

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

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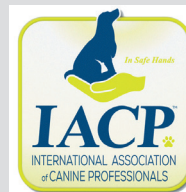
International Association of Canine Professionals

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
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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.

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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.

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IN THIS ISSUE...

President's Letter.....	Tyler Muto	4
How To Stop Fighting Your Clients.....	Marc Goldberg	6
Maximize Your Use of Positive Reinforcement	Kim Greco	9
Call of the Wild	Sarah Dixon	12
Questions for Veteran Trainers, Part 4.....	Edited by Mailey McLaughlin	15
Critical Thinking (editorial).....	Mailey McLaughlin, Editor.....	22

The IACP is proud to announce that Members

Bridgette Ashmore and Jeff Leavitt

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



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President's Letter

by Tyler Muto

As each year comes to a close, we have an opportunity to look back at the previous 12 months with gratitude for the goals we have accomplished and aspiration toward making improvements where needed. This process of self-reflection is not only important for each of us as individuals, but has significance on an institutional level as well.

In the short few months that I have been in the role of President, many of you have made an effort to express areas in which you feel the IACP has room for improvement. One of the most common themes has been the need for better communication from the IACP Board and Administration with you, our membership. I, and the rest of the Board of Directors, have heard you loud and clear and we are making sure that the framework is in place to make this happen.

Additionally, we have been discussing areas in which we can get our membership more involved in some of the decision-making. This is, after all, your organization, and we want to ensure that it feels that way.

With that said, I do have one request. If you have any concerns or suggestions, the most effective and productive way to get your voice heard is to email our home office at admin@canineprofessionals.com. Although social media is an easy place to post a comment, often the original point gets diluted by tangents and side conversation before the board even gets a chance to see it. Thus it is easy for the original goals and intent to be lost. When we are able to hear your voices clearly, we are given guidance on how we can make this great organization even better.

Looking back at this year, I am proud of the accomplishments of those who have volunteered their time and helped shape the future of the IACP. Our volunteer-based committees have continued a level of productivity that is inspiring. I especially want to thank the Service Dog Committee for their diligent work, collaborating with various governmental departments to help steer policy and legislation, as well as putting together educational materials to assist businesses in knowing their rights and expectations regarding service animals.

Our Certification Committee continues to work tirelessly to ensure that the IACP standards are second to none, and to set the bar for professional certification in our field. We are looking forward to the re-release of the foundations exam and certification, which we hope will encourage a new generation of young and aspiring dog trainers to join our ranks.

IACP Regional groups have continued to grow, thanks to the efforts of Board member Nelson Hodges. As of November of this year, we had 24 active groups around the world, consisting of over 1,000 members! If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of starting a group, or are interested in joining one, please email nelson.hodges@canineprofessionals.com.

Those are just a few highlights of some of the excellent work being done by our members. As for me, I am grateful for the assistance I have had transitioning into the role of President mid-term. I couldn't ask for a better Board of Directors to be working with and for. Their support and effort has been invaluable. Our two Vice Presidents, Mailey McLaughlin and Melanie Benware, are always ready to assist, and I can always



count on their sound reasoning and judgment. I would like to especially thank our founder Martin Deeley, who continues to pour his heart into every aspect of this organization. Without his assistance I would likely have lost all my remaining hair over the past 3 months.

Lastly, thank you all for making the IACP what it is today. I am excited and privileged to lead us into the new year.

Respectfully,



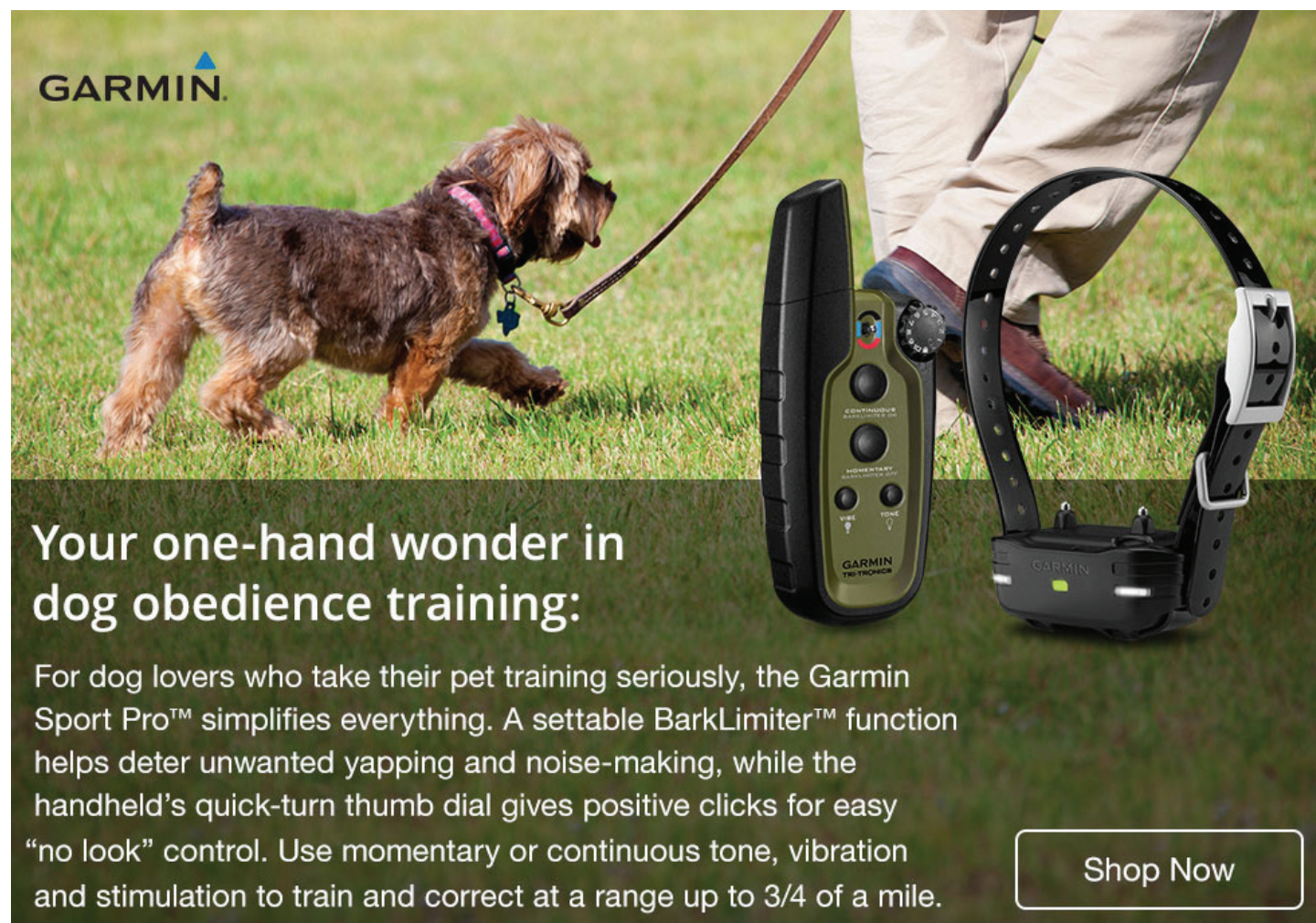
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How to Stop Fighting Your Clients

by Marc Goldberg, CDT

Editor's note: this article ran in an issue of the SafeHands Journal about 5 years ago and is being re-printed with the author's permission.

