nature" component at work here as well. In my experience, puppies as well as older dogs will have a measure of genetic independence or dependence in terms of their social drive that is innately present. So if you start with a puppy that is genetically independent, doing motivational training as much as you like with that puppy may have little to no outward manifestation even in the absence of doing activities to encourage independence. The converse would also be true: a dog starting with a large genetic predisposition to dependency if trained with a relatively small dose of motivational engagement training could become adversely affected and more dependent as a result of the training.

If the compulsion or motivational training in obedience is the main focus of the training up to the beginning of adolescence, it will be a hard road back to independence for some dogs. Let's look at the dog who is raised in the opposite manner (and there are a lot of them)--dogs who are encouraged to be outwardly focused from puppy hood. This is the old program of "let the dog be wild until he is 12 months old."

Adolescent Dogs

In cases of young adult dogs that are encouraged to be extremely independent and outwardly focused from the time they are pups, we can deduce the opposite issue. Examples of these dogs are green police dog prospects raised primarily for being sold to police dog vendors in Europe, or pups that are allowed to be wild and not asked to do much besides bite work and perhaps tracking, both of which are activities that encourage independence from the handler. These green police prospects are motivationally trained to be independent from the start. Very little obedience, compulsive or even

motivational, is introduced so as to not squash the drive, or direct the dog away from an outward focus. Bite work foundation is laid, and from that the dog becomes focused outwardly on the decoy. The dog is shown hunting drills and allowed and encouraged without help to search out the toy. Independence is encouraged as the people buying want to see dogs that work without handler direction and influence.

Tall grass hunting, hunting in rooms, basic building searches for humans, perhaps some tracking to find a toy or articles which produce a reward are often used. These dogs become very independent and outwardly focused and often trainers have trouble when it is time to bring in obedience training (even motivational) because they are conditioned to want high value rewards (decoys and toys) relative to food, perhaps. Layer onto this a little defense work, and you have a dog whose outward focus makes flashy attentive obedience a bit of a struggle. All his concern and rewards

dogtra
COMBO
COMBINATION BOOST CONTROL

COMBINATION
BOOST
BUTTON
M+L+H

**LEAD THE TRAINING WITH INSTANT
STIMULATION LEVEL CONTROL**

www.dogtra.com 1.888.811.9111

come from outside the handler/dog relationship. Furthermore, these dogs are passed from owner to sub-dealer, to larger dog dealer, to vendor, and their life consists of more hunting and biting with a parade of new people holding the leash who have very little relevance to the dog. You receive your green dog and in fact, you are just your dog's "ride" to the fun.

Achieving Balance

To balance these effects we need to simultaneously create pathways to reward by expressing drive and rewarding independence and outward focus as well as inward focus and rewarding the dog or puppy for being handler focused. This means if you start training your competition puppy, and he is genetically pre-disposed to being dependent, be careful how much you condition the dog doing motivational obedience without balancing that with activities that are outwardly focused such as bite work, searching or tracking. Further, if you get a relatively outwardly focused puppy, don't let him only engage in activities that reward only outward focus as you may lose key opportunities to work on engagement with the handler and you will likely create a dog that is too outwardly focused.

This begs the question, "How do I know if my puppy is relatively outwardly or inwardly focused when I select him?" Good puppy testing protocols can reveal this, and there are as many different ways to test a working prospect puppy as there are trainers. The purpose of this article is not to go into detail on this particular subject, but suffice it to say, when testing puppies, be sure to test your puppy away from its pack. Many people looking at pups will do rag work and interact with their pups all together in the litter, in familiar settings, and the ones that draw confidence and boldness from their litter mates in the group setting, or from familiar surroundings, will be hard to separate from more independent puppies. Look at pups individually and see how they interact with you vs. their environment in a novel setting. We are looking at where the puppy focuses. Does he want to only explore his new environment? Does he check in with you or the breeder with whom he is familiar in between exploring, or does he stay glued to

people in a new environment? These are some of the things, as well as the breeder's (assuming they are honest and perceptive about their litter) assessment that you should take into account. You want to strike a relative balance between independence and dependence.

The conclusion here is that every puppy and young dog is different. Many novices start with puppies and as such the burden of knowledge needed to avoid critical mistakes is large. Many people think starting with a puppy is easier than a young adult, but with puppies there is much room to make errors from which recovery is difficult at best. You have to do your homework, and know what your puppy is, how best to train it, and that requires the guidance of experienced trainers in most cases. The expert eye will see problems on the horizon where the new working dog handler will be seeing their dog doing such cool perch work for rear-end awareness they will lose the forest for the trees. If something as simple and seemingly harmless as motivational training can create problems for you in your training, it becomes crucial to understand these temperament traits of focus and independence as you embark on your journey with your dog.

Jerry Bradshaw is the Owner of Tarheel Canine Training in Sanford, NC. His experience and progressive training methods have made Tarheel Canine an industry leader in training and service. Jerry is co-founder of the civilian protection sport PSA (www.psak9.org) and the Police K9 Certification organization known as the National Tactical Police Dog Association NTPDA (www.tacticalcanine.com). Jerry is the author of "Controlled Aggression," and the forthcoming book, "Commonsense Pet Training." Jerry and his trainers have appeared on CNN, Good Morning America, and in many regional and National print publications.

iACP

The handcrafted Micro Prong is available again!



3 styles for all sizes
of dogs

Special wholesale pricing
for IACP members

kimberlandcollars.com

425.559.4120 fetch@kimberlandcollars.com

Every Dog is a Living Breathing Project

by Jeff Leavitt, CDT

When we train dogs, we typically do not think of the activity in terms of being a “project.” The term almost has a sterile feel to it, as if we were simply putting an addition onto our home. But we, as professional dog trainers, know that every dog is different, a living creature, and the approach we take can vary based on a number of factors. When we sign the contract to perform training (I will include behavior modification as part of “training”) for a client (aka owner), I suggest that the work we perform is project work, there is a process that guides us, and we may improve what we do by implementing even a few of the concepts I will describe. Let’s break it down a little more.

What is a project? According to the Project Management Institute’s (PMI) Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), a project is: “a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.” There are three key components to the definition. First, a project is a “temporary endeavor.” The work we perform in training a dog can be relatively short, as in a few basic obedience commands with several private lessons. The work can also stretch over many months, such as in training a service dog. However, there is a starting point and an end point to the training we do, so it is a “temporary endeavor.” Second, we “create” something “unique.” The act of sitting for one dog is no different than the act of sitting for another dog, but each dog we train has its own personality, quirks, and environment in which it lives. One dog may perform a sit in the presence of deer without any difficulties, while another cannot keep his rear on the ground because he’s ready for the chase. The way we develop the training plan, or “project plan,” will be different for different dogs. Similarly and third, we most often produce a “result.” The IACP has adopted standards for training, which we could use to gauge our results in training dogs. For instance, the basic sit command for dogs

older than 16 weeks requires (1) that the dog will sit from a stand or down, using a single command or signal, and (2) the dog is successful on 4 out of 5 attempts. This would be a measurable “result,” which is part of the definition of a project. This type of standard can in part, be used to determine the success of our “project.”

Every dog is a living, breathing project, but it does not end there. A project has a life cycle, and this life cycle goes through phases. The basic phases of a project are (1) Concept, (2) Planning, (3) Execution, and (4) Close-Out. Without exception, I find myself working through each of these phases for the dogs I train. When I am hired, the project will go through all four phases. If I am not hired, I will have gone through concept and planning, or just concept. The phases of our projects could include these characteristics:

Concept: Marketing/Advertising, Prospect Contact, Evaluation/Discussion of Training Options

Planning: Training Selection, Training Plan Development, Contract, Payment to Start Work (partial or full)

Execution: Work Performance, Monitoring Progress, Modifications to the Training Plan, Modifications to the Training Methodology, Owner/Stakeholder Feedback

Close-Out: Knowledge Transfer to Owner, Final Payment (if partial payment was made to start work), Client Feedback

Along with the life cycle phases of a project, there is also a process for getting the project from start to finish. The following is an eight-step project management process that was codified by Philip C. Nunn, my co-author of a 1994 book¹ that dealt with the synergies of quality and project management. Each step may not have the same duration (some may be very short or overlap) or

depth as another, but skipping any could slow or bring the project to a screeching halt. The steps of the process are described below.

Step 1 – Project Definition: *This step tells us what the project is about and provides the foundation for making it a success. It will include a project description, the current situation, the future state, the strategy, objectives, and assumptions.*

Step 2 – Appoint the Planning Team: *We want input from people who will be involved in the project. Typically it is simply the trainer and the owner. However, there may be others needed to make the project successful. For instance, a client dog was highly excitable/unruly at the groomer and would bark the entire time there (45 minutes or more). Improving this behavior was one of the objectives, and the groomer had to be involved in planning the “how” and “when” at their location.*

Step 3 – The Work Breakdown Structure: *Also known as the “WBS,” it is basically a task list of everything that needs to be done to complete the*

project. In some cases it is fairly straightforward, but sometimes it includes tasks that are outside of the regular dog training tasks. For instance, I would need to include a task to write a protocol for handling an aggressive dog if I did not have one already, and part of the project definition included behavior modification for an aggressive dog.