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 situations as examples.

Binky is a 70-pound 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, or such 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, which 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 had 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.

Here is another case. Clients came 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.

A black and white photograph of a black and white puppy interacting with a Kong Wobblers toy. The puppy is leaning over the toy, which is a dark, rounded, bulbous shape with a hole on top. Several small, dark, irregularly shaped treats are scattered on the floor around the toy. The puppy's head is lowered towards the treats. In the upper left corner of the image, the text "KONG" is written in a large, bold, outlined font, and "WOBLER" is written below it in a similar but slightly smaller font. The entire image is framed by a thick black border.

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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:

- Would you rather quit your job and stay home with the puppy so she doesn't have to poop in the house?
- Would you rather remove the crate as planned and come home to urine and feces all over the kitchen?
- 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 for 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.

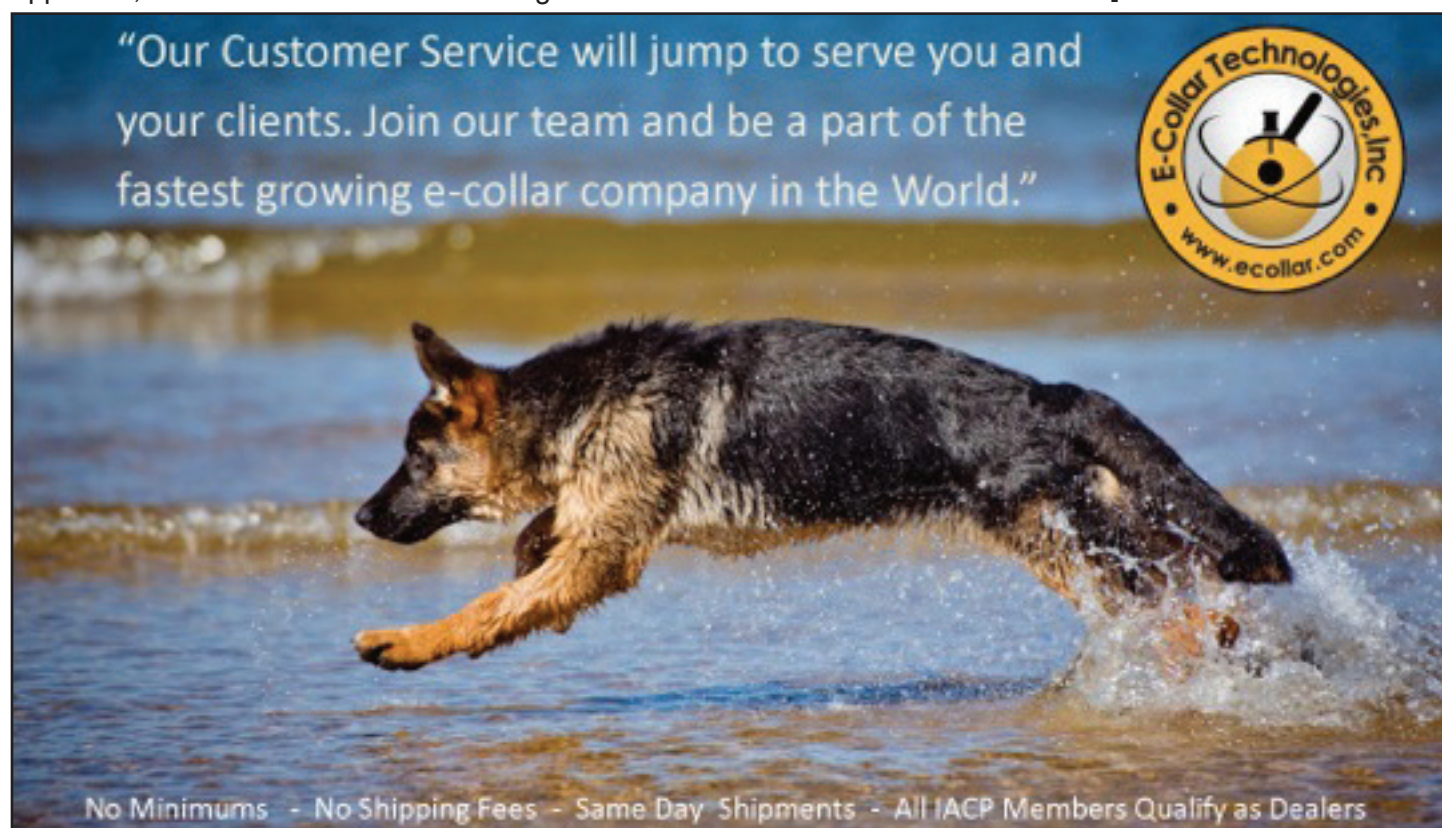
In a couple of months that dog will come in for full training. I'll be able to make her off-leash reliable, which will allow her people to run her and play fetch to productively work off some of her energy.

The two cases I mentioned worked out well for me, for the dogs and for the clients, although it doesn't always end up this way--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, CDTA/PDTI is past 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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How to Maximize Your Use of Positive Reinforcement

by Kim Greco

I'm standing on center deck during the dolphin show with hundreds of people watching. I touch Bashful and Kelly on the tip of their rostrums, their cue to come with me, and dive into the water. With one dolphin pushing each foot, I maneuver underwater to the center of the pool, 24 feet below the surface of the water. I aim towards the top of the water, and in no time I am rocketed straight up about 15 feet high. I see the two dolphins diving back into the water just before I dive; everyone is clapping. The dolphin's behavior was impeccable, as was the case most of the time. What was it that enabled the dolphins to perform their behaviors so well? It was the expertise of the trainers in the use of positive reinforcement.

Here was the thing. Our veterinarians required the dolphins be fed their daily allotment of fish regardless of their behavior. Our curator required the dolphin's behavior exceeded the expectation of our guests. Therefore I had to find a way to balance accomplishing both using only positive reinforcement; which, by the way, is the only tool available in training marine mammals. My only option was to maximize positive reinforcement effectively in the training.

My first IACP conference in 2012 was an interesting overlap of my two worlds. I was surrounded by some of the world's best dog trainers meeting at Sea World, the premiere marine mammal training facility. From the questions that were asked that week, it became evident many dog trainers lacked the same intensive knowledge that I had from 10 years of training marine mammals on how to use positive reinforcement effectively. At first I was surprised, but then stopped to realize, as a balanced dog trainer, there aren't a lot of resources available to learn more about the use of positive reinforcement in a supportive, open-minded environment. My goal as an IACP member is to share with you my specific area of expertise in hopes you and ultimately your clients will benefit. I am going to start at the beginning to help the novice trainers learn the very basics and refresh experienced trainers knowledge base to emphasize the importance of the basics.

The most common mistake people make when training a dog is using positive reinforcement incorrectly. What makes this situation even more challenging is most people don't believe or realize they're doing anything

wrong! Employing the appropriate scientific application of positive reinforcement is quite simple once you understand a few things. When you stick to a straightforward continuum of steps, you'll be way ahead of the game!

Here's the secret ingredient. When a dog is reinforced for a behavior, you increase the probability the dog will repeat the behavior in the future.

It may be easier to understand by looking at it like this:



Now that we've got that straight, let's talk about where the problem rears its ugly head. If I told you that you inadvertently reinforced a dog for an undesired behavior, you may say I'm crazy. Reinforcing a dog at the wrong time and for the wrong reasons is using positive reinforcement incorrectly without even realizing it. I know, I know, many of you are saying to yourself, "No kidding, Kim," and yes, most people tell me they would never do that. However you'd be surprised how often I see this in training sessions and when I shadow other trainers.

Imagine the following scenarios, and see if anything sounds familiar. Once you know what to be on the lookout for, you can begin analyzing your interactions with dogs and determine if you're as effective as possible with your application of positive reinforcement.

Imagine a dog is:

- Annoying you while you're cooking dinner so you give him a bone, and he leaves you alone.
- Barking at another dog so you try to distract him with a toy or a treat.
- Nervous of the thunder so you pet him to let him know it's ok.
- Jumping on guests so you tell him to sit and give him a treat.
- Ignoring you when you are calling him to come so you shake the treat container.

Do any of those examples ring true to you? Have you fallen into this trap? As dog trainers, you may be in the clear with these. If that's the case - good job! But our clients fall into this trap daily.

So let's look at the continuum we discussed.



Unless you really stop to analyze exactly what is happening, you may never notice your actions are reinforcing the behaviors you don't want and ultimately making it worse.

Scenario 1:

A dog is doing something wrong and you give him something he likes so he'll be good. Sometimes the dog behaves so you feel like it worked. I promise, it doesn't work! You accidentally reinforced the dog for an undesired behavior, and he'll actually be more likely to exhibit it again in the future.

Scenario 2:

A dog is exhibiting a desired behavior and you give him reinforcement to communicate the desired behavior. He behaves and it works. He'll be more likely to do it right in the future.

In both scenarios, the dog may display good behavior in the moment, so it appears to work either way. This is why it makes it hard to catch yourself doing it wrong. Only in the second scenario will you have a dog that will be better behaved in the future, which is your goal when it comes to dog training.

There is another common mistake people make when using positive reinforcement. A behavior is inadvertently reinforced because of a lack of clarity in understanding what a dog finds reinforcing. Your intention may be to correct a dog for an undesired behavior, but unless your actions cause a decrease in the likelihood of the dog repeating the behavior, you may end up accidentally reinforcing

the dog. I'm not suggesting standing around giving a dog a treat for jumping or barking (but I have seen that, too!). I'm suggesting you're reinforcing a dog with something other than food when he's acting inappropriately.

First, let's discuss some of the most common things that are reinforcing to a dog so we can put this into perspective. The most reinforcing things to dogs include treats, toys, praise or talking, petting, and eye contact. Of all these, most people fail to recognize the impact of eye contact--simply looking at a dog – as reinforcing. As a dolphin trainer, I taught the importance of eye contact and included eye contact as part of the criteria contingent for reinforcement. In my experience as a dog trainer this is most overlooked. Eye contact is very reinforcing for most dogs. Don't underestimate the importance of it when you're training.

From what I've seen, most dog owners tend to give their dogs 3 out of the 5 things considered reinforcing when they are trying not to reinforce the dog. The most common ways a dog gets reinforced in response to an undesired behavior is through eye contact, talking, and touching.

Here are some examples of inadvertent reinforcement. Imagine a dog is:

- whining and you look at him to see what the problem is. (eye contact)
- barking to get you to play with him and you ask him to stop in a pleasant voice. (praise)
- jumping and you reach down to push him off. (touching)



Can you see how these examples inadvertently reinforce a dog's unwanted behavior? Now go back to the continuum and we can see how a dog is reinforced for an inappropriate behavior. It's critical a dog receive reinforcement for desired actions. Furthermore, it's just as important to avoid accidentally reinforcing a dog for an undesirable behavior. Employing these concepts correctly is the only way to maximize positive reinforcement.

In the next Canine Professional Journal issue, we'll continue this discussion by talking about a specific system of training you can teach your clients to help them maximize their use of positive reinforcement.

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.

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The Call of the Wild

by Sarah Dixon

Bringing Winter Dog Sports to Your Door

The crisp, clean winter air whispers along your face and you are embraced by near silence---the only sounds you hear are the light swish of your sled runners along the snow and the almost uniform breaths and foot falls of your team ahead of you. Far from traffic or the bustle of the city, it's just you and your dogs together in nature. A fork in the trail appears ahead. "Geel!" you proclaim and your lead dogs dutifully swing to the right, bringing the rest of the dogs happily hauling you and your sled along.

While it may seem just a dream for many, mushing is still a popular hobby throughout North America and the rest of the world. Despite lack of snow in some areas making hosting races difficult, there are still a multitude of dog sled racing events for an enthusiast to participate in. However, plenty of people choose to enjoy this sport without the thrill of competition, as the satisfaction of working with the dogs and joy of being in nature together is reward enough.

There are options for a winter-lover to participate in an enjoyable team sport with their canine companions which will range in suitability for the active competitor to the serious kennel owner. Many people are familiar with dog sledding and racing, but aren't aware of more easily attainable winter dog sports options for people lacking the desire or ability to care for a full kennel of sled dogs.

Dog sled racing is generally split into three categories: sprint, which is relatively short distances of 4 to 25 miles; mid-distance, which comprises treks from 100 to 300 miles; and long distance races, which consist of trails from 300 to over 1,000 miles. The Ititarod (1150 miles)

and the Yukon Quest (1,000 miles) are two well known, grueling long distance sled races. These events take days to compete and some serious dedication for the required year-round training.