Step 4 – Estimate Task Durations, Resources, and Costs: *For each task identified in the WBS there will be an associated duration, resource, and cost. As an example, a new client dog will be learning the place command, which is a common task in many a dog training WBS. I already have a couple of elevated dog beds, but there is a problem. The new dog is too large for the beds that I have, so I have to purchase another bed. The task duration may be impacted (time to locate a supplier and place order, availability of the bed, time to deliver), I have to include another resource (the supplier of the bed), and this is an additional cost for the project.*

Any trainer, from basic obedience to hunting and agility, will tell you that consistency is the key to a well-trained dog. Training your dog does not stop when the dog is “finished” with professional training. Consistency is essential for a dog to retain the commands he has learned. Platform dog training helps keep that consistency in training. The KLIMB™ is the first professionally-made dog training platform available for professional dog handlers and everyday dog owners, making it far easier to continue training and keep the dog's focus.

<http://www.blue-9.com/>



DogWatch® 
HIDDEN FENCES
Smart products for today's pets.™

Unleashing dogs for
25
YEARS
1990 - 2015

The only premium pet containment system rated a Consumers Digest Best Buy.

 Keeping dogs happy and safe since 1990

www.dogwatch.com

The Best Buy Seal and other licensed materials are registered certification marks and trademarks of Consumers Digest Communications, LLC, used under license.

Step 5 – Calculate the Schedule: We sequence all of the tasks necessary to complete the project. Some tasks must be completed before others. Some tasks can be performed at the same time as others. This is not so much of a problem with our type of projects, but watch for resource conflicts. One resource cannot be in two places at the same time.

Step 6 – Start the Project: This is the green light to proceed. Contract (including the training plan/project definition)... check. Vet records... check. Payment... check. The first task in the schedule can now start.

Step 7 – Track Progress and Identify Problems: This is where the training plan is executed. There are a certain number of tasks that need to be completed within specified time frame. Are you on schedule? Is there something that is impeding the progress of the project? If so, how will it be resolved? Is the rate of learning for the dog, or inversely, the effectiveness of the trainer in teaching the dog, taking longer than expected?

What do we need to change? In some cases, communicating delays or problems to the owner is critical.

Step 8 – Transition to Use: We hand-off the newly trained dog to the owner, and provide training to the owner on how to maintain what the dog has learned. We demonstrate, observe, critique, provide written instructions, and possibly homework. Was the owner satisfied? Dissatisfied? Thrilled? If full payment has not been previously made, the balance is paid in Step 8.

So, why is all of this important to how we approach our living, breathing projects? Simply put, the better organized we are as professional dog trainers, the better we are able to improve the lives of our clients and their dogs.

1 Jeffrey S. Leavitt, Philip C. Nunn, 1994, Total Quality Through Project Management, McGraw-Hill

Jeff Leavitt is the owner of Blue Bridge Dog Training in Hixson, TN. He can be reached at jeff@bluebridgedogtraining.com.

iacp



K9 Lifeline, LLC
801-272-1159

K9lifelineinfo@gmail.com
www.k9lifeline.net

K9 Lifeline's Transitional Leash is the most innovative and gentle dual purpose, no pull, training leash on the market. From head halter to slip lead, transition from a pulling dog to a calm companion. See our website for sizes and colors.



Shadow Program Information

Working with dogs and their owners can be a very rewarding career. Heather Beck is focused on teaching how to work with dogs with behavioral issues. You will watch Heather throughout her daily activities, including consultations with clients and their dogs, working with dogs at K9 Lifeline for Board and Train, and working with their own pack of dogs. You will also spend a lot of hands on time with dogs learning how to work with problem dogs in a safe, but effective manner.

The Peace of the Woods

by Derek Bryson

There is an unrivalled tranquillity of being in the woods with a group of dogs. I consider myself very privileged to be part of this with my own, and clients', dogs. My purpose on these walks is to fulfill the dogs needs safely. Our general day will be in woodland areas, off lead, embracing the nature of our environment and time together.