There are many smaller races to select from, which will usually have a few days of events featuring sprint or mid-distance races. Mid-distance races are either heat races, typically 14 to 80 miles per day over several days, or continuous races of 100 to 200 miles, which can take several days to complete. Sprint races are fast and fun, featuring multiple heats per day with the same dogs on the same course. Sprint racing is typically split into 4, 6, and 10 dog team events with progressively longer courses for the larger teams. Because of the smaller team sizes, sprint racing can be an excellent option for the keen hobbyist who loves to compete but wants to avoid running a full kennel.

If you want to experience the thrill of dog sledding, but aren't too keen on even a 4-dog team, skijoring may be the sport for you. Skijoring is, in essence, dog powered cross-country skiing. It can be done with one or more dogs and costs required to start are minimal. Most of all, it's a wonderful way to exercise and bond with your dog while enjoying the great outdoors at the same time.

Skijor was originally done with horses in Europe, but has since been adapted into a dog sport. Skijoring is growing in popularity and most dog sled races now have skijor classes. While this class can be highly competitive, with fast teams and fast dogs, you will often see many people competing for fun with family pets. You don't need a husky to skijor either; any breed, including Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, Pointers,



and even Golden Retrievers can make excellent skijoring partners.

Skijoring can be relatively easy to train if your dog has a natural inclination to run or pull. Your dog may take some encouragement at first, since we usually discourage pulling, but once they get the hang of it they will fully embrace it. Don't fret over teaching them to pull on lead; dogs can easily learn the different contexts of the different equipment. You can maintain your polite on-lead walks while allowing your dog the delight of working in harness.

You will need a sledding harness, a leash or preferably a bungee line, and a skijor or climbing belt to hook to the skier. Dog sledding harnesses are specially made to maximize comfort and freedom of movement for the dog. My favorite style of harnesses for skijoring are the Shorty harnesses made by Canadog supplies (they also sell a super skijor starter kit). Choice of skis is dependent on your ability, inclination, and trail access: if you want to race, skate equipment is most suitable, but requires groomed trails; if leisurely trolling along trails suits you, classic style equipment will do; or if you would like to go off the beaten path, backcountry skis and boots would be a sensible choice.

If this all sounds a bit too fast paced for you, but you still would like to enjoy the snow with your dog, you could try something I semi-jokingly call snowshoejoring. For this you will need the same equipment as you would for skijor, but swap your skis for snowshoes. You can reap a lot of the benefits of skijor while on snowshoes: exploring nature, fun, teamwork with your pet, as well as exercise for you and your dog, all at a safer, calmer, more manageable pace. Another bonus is groomed trails are not needed – you can go anywhere you wish. With your dog in harness and hooked up to you, they work harder mentally and physically than if they are simply running loose. You have to communicate and work together and your dog will help with forward momentum – particularly useful on the uphill portions of the trails!

There are a few commands that can be helpful to teach if you plan to do a harness-work activity with your dog: directionals and stop/go cues. Most of these can be taught fairly easily while your dog is just on a regular leash walk. Traditional cues for directions are "gee" and "haw." Gee is for right turns, and haw for left turns. A little tip to remember these cues if you're a little dyslexic like me, is to think "Gee, you're right!" to associate gee with right in your mind, and "Ha ha, south paw" to associate haw with left. A simple

way to teach these is to start saying the direction cues just before you turn in the appropriate direction when you're walking your dog. Your dog will start to understand and respond to them surprisingly quickly! To get lots of quick repetitions in, practice in a parking lot which will offer plenty of opportunities for turns. Make sure your dog is in their sledding harness when you are doing any of this training.

The other important cues to teach are for stop and go. Traditional cues are "Hike!" for go and "Whoa!" for stop (that's right, I don't think anyone actually uses the cue "mush"). Like gee and haw, you can start teaching these cues with your dog on the standard leash. Don't forget to have the sledding harness on; it's especially important for this part if you want the dog to understand the context of sledding equipment, meaning he is allowed to pull. To get your dog to start to pull you, get animated and excited – you will likely have to run. As they in turn get excited and move out in front of you say "Hike!" Your dog may be unsure about pulling if it's been discouraged in the past, but usually they get over this quickly with a bit of encouragement.

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Again with repetition, they will associate “hike” with ‘turning on’ and learn to pull and work in response to this cue. In contrast, you want to teach “whoa” to slow down (have your dog on leash in their harness). Once the dog is pulling, say “Whoa” and slow yourself down, applying pressure to the line making it harder for the dog to continue to pull. Praise your dog if they slow down or stop. As with the other steps, repeat as necessary!

Any winter dog sport is a great way to spend time with your canine companion. They are fun, easy, inexpensive, and good for the body, soul and canine-human bond. Whether your dog is big or small, if they love to run and you love to spend time in the great outdoors, you’ll be thrilled with one of these team sports. If you become really keen, you could even try your hand at racing (to my knowledge there are no snowshoejoring racing events--yet). Attending a race is a great way to spend a weekend and is as much fun for the social aspect as it is for the sport aspect. If you’re at all interested, I recommend you give one of these winter sports a try - with a bit of money and patience you could have a favourite new pastime for you and your furry best friend. You don’t have to spend

the cooler months cooped up indoors. Winter has its own special beauty; answer the call of the wild and experience it for yourself. Your dog will thank you for it.

Sarah Dixon, CDBC, KPA-CTP, works as a Dog Trainer and Behavior Specialist for Instinct Dog Behavior & Training LLC in New York City. Sarah has trained animals her entire life and has experience working with dogs, cats, horses, parrots and various small animals. She is dedicated to continuing education and has completed multiple courses in dog training and animal behavior. Sarah is particularly interested in helping puppies, newly adopted dogs, and dogs that have behavioral issues.

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Questions for Veteran Trainers, Part 4

Editor's note: I asked IACP members who had only been training for a few years what questions they'd like to ask "veteran" trainers (those with two decades or more "in the trenches" dog training experience). Then I found some "old-timers" who were graciously willing to take the time to answer those questions. The following are their answers. Read more about these knowledgeable folk starting on page 20 This is the last of a multi-part series; I hope you enjoy it.

Could you share the "why" and "how" of a useful exercise you do that is sort of your "go-to" for most dogs?

Cockrell: I do the Koehler-based long line work on every single dog regardless of what the end goal, or training issue, may be. The why is simple. It gets a dog to be attentive, and teaches them to follow a leader.

Deeley: The most useful exercise, apart from familiarization and acceptance of the leash, which I consider essential, is the Down command. Down teaches them confidence in their own space, patience, ability to 'switch off,' ability to be in an alternative acceptable behavior to replace an unacceptable one, a watch and wait until required to move, and the list goes on. I believe Down is very much a submissive action in the dogs mind and therefore many dogs will refuse, even fight the guidance to go down. Tasty treats are ignored even though responded to with other commands. Therefore, patience and the ability to follow through without creating a difficult situation is important. I have stood with my foot on a leash for up to 30 minutes applying downward pressure before a dog will go down. Sometimes I find a specific place or object such as a place board gets them going down more easily. Certainly a slippery floor can help.

Down should mean stay in a down position until I release you. I find more resistance to this command than any other, whether luring with food to begin with or using hands and leash to guide. Some dogs resist this strongly and even those that have been food trained will often refuse to do it without food. So correctly applied 'pressure' in the training and follow through becomes essential and knowing how to proceed at each stage to have a dog that will not only go down but stay in a down and relax even if you are out of sight.

I also spend time with the dog in a down command at my side while I read, have a coffee and generally relax. This is what owners want - a dog that will relax and behave calmly as part of the family in the home.

Douan: I start all board and trains with long line work. This exercise builds rapport, orders the relationship, inspires attention, fixes "reactivity" and gradually shapes off-lead heelwork. Equipment is a chain slip collar and a 15 foot long leash. The exercise is conducted in a large open area with no obstructions. I leash the dog up and ignore him while I walk a square pattern that has 100 feet on each side. At each corner, I pause for a few seconds, then turn right and walk down the next side of the square. While there may be any number of things happening at the other end of the leash, the dog has the opportunity to figure out that is more pleasant to walk near me than farther away from me, and that by keeping his eye on me, he can avoid being caught at the end of that leash. I will do 10 minute sessions of this exercise two to three times a day for anywhere from 3-5 of the first days I have the dog. When the dog becomes keen to the exercise and follows along with me, I switch from the square pattern to walking straight lines and doing right about turns when the dog trots ahead past my feet. After 3 to 5 sessions of this, I begin to walk toward open gates, fences containing other dogs, or other stationary things that might distract the dog. I use about turns in the same way...when the dog forges ahead of me. I do this until the dog is turning with me in front of any distraction I walk toward. Then I begin to take up the lead until I can switch to a 6 foot lead.

I tried, for at least 10 years, to teach reliable heeling without using corrections, in a reasonably billable amount of time, and in such a way that the owner could easily take over control of the dog at the same performance standard I had. I can teach really nice heelwork without using compulsion and I've done it. It takes me no less than a year. Everything else I install in a board and train can be done quickly and easily with food, but not the heeling. So I stay with what I've found to be tried and true. Heeling is the bedrock of good solid training. It teaches the dog attention, teamwork, trust in the handler, and responsibility. Show me a dog who does not understand how to follow his handler and that will be the dog who has any number of other behavioral and training issues. Fix the heeling and you are more than halfway there.

Haggerty: There are so many. The more you teach the dog, the better they will be. They will be balanced, happier, more relaxed. All dogs need a working knowledge of all of the basic skills.

Kaim: It's not that I teach one command in deference to others, I teach the 6 basic obedience commands, and a few other commands to make it easier for owners to control their dogs' behavior under any circumstance. EVERY command has value, and EVERY command can be used to predict or control behavior. ANY obedience command can be used as

an alternative behavior to the behavior an owner is trying to change or extinguish altogether.

One of my favorite commands is the “stand” command. So many people disregard this command as worthless or explicitly for showing or whatever. It is probably one of the most difficult commands to teach, but its benefits are dramatic. The stand command really forces the dog to control its emotional state in a way that the other stationary commands do not. It is the one command where the dog is deliberately poised for flight and then remanded to not move. It is emotionally a difficult command for a shy dog to overcome, or the bold dog to accommodate. It is the one physical behavior the dog is most readily disobedient in, because instinctively, it is not their nature to remain motionless in a stand position. In a stand, the dog is poised to flee or advance. You really fight instinct by teaching a dog to remain motionless in the stand position. It builds character in dogs with weak temperaments, and it creates tolerance in dogs with stronger constitutions. It is probably my favorite command besides the trained retrieve.

Mazzeri: Aside from the basic obedience exercises, I like to teach dogs to wait for permission to exit (doors, gates, cars etc.). This is a yielding exercise with important safety implications. Often a dog bolts/slips out when owners aren't even thinking about the dog (kids holding a door open to talk to their friends, UPS person handing off a delivery, etc.). My goal for this exercise is to build an 'environmental cue' that the dog can internalize. I ultimately want to condition a non-verbal cue.

1. a-Dog on leash in house, taken to closed door (it is easier if dog is sitting in the beginning) then asked to “Wait” with a little leash pressure restraint as the door is opened 3-4 inches and reclosed. The dog should be positioned 2-3 ft. away from the door. Restrain/reposition dog if it moves forward. Open and close door several times while dog is waiting. b-When dog stops attempting forward motion, repeat first step, still on leash, but without tension in the leash, as door is opened. Mark “yes” if dog holds position and looks at handler, close door and reward (with calm praise, petting, or treat) release/repeat. If dog moves forward, close the door or physically block forward motion, using leash if needed to reposition the dog. Dog isn't allowed to go thru door unless it: 1) holds position 2) “ask permission” by looking at handler (mark w/“yes”) and 3) handler gives VERBAL consent to go thru threshold. (I don't care who goes first as long as dog has waited as the door is opened, checked in visually, and waits for verbal ‘authorization’ from handler).

2.a-When dog masters both parts of step one for several days, add a negative consequence for not waiting for command criteria. If dog moves without meeting the criteria, the consequence depends a lot on the door set up and the dog itself. If there are 2 doors (regular door and storm door) I like to have the inner door opened out of the way and the storm door shut. Give the wait command, open the storm door slightly and if the dog moves forward –let it, and close the door quickly right as it gets to the opening. (You must

avoid catching the dog's feet in the threshold but bumping it in the nose with the door creates an environmental aversive correction.) This needs to be timed and suited to the temperament of each dog. It may not be appropriate for a very timid or tiny dog. They can just be leash corrected (a little more abruptly/emphatically) back to their wait location. If you only have a door that opens in, you'll have to time the closing of the door so that it closes just ahead of the dog. You don't want to catch the nose in the side jamb.

Do not try the environmental door correction if you have a heavy glass patio type slider. It isn't safe with a slider! Use a leash correction. Another correction for a serious bolter might be a long line tethered to something really sturdy/immovable and let the dog bolt. Retrieve dog wordlessly/repeat. Keeping a bolter on a dragline/house leash after such a correction will tend to remind it that it might be tethered. Calmly praise/reward all correct responses.