I was asked to discuss the freedom I give to dogs on my walks. The off lead reliability we achieve comes from on-lead choice. A lead can always be used as a restriction but I will use it to communicate to the dog and aim for loose lead walking. I am a slip lead man and have my entire group walking on them, from the small Bichon Frise to the large Siberian Husky. Both dogs know to walk and find comfort on a loose lead, tension at any point is removed when the dog restores position. If this is consistent the dog can make an easy choice on where to be. Any dog must accomplish loose lead walking under distraction if I expect them to choose appropriately off lead.

As most of these dogs are clients' dogs, I insist on having the dogs on a consistent basis to establish a bond with the dog and form a trusting relationship. I focus on working the dogs as a social group from sharing crates and scavenging for hidden food to group resting and play. I think all of these aspects help strengthen the social drive within each dog. The activities will be initiated by me within the group to keep a clear structure.

Our walk starts with the etiquette of leaving the van. It is essential that any dog is capable of thinking and decision making, outside of stress, to fairly be held accountable for its action. Our walk starts with all the dogs calm and attentive to move forward out of the crate, then individual roll call will start. Any new dogs will be worked individually first and on their first day with the group we will wait until they are calm.

It may be surprising for some people to learn that the vast majority of our walk will be at a fairly loose heel. If we come across any traffic such as horse riders, cyclists or dog walkers, I move off the path and instruct the dogs to stay. Once the distraction has passed, we will go on our way exploring.

My objective is never about distance or destination--it is really about the experience. One activity I mentioned earlier was scavenging for hidden food. This

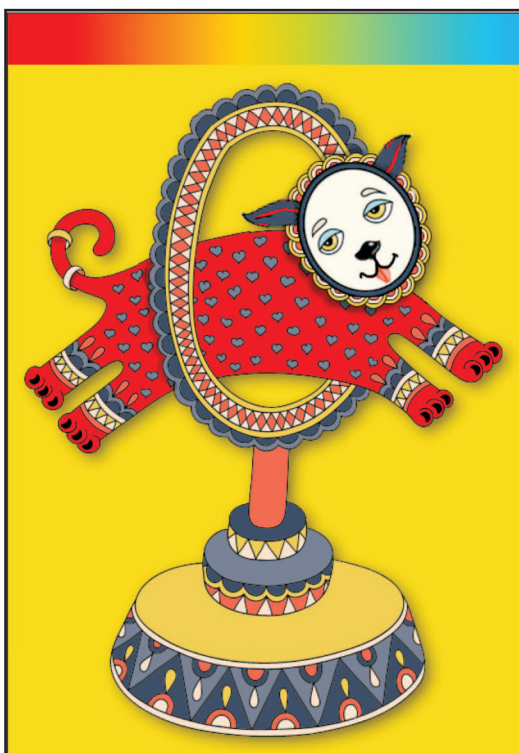
will involve us going to an area where I will again ask for stay whilst I throw and hide kibble in the area. I will then return to the group before releasing them to find it. Occasionally I will vary this from a group release straight away, roll call them individually first before giving the release, or heeling away from the area to then turn and release. I find the variety is the key in order to challenge the dog mentally. I believe the aspect of social eating strengthens the group bond. Using their nose to forage whilst navigating the environment, including climbing, digging, jumping, and holding balance is a very nice experience for the dogs. They remain content yet purposeful at the same time.

We will move on and sometime later find an area or stretch of the walk to enjoy a run and some play. I will give the dogs a release command to run, and what happens next will vary. Occasionally I may recall the group to send them on again, hide behind a rock or tree, play with a dog or the group, continue walking, or wait in the area and enjoy the dogs' interactions. After some variation and duration of this, I will then have some rest time with dogs. Our rest time will be within the same environment the dogs have been highly excited in, but now they are also learning another way to behave. I believe this helps an arousal level transition where the dogs are able to fluently move between excitement and calm. (Practice this daily and it is very easy for your dog to switch levels, almost seamlessly in time.) The group resting time is another special experience when you can see the dogs completely relax and even sleep. The dog's choice of action here speaks to me about their contentment as an individual and within the group. The satisfaction of seeing a variety of dogs finding peace and comfort in these moments is something that will forever be with me.

Having a variety of working dogs in the group, I prioritize a mental workout within a social group. I firmly believe, with dogs and people that are socially motivated, who you are with and what you are doing holds more value than where you are.

Derek lives in Bonnybridge, Scotland with his wife and 4 dogs running his business, Paws for Walkies. Currently he helps his clients and their dogs with off-lead dog adventure walks as well as private and group training.

iACP



Unexpected Dog Training

TRAINING OUTSIDE THE BONE

FOR OUR CLIENTS

BUSINESS-BUILDING & SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

FOR OUR PEERS

Come Visit Our Booth at This Year's **IACP** Conference



DAIRYDELL, INC.

Northern California's Fastest Growing Dog Training Center
& Proud Sponsor and Member of IACP



IACP Members & Clients!
Save this month with ONE of these offers:
20% Off Promo Code IACPCRATE
or **FREE Shipping** Promo Code IACPFREE

Now to February 28th, 2017



Made in the USA

impactdogcrates.com

208-687-4400

IMPACT
ImpactDogCrates.com

DogWatch®



TRAINING PRODUCTS

Smart products for today's pets.™



the Bark Collar™
NO-BARK TRAINER

the Big Leash®
REMOTE TRAINER

the SideWalker®
LEASH TRAINER

www.DogwatchTrainingProducts.com

Get Ready to ACT

by Kim Greco

In the last issue, I promised you a system of training you can use to help your clients with positive reinforcement. I call my system ACT.

ACT™ : A proven, systematic, easy approach to dog training that anyone can follow.

I'm training a sulphur-crested cockatoo named Annie to climb up a rope ladder. When she gets to the first rung of the ladder, I click and give her a tiny piece of a peanut. I ask her to do it again, hoping to have her climb to the second rung before I click this time. She climbed to the first rung again and turned her head to look at me. I waited, patiently willing her to keep climbing. I heard a familiar sound and started laughing, realizing that Annie had just imitated the sound of the clicker and was waiting expectantly for me to give her another peanut! Clever girl.

Most trainers have heard about clicker training and they either love it or hate it. I think it's important for trainers to learn and teach because it makes it simple to use positive reinforcement effectively. As you may have read in the article published in a previous Journal, "Maximizing Your Use of Positive Reinforcement," the biggest mistake trainers and clients make when trying to use positive reinforcement is inadvertently reinforcing undesired behavior. With clicker training, it's easier to have inexperienced dog trainers and owners hold themselves accountable for reinforcing only desired behaviors, which results in higher rate of success training dogs.

Dog trainers started to use clickers because they were copying dolphin trainers. I trained dolphins and other marine mammals for 10 years and am an expert when it comes to teaching people how to use a clicker. If you have ever seen a dolphin show, you may have noticed we use a whistle to communicate to the dolphin when they do something correctly. In much the same

way, you can use a clicker to communicate to a dog precisely and accurately any time he does something right.

Some people think they can just say, "good boy" and it will communicate the same message as a clicker. Using a clicker is the most effective way to train a dog. You've probably told a dog he's a "good boy" a hundred times today, but how many of those times has he gotten a treat? The ratio of "good boy" to treat is too low for "good boy" to be an effective tool in communicating critical information to a dog. When your dog hears a click, 100% of the time he will get a treat, and he knows it. It makes it easy to communicate clearly.

Sometimes clients are concerned they'll always have to carry a clicker around. A clicker is only used while you're training a dog something new. Once he knows the behavior, you can slowly phase out the clicker. If you're training a dog not to jump on people, you'll need to carry a clicker with you whenever a dog will be near people. When he no longer jumps, you won't need your clicker. Just remember where you put it because when you decide that you want to train him something new, you'll want it again!

You may notice at the beginning your dog is much more likely to do exhibit the correct behavior when you're holding the clicker because the treats are near also. That's good news! He's catching on to the system. You just need to repeat it enough times so he knows what your expectations are and you begin to establish a history of strong reinforcement. That's when he'll start to exhibit the desired behavior whether you have food or not. You can also start to keep the clicker and the treats out of sight when your dog understands the behavior you are asking for. This will result in a dog being on a variable reinforcement schedule. It sounds complicated, but sometimes you'll give a dog a treat and sometimes you won't. When you

keep him guessing about the reinforcement, he's more likely to work harder.

To begin clicker training a dog, you simply click and give a treat. It follows the same concept in which Pavlov conditioned dogs with a bell followed by food. His dogs started salivating after the bell before they saw the food because the dog had made an association between the bell and the food. That's what you want. You'll need to "charge your clicker," which means you need to teach the dog when he hears the click, he knows he'll get a treat. It generally takes about 20 repetitions of "click = treat" before a dog makes the association.