3. After several days, when the dog respects the door space and understands the pattern, review once or twice as you put your hand to the door handle, praise or correct as appropriate, then immediately set the dog up by approaching the door (still on leash) and say nothing. Your Non-Verbal Cue to wait will be your Holding the door knob or handle. Be sure that your dog sees you do this. Exaggerate a bit if needed to draw its attention. Corrections remain the same as for step two. When the dog correctly does the waiting and looking part of the pattern, sometimes it gets to go out with the han-

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dler and sometimes not. Whether it does or not is up to the handler, not the dog.

4. Add distractions outside of the door once the dog understands and internalizes the 'waiting' concept. Dog is still on leash.

When the dog responds correctly and consistently, practice with the dog on a dragging house leash and then gradually eliminate the line when the dog resists all temptations to pass through the threshold without permission.

McBee: There are very few dogs that I don't do at least one lesson of long line work. I use long line work to help a dog learn how to pay attention to me, come when called and sit when they get there. I don't need them to heel or even be right beside me. I just want them to know where I am and stay in my vicinity. I use a 15' long line, generally. We use a fairly large field or parking lot type area. I attach the long line to the dog's slip or martingale collar and I hold the other end. I talk to the dog a bit to get some attention, then I say "Let's go!" and I start walking. I usually walk down the middle of the field to give myself some leeway. I walk with purpose and intent. I keep an eye on the dog without staring. If the dog starts to meander off to the side away from me, I change directions. At first I cluck to the dog to let them know I changed and say "Let's go!" again. I want them to succeed. If they don't listen, I just keep walking at the same pace, but I prepare myself that the dog will soon hit the end of the line. Just before they will hit it, I say "Let's go!" again. If they don't change directions, they will hit the end of the line with whatever velocity they have going. I say "Let's go!" again. They've just corrected themselves. I continue this exercise up and down the field, but randomly I interrupt the progress to stop and call the dog to me. When the dog arrives, I ask the dog to sit (I will have already taught this prior to this exercise). When the dog sits I praise and/or give a very small treat. After a second or two, I say "Let's go!" and we take off again. I may also, during this exercise, call the dog to me and simply great them with "good dog!" and say "Let's go!" again without asking the dog to sit or giving a treat. This exercise helps the handler become the center of attention for the dog.

Lest anyone think that I think I invented this - I most definitely did not!

Wilson: Head turns, to carefully and consciously teach the dog how to turn away from distraction and back to you on a light touch of the leash. I use this skill to teach behaviors (leave it, come, loose leash walking) and to resolve problems (pulling, lunging, bolting out doors) and to strengthen the bond (because of congruence and oxytocin, both of which are longer discussions). The basics are simple to teach to both people and dogs and it makes a critical, foundation skill easy to practice. It is one of my four foundations that I teach every team.

How often do you make mistakes? How do you handle them?

Cockrell: I probably make mistakes every single day. Experience has taught me to be aware of them quickly and adjust even more quickly. Dogs will forgive and forget the mistakes faster than us humans do as long as we get back to being clear and fair in a timely fashion.

Deeley: Like everyone, I make mistakes. How often? What a difficult question. I could not tell you. Sometimes you do not realize it is a mistake until a behavior manifests itself in the dog or the owner that you do not want. It is then you realize you have not approached the problem in the right way. On other occasions you know you have made a mistake because the dog is not reacting the way you want it to. When this happens, the most important thing I have found to minimize any consequences is not to bring it to the attention of the dog. They remember it more when you make an issue of the mistake. Training is making gradual steps towards the ultimate behavior you seek. Small steps means small mistakes and if you do not make an issue of the mistake then it has little consequence and does not stick in the mind of the dog. I find it difficult to understand what is meant here by a 'mistake'. In dog training we sometimes have to be creative and try adaptations and new approaches to achieve what we want. Some work and some don't. If they work they were not a mistake. If they don't again they are not a mistake, they are part of the learning process. We learn from actions and approaches not working. It is essential that when it does not work, we do not fall into the trap of trying to make it work by applying pressure or even increased pressure and creating a 'memorable' moment for the dog where he will learn an incorrect behavior and which you then find difficult to remove.

It is better to look at all of this as "Is what we are doing working? Is it achieving the behavior we seek? Or moving us forward to the behavior we seek?" If we try an approach that



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works, that is good and we put that in our 'toolbox' for this dog. If it does not work or does not bring about a movement towards the ultimate behavior we seek, then it was not a mistake--it just did not work and so we look for alternatives. That is why being versatile is essential. With versatility and an understanding of what can be applied from a wide range of tools and approaches we also gain patience because we know in the end we will find the 'key' to helping each dog. We just have to go through approaches until we find the 'password.'

Douan: Mistakes? That's a fairly broad question. After 26 years training dogs and people, I believe I have that figured out. Ten years now of running a large facility with a sizeable staff, and I think I've got the better part of the kinks worked out. My mistakes now are generally "first world." Hot wings and fries are always a mistake. I can still make the mistake of entering too many dogs in too many turns at a competitive event. I have trouble getting a grip on that one, but I always pay for it the following week. Running out of rum is a terrible mistake.

I am very likely to train wreck most Master Challenge Courses (agility). I am also apt to make a righteous soup sandwich out of a herding course. I keep myself humble, and have learned to laugh at these screw ups. I pick myself up, dust off, and go back for more. I have a deep appreciation for my teammates (the dogs) because they are just as enthusiastic to go in the ring with me again knowing full well that their handler could very well go doopey on them and screw up their run! I'm used to fumbling and stumbling while trying to get good at new things. Staying out of my comfort zone is something I want to keep doing. When I'm not making mistakes, I'm not subject to learning something I did not know. It holds great entertainment value for the spectators and I can now pick out the sound of my coach cackling wildly beside the ring as I'm out there bugging up a course with my dog. It's great! It truly keeps me empathetic and patient with my training clients who might be struggling as much in getting the basics as I am when I am trying to get my dog to drive a line that will get my sheep through the panel. Mistakes create learning opportunities. If your ego is too fragile to take a lot of hits along the way, you will never get better at what you are doing.

Haggerty: I analyze what I did wrong, how it can be prevented, learn from it and move on.

Kaim: Defining mistakes is pretty important, here. I don't make mistakes that get dogs hurt, killed or lost. I never have. Handling mistakes, such as using the wrong leg to lead, or the wrong command, I probably make a few times a day. The only one usually looking is me, and I am my worst critic. I used to be a perfectionist, and for my own conduct, I still pretty much am. I sweat over every dog that I train. Is the job good

enough, will the clients be happy, what can I do to improve. Those types of questions have haunted me since I took my first paying client. I make mistakes, and I own them. I make them right. That is what a professional does.

Mazzeri: Often enough. I admit to them immediately when working with a private student or a group class. Maybe it was an unsuccessful demo. No sense trying to fake it, really. I will 'do it over' and make things right as soon as possible.

Occasionally I've forgotten an appointment and showed up late or missed it altogether. I contact the student immediately, apologize, and take ownership of my lapse of memory. I offer them an additional lesson at no charge whenever appropriate.

McBee: I don't keep track of most of my mistakes, now. I don't tend to make major mistakes much anymore, or, if I do, I don't know about them. If I've made a mistake, I do my best to correct it or make it good, admit that I've done it and I move on as best I can. Admitting your mistakes to yourself isn't always easy but it's important to do.

Wilson: I rarely think in terms of "mistakes" but rather think in terms of information. You try something, it does or doesn't work; both of those results are vital information for the trainer. When I see confusion, I adjust my approach.

One of the biggest problems trainers face on a day-to-day basis is trying to get the owners to commit and follow through with what we teach, and what tools are needed for their dog. Can you describe some of the ways you gain client compliance?

Cockrell: Being completely honest. We cannot force a client to do anything. Keeping that in mind, our job is to inspire and convince them effectively. One of the main skills a trainer who works with the everyday dog owner needs is the ability to speak relevantly to who happens to be in front of them



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at the time. This skill is developed over time by being well versed in things other than dog training. Being able to switch between a good Ol' country boy or gal one minute, to being able to intelligently converse with a PhD rocket scientist and then turning around to get through to the teenager who knows everything, sometimes within the same lesson, is a skill more trainers need to develop.

Douan: In group class (which is as many as 17 dogs), I tell my students what equipment I recommend for the class. I tell them they can use whatever equipment they prefer, but as each week progresses, they will notice that the dogs that are on the equipment I recommend are the dogs who are succeeding and learning faster. They eventually ask that their dog be fitted for the equipment I recommend.

Group class brings out the competitive nature of humans and that is good. I ask for a show of hands at the start of each week for who practiced every day, almost every day, or not as much as they would have liked. When they want to be better than the others in class, they practice more.

Small classes and privates are more difficult because clients have more opportunity to whine and make excuses to the instructor. It is amazing how productive and independent the clients become when you place them in a large group and they see others succeeding with minimal individual help.

Heel, sit, down, stay, recall, and place is not that hard. (Pro dog training instructors, you can cry to me when you get to teaching lead changes, collection & extension cues, independent obstacle performance or better yet, when you are trying to pen 5 neurotic ducks with nothing but your voice, a stick, and a hopped up off-lead herding dog...<grin>. Comfort Zones? Get out of them. It's also a big help that all of the halls leading into the training room are lined with ribbons, title certificates, invitations to world events, and performance sport photos. It establishes credibility and an expectation that if they are coming to train with me, they'd better not waste my time.

A person who has good knowledge of the "dog training instructor" skill set, knows how to organize homework that is operational, and has a decent demo dog should not ever have to take the leash of a client's dog to help the client understand a concept or teach a behavior to a dog. When you do that, you are taking responsibility away from the client to do it themselves and believe me, they will let you do it. It might make you look good, but it is not helping that handler figure out how to make his dog respond to him. The only dogs I should have to handle and build rapport with are board and train dogs.

Owners who participate in privates and board/train programs must be motivated by the hurt the training places on their pocketbooks. Money matters and money motivates. The contract for privates states that the owner must work with the dog 30 minutes per day. I quit the client when they don't work the dog. Board and Trains get a written send home plan and an extensive send home lesson. If they are

not following the send home plan when they call back with problems, they have to pay for more training or I refer them elsewhere. I help for free for the life of the dog if they have followed the send home plan for the board/train.

Haggerty: The more money they spend, the more compliant they will be, but there also needs to be accountability. They need to be motivated to practice. They need to know that they are going to see you next week, otherwise they are not going to practice. I don't feel I have too much trouble with compliance. I can identify on the phone those who will not be able to practice and for those people I recommend our day school program so that we can do the work for them.

Kaim: After a certain point, success is predicated on owner buy-in. I cannot make them desire their success more than I do, and quite honestly, especially with dogs displaying truly at-risk behaviors, I'm pretty frank with them about their chances of success if they choose not to do the work or follow through. I find it easier to scare them into submission at the front end than to hear them complain bitterly at the back end. Seriously though, we use a variety of learning modalities to help owners break through and commit to the process. We offer unlimited follow up, and call owners aggressively after training is completed to keep them on track.

Mazzeri: I try to motivate owners. The HOW of that is the hard part. I like to find out about them and their circumstances and draw analogies to their own experiences if possible, so they can relate. I always teach the 'why' along with the 'how' of an exercise. I try to paint an illustration of what could happen if an exercise is successfully mastered—or not. The recall is a good one for example; consistent, balanced training is essential to keep a dog safe. Cookies may work when there's nothing better to do but given the choice between getting a treat and chasing a squirrel into the busy street, the success rate goes down. Practicing drills that teach both positive and negative consequences increase a dog's chances for survival. Keeping their dog safe is a positive motivator. We give them the tools to do that.

McBee: I use a homework check list that clients are required to bring back to each lesson so we can go over it again and add more to it. I tell them they are required to do at least 4 days of training each week and that they must reschedule if they haven't done it. Each lesson the clients must show me the progress they've made. Know they have to do that is usually motivation enough to do their homework.



There are some clients for whom I must change this protocol. I have to be able to see what will motivate them and plan accordingly. Holding them accountable is important.

Wilson: I keep things as simple as possible which is a complex task. Also, I show the pet owner how easily things can change, how much fun I have and their dog has changing. That joy tends to be contagious.

Bios:

George Cockrell is currently the Training Director for Dogizone in Rockville Md.

He recently celebrated his 39th anniversary of training dogs and their humans. He has extensive experience in many areas of dog training, including Hunting Retrievers and Pointers, Police and Military dogs, Search Dogs, Assistance Dogs, Therapy Dogs Competition dogs, Animal Actors, and has personally supervised the training of over 20,000 students in both group settings and private practice. George is a longtime IACP member, an Ambassador, a member of the IACP Member Hall of Fame, and an all around nice guy.

Martin Deeley, internationally recognized dog trainer, writer, and commentator, has been training dogs for 35 years. He has not only trained with the best but also trained the best in his workshops. His dogs have won competitions in Britain, and in America. He has been a feature writer for leading American and European magazines, and is the only journal-

ist ever granted a personal interview with Her Majesty the Queen of England.