Here is the most important part for you to remember:

The moment you click it's as if you've taken a photograph of the dog and whatever he's doing at that exact moment. Then treating the dog is like you've handed the photograph to the dog, which communicates, "I love it when you do this." This is the very reason why teaching someone to train using a clicker helps to avoid the most common mistake of inadvertently reinforcing undesirable behavior. Without the clicker, people tend to reinforce their dog the exact moment their dog is doing something wrong! Clicker training helps owners more clearly understand when to reinforce their dog the exact moment he exhibits the desirable behavior. The difference is critical.

Timing matters when you click. You have to click when a dog is exhibiting the desired behavior. After the "click" you have anywhere from 2-30 seconds to get your dog a treat. The timing is more critical for the "click" than how long after you treat the dog. Technically speaking, any time you use positive reinforcement, you are increasing the probability that a dog will repeat the desired action again.

I have developed and taught a simple way of communicating to owners the easiest way to use positive reinforcement when training. The concept of **ACT™** is an acronym to help make this simple:



The **ACTION** is the behavior you'd like the dog to exhibit consistently.

CAPTURE is to literally "mark" the moment in time your dog is exhibiting the specific **ACTION**. This is the aforementioned "photograph" of the behavior.

The last step is **TELL**, which is when you provide feedback to the dog you were satisfied with the behavior or **ACTION**.

Let's go through a few examples...

I want a dog to sit.

Action - Puppy Sits.

Capture - Click as soon as he sits.

Tell - Give him a treat.

When you give the puppy something he likes (a treat), he will be more likely to sit again.



Pet Cots

- lightweight, easy to clean, doesn't require hardware or tools to assemble.
- mix and match between 8 different fabric colors and 12 leg colors. Fabric is textylene, metal rails are durable powder coated.

Great for place-board training!

Contact us for free swatch and leg color chips.

Toll Free 800-224-8268
4Legs4Pets@Mahar.net
4legs4pets.net

AVAILABLE IN THESE SIZES
22" x 22", 22" x 40"
30" x 30" & 40" x 40"

Customize your colors!

I want a dog to lie down.

Action - Dog lies down.

Capture – Click when he lies down.

Tell - Give him a treat.

Your dog will be more likely to lie down, because he was reinforced.

This process doesn't happen instantaneously. It takes some time for a dog to figure out what's being reinforced. It will work.

There are some common mistakes people make when they are using a clicker, but when you apply ACT™ it's easy to see the mistakes. For example, a dog is outside and won't come. You click, and he comes running. You think because your dog came you were successful in training recall. If you plug in the steps to ACT™ your mistake will be evident.

Action - Dog ignores you.

Capture – Click to get him to come.

Tell - Give him a treat.

The dog will be more likely to ignore you, since that's what you reinforced.

Please be careful that the moment you click the dog is doing something that you want more of.

I'd like to leave you with one final thought. The system of ACT™ works very well for helping people maximize their use of positive reinforcement. The exact same system works for maximizing the use of punishment, as well. I describe it as the mirror opposite of clicker training. If a dog is doing something you don't like (**ACTION**), you can use a "marker" like the word "no" to **CAPTURE** what he's doing wrong. When you pair that with something your dog doesn't like, you can **TELL** him you like him to exhibit the **ACTION** less in the future.

I'm a big fan of setting up our clients and their dogs for success. My system of the ACT™ approach helps dog owners stay on track. If you can avoid making the most common mistakes when you're training, you'll see quicker results and happier dogs.

Kim Greco, owner of Paws and Possibilities, is a dog trainer for people who want to be proud of their dog, not embarrassed by him. While in high school, Kim was ranked 3rd in the country with her horse, Harbor Bay, who has been mentioned in The Practical Horseman magazine as one of the best hunters to ever step foot in the show ring.

After graduating from the University of Vermont with a B.S. degree in Biology and a concentration in Psychology, Kim began her professional career as a dolphin trainer. Over a 10-year span, Kim worked with dolphins, sea lions, seals, penguins, and exotic birds. Spending most of her career at the National Aquarium in Baltimore as a Senior Trainer, Kim helped teach new trainers and interns how to train dolphins.

In addition to working well with animals, Kim has a natural gift to relate well with people and has the ability to simplify complex ideas and present them in ways that enable people of all skill levels to understand and retain them. These qualities have lead to a successful career working with dog owners and coaching other professional dog trainers to enhance their skills.

iACP



www.pawmarkWS.com

- Herm Sprenger Training Collars
- Martingale Chain Collars
- Martingale Fabric Collars
- Cruz Control™ - Assertive Dog Collar
- Easy Walk® Harness
- Gentle Leader® Headcollar
- Halt/Halti® Headcollar
- Latigo Leather Braided Leashes
- Latigo Leather Collars
- Pull Tabs and Long Lines and more

**Call or visit us online at
www.pawmarkWS.com
877-275-3332**

Negative Reinforcement and the Curse of Sisyphus

by Tyler Muto, CDTA/PDTI

Sisyphus was the King of Ephyra, and he had a reputation for defying the Gods and being a bit of a trickster. One of his best known exploits came at the end of his life when Hades, the God of the Underworld, came to claim him, bringing along a pair of handcuffs. Sisyphus, in all his cunning and mischief, managed to persuade Hades to demonstrate the handcuffs on himself. Sisyphus further took advantage of this turn of events by locking the handcuffed Hades in his closet.

Eventually Sisyphus' shenanigans caught up with him and he was brought to the underworld to receive his eternal punishment. For all his transgressions, he was condemned to an eternity of rolling a massive boulder up a hill. What made this especially torturous was not that the hill was infinitely tall; in fact by exerting all his strength Sisyphus was able to reach the top. However, the moment he reached the peak and was ready to rest and rejoice in his accomplishments, the darn boulder rolled right back down to the bottom. Sisyphus, tired and frustrated, had to start the process all over again. And on it went for eternity.

Now, for lack of a clever segue, I'm going to abruptly shift gears. But don't let the tale of King Sisyphus slip too far from your mind.

Negative reinforcement is one of the most widely used and versatile aspects of how animals learn. Technically speaking, negative reinforcement refers to the elimination of a stimulus (generally unpleasant), for the purposes of encouraging or strengthening of behavior. In dog training, negative reinforcement refers to when the dog learns to turn off (or escape) an unpleasant sensation, and later learns to avoid unpleasant sensation altogether by responding to a specific cue.

Used properly, negative reinforcement can strengthen and solidify your dog's response to known commands, and make that response far more reliable and resistant to extinction. The key, however, is to learn to use negative reinforcement properly. An incorrect understanding of negative reinforcement can make training stressful for the dog. At best, using negative reinforcement incorrectly can simply slow down your training progress and limit the overall reliability of the results.

While there are many mistakes that are commonly made when it comes to the use of negative reinforcement

(which I will refer to as R-), I would like to use the story of King Sisyphus illustrate one of the most common ones: During the initial conditioning, or instructional phases of training, when the dog is learning how their actions can control the stimulus (or pressure), no sooner than the dog completes the task asked of it, then they are instantly released and/or given another command and the dog has to escape the pressure again.

To illustrate by way of example, let's take the early stage of remote collar conditioning where the dog learns to go his bed in response to the stimulation*. The trainer presses the button on the transmitter on a low setting (only a mild tickle or annoyance to the dog), and then guides the dog to his bed. As the dog goes to his bed, the trainer releases the button and the dog is praised and rewarded. Then, after only a brief moment, the dog is released and the exercise is started again (the trainer presses the button, guides the dog etc.).

What we must remember is that it is the cessation of the collar pressure that is reinforcing to the dog. In order to really take advantage of this reinforcement, the dog needs a moment to enjoy his accomplishment and the sense of relief and relaxation that comes with it. In other words, when the dog successfully removes the stimulation, give them a minute to savor it.

When we drill our dogs with a rapid succession of commands during R- training, we are essentially giving our dogs the same fate as Sisyphus. However, training should be a fun and enjoyable experience for the dog. The "curse of Sisyphus" erodes the value of the reinforcement, thus eroding the dog's desire to work with us, causing them undue frustration, and slowing down our progress.

Don't give the dog the curse of Sisyphus.

Moreover, the more motivating the stimulus or pressure is, the more important it is to give the dog this extra bit of time.

After all, if Sisyphus was given a chance to sit down and catch his breath between boulder rolls, perhaps an extended break at lunch for a panini and a glass of wine, and two solid days off on the weekend, maybe his fate wouldn't have been so torturous (heck, it's just a solid days work!).

In addition to potentially causing undue stress during training, we may also be missing out on one of the potential benefits of negative reinforcement training.

For those with just a casual interest in training, you can probably stop here. For those dog nerds like myself, you may want to read on; I'm going to get all sciency for a moment.

As stated earlier, negative reinforcement training ultimately has two components. First, the dog must learn to turn off, or "escape," the pressure when they feel it. Second, they learn to avoid it all together by responding to a predictive cue (i.e. our command). One of the unique and desirable qualities of this later avoidance learning is that once the dog learns how to avoid the pressure, they continue to do so for many repetitions without needing to be exposed to the pressure again. In fact, done properly, this type of learning is one of the most resistant to extinction.

Early researchers postulated that what was maintaining the dog's response in the absence of actual pressure was a classically conditioned fear response when the cue is given. This seems to make sense. The dog hears a command, and responds out of fear of the consequence for not responding. The problem was that the evidence simply did not support this theory. Dogs wear their emotions on their sleeves, and they are terrible liars. What researchers observed was that when dogs were properly conditioned through negative reinforcement and avoidance learning, not only did they respond reliably, but they did so with very happy and relaxed dispositions.

More research and a new theory were needed to explain this phenomenon. Along came the safety signal hypothesis. Several researchers (see M.R Denny, R.G Wiesman/J.S Litner, and D.F Tortora) recognized that after the removal of pressure, the dogs experienced a sense of relief and relaxation. Further, as the dogs learned to successfully avoid pressure, any potential unpleasant emotions faded quickly, but the sense of relief and relaxation remained. Thus it is the pleasant emotions of relief and relaxation which act as reinforcement, and account for the dog's disposition and the continued maintenance of the desired behavior.

In fact, M.R Denny noted that the experience of relief occurs 3-5 seconds after the cessation of pressure, and lasts for 10-15 seconds, whereas relaxation requires approximately 2-5 minutes to produce full benefits**. He also noted that the effects appear to double when the dog experiences both relief and relaxation as opposed to just relief by itself.

In other words, if you give at least 2-15 seconds between reps, the dog experiences some reinforcement, but if you give a full 2-5 minutes, the experience of reinforcement can effectively double.

What this means is that by giving ample time between repetitions during escape/avoidance training, not only are you avoiding giving your dog the curse of eternal damnation (a bit of an exaggeration I know), but you are doubling the pleasurable aspects of the training.

We can take advantage of this extra time. Research has shown that we can condition other signals to be associated with this sense of relaxation. Thus praising and interacting with the dog during this time can increase the value of your praise and help establish your interaction as a source of safety and comfort. The latter is immensely valuable for professional trainers who are regularly working with dogs with whom they are relatively unfamiliar.

Lastly, remember that this principle doesn't only apply to leashes and collars. For instance, in the rehabilitation of dog's with social anxieties we often are working on how to relieve social pressures in appropriate ways. Taking a bit of extra time between exposures can help to amplify your results. The same applies to exposure to other forms of fear, phobia and anxiety as well.

Training with any kind of pressure is a responsibility, not a right. If you are going to do it, every effort should be made to do it well. Avoiding the curse of Sisyphus is just one of the many ways you can ensure you get the most out of your training.

*I recommend training dogs initially with the use of positive reinforcement techniques, and utilizing the electronic or remote collar only to solidify and reinforce the previously established training.

** Denny specifies that relief involves a strong autonomic factor, whereas relaxation striatal muscles and various motoric components.

References:

- Denny M.R. (1976). Post aversive relief and relaxation and their implications for behavior therapy. *J Behav Ther Exp Psychiatry*, 7: 315-321.
- Denny M.R. (1983). Safety catch in behavior therapy: Comments on "safety" training: The elimination of avoidance motivated aggression in dogs. *J Exp Psychol Gen*, 112: 215-217.
- Lindsay S.R. (2000). *The handbook of applied dog behavior and training*. Vol 1, 295-296.
- Tortora D.F. (1983). Safety training: The elimination of avoidance motivated aggression in dogs. *J Exp Psychol Gen*, 112: 176-214.
- Weisman R.G. and Litner J.S. (1969). Positive conditioned reinforcement of Sidman avoidance in rats. *J Comp Physiol Psychol*, 68: 597-603.

iaccp

THINK, PLAY, LEARN

Starmark's treat dispensing toys give dogs challenging and tough outlets to combat boredom and spark mental stimulation.



Everlasting Bento Ball



Treat Dispensing Chew Ball



Treat Dispensing Bob-A-Lot



Treat Dispensing Pickle Pouch



STARMARK®
TRAINING & BEHAVIOR SOLUTIONS

See our full product range and free behavior solutions, guides, and videos online at starmarkacademy.com.



RUNNING UNLEASHED



R.A.P.T. 1400

RAPID ACCESS PRO TRAINER



1,400 YARD (3/4 MILE) RANGE



WATERPROOF/FLOATABLE COLLAR & TRANSMITTER



PATENTED RAPID ACCESS BUTTON FOR "HANDS FREE" USE