Martin has written three top selling books: *Advanced Gundog Training*, *Working Gundogs*, and *Getting it Right with Gundogs*. He has commented on over 80 European championship videos, and for 28 years provided the commentary at the International Gundog Competitions held at the Country landowners Association Game Fair, the largest Game Fair in the world.

Martin, with his wife Pat, continues to train dogs at his Florida Center and run courses through his International School for Dog Trainers. Martin is a Founder, Executive Director and Past President of the International Association of Canine Professionals. He was inducted into the International Association of Canine Professionals Hall of Fame in April 2011.

Cyndy Douan, MHDL, CDT, CDTA, PDTI owns Georgia Dog Gym, LLC in Rome, Georgia, USA and has been a full time professional dog training instructor for 26 years. Cyndy is a Co-Founder of IACP and served many positions over the span of 10 years as a Director of the organization including Director of Education, Vice-President, and President. Cyndy has personally trained thousands of dogs of all breeds and mixed breeds through classes, private lessons, and board and train programs. She has earned over 100 performance titles on nine of her personal dogs and instructed numerous



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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.

students to performance titles. Cyndy has trained and competed with her dogs in Obedience, Rally, Agility, Disc Dogs, Flyball, Herding, and Dog Diving. Through her breeding program, Cyndy has produced several top ranked working line Border Collies in the sports of Disc Dogs and Diving Dogs that have competed successfully at the international level, as well as successful working farm sheepdogs and trialing sheepdogs. Cyndy now splits her time between managing a 12,000 square foot boarding and training facility with a staff of 10 people, training and trialing 6 of her 8 Border Collies in various performance sports, and spending time with her husband of 20 years, Jeffrey White.

Babette Haggerty started working in her dad's kennel over 40 years ago, first during the summer and on weekends. She started on her own training in 1989, and built what became the largest dog training school in Palm Beach County. In 2012, she decided to return to her home turf, and opened up a canine lifestyle center in Midland Park, New Jersey. It offers canine enrichment programs, doggy day school, group classes and private instructions. Three of her books have been published: *Womans' Best Friend*, *The Visual Guide to Good Dog Training*, and *The Best Dog Tricks on the Planet*. She can be contacted at 201-444-9893.

Linda Kaim has been training dogs professionally since 1979, all over the country. Her career began in dog showing, and blossomed from there to include breeding, veterinary assistance, and hunt training. She interned under a variety of upland bird dog trainers and retriever trainers over the years, and dabbled in protection sports as both a handler and decoy "when I was still young and daring." Since moving to Maryland, Linda has held positions with the Humane Society of Harford County in Fallston as the behavior counselor and temperament evaluator, the Baltimore Humane Society and the Mid-Atlantic German Shepherd Rescue as well as a plethora of breed specific and all-breed rescues in the area.

Linda often remarks "I will drop my leash when someone pries it from my cold, dead hands." Recently, she opened a 9,000 SF indoor facility in MD where "I can train out of the wind and sun because I am getting geezerly and don't fare well in the blazing heat of summer, or sub-zero temperatures of winter. I am officially old." The focus of her most recent research over the last decade has been with the development and early learning of puppies.

She can be reached at coeurdlionk9@gmail.com or online at www.lionheartk9.com.

Mary Mazzeri founded Care Dog Training in the early 1970's. Mary is a "trainers' teacher," having personally mentored dozens of other successful dog trainers who now own their own dog training businesses across the USA. She instructs and communicates by breaking down concepts and exercises into understandable components for both dog and handlers.

Mary successfully exhibited in AKC events for 32 years, putting dozens of titles on 16 personally owned dogs. She is

certified by IACP as an Advanced Dog Trainer & Instructor – CDTA/PDTI; serves on the Education Committee as an evaluator for Trainer Certification; and is an IACP Ambassador. Mary was named "IACP Member of the Year in 2010" and inducted into the IACP Member Hall of Fame in 2011. She can be reached at www.CareDogTraining.com.

Tawni McBee, IACP CDT CDTA PDTI, has been training dogs professionally since 1997. Prior to that, she trained horses and incidentally trained dogs along the way. She retired from the IACP Board of Directors in 2014, and is the chair of the IACP Dog Trainer Certification Committee. "I hold a 5th degree black belt in judo, which may seem irrelevant to some, but it, along with the horse training experience, has had a very large impact on my dog training." Tawni also does body care on animals, using a system I put together from a variety of methods with a Reiki base. She is married and has two sons, 10 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson. She owns 6 dogs and 2 horses on her Water Dog Ranch in Mesa, AZ. Tawni owns All Greatful Dogs, Inc. She can be reached at www.allgreatfuldogs.com and tawnimcbee@yahoo.com.

Sarah Wilson is a pet dog trainer with a special love of working with shy, sensitive and/or deficit companion dogs and rescued dogs. She has written or co-written nine books that have sold hundreds of thousands of copies and been translated into several languages, been seen on television (including "Good Morning, America" and PBS' "Nature"), appeared on radio, and has had several celebrity clients from her years owning a boarding and training kennel in NYC. She holds a Master's degree on the human-animal bond, tours as a speaker, and consults for Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Most importantly, has helped thousands of people and dogs succeed together since 1986. Find out more at mysmartpuppy.com, or email her at MySmartPuppy@gmail.com.

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Want to be published? Here's your chance!

The Canine Professional Journal editor is looking for submissions relating to all aspects of professional canine care. Articles should be of interest to a diverse membership of canine pros and should range from 800 to 1,500 words. Articles are subject to editing. See page 2 for details.

PHOTO submissions welcome, too!

Critical Thinking

by Mailey McLaughlin, M.Ed., CDTA/PDTI, Editor

“We judge the tools we like by their best usage, and the tools we dislike by their worst usage.”

~Brian Kilcommons

Everyone has tools they consider their “go-to” items, and tools they do not care for that, if they are truly balanced trainers, remain in the toolbox but don’t get a ton of use. Not-so-balanced trainers consider certain tools to be dangerous and decide (usually without even attempting to educate themselves) that they would never use them, and no one else should, either. Both approaches can be limiting, but at least the first leaves the door open to future experimentation. I’ve personally packed away tools in the past that I couldn’t see myself using again only to unpack them later when I realized they might just work for a particular case. One example of this is the Halti headcollar and my experience at the conference in 2016 attending Heather Beck’s presentation was a catalyst.

It’s not easy to admit you may have sold yourself short, may have stopped looking at possibilities, may have taken the easiest, shortest route out of laziness. Some tools work so well for so many dogs that we get into a groove and don’t want to get out. At that point, a slice of humble pie can be a delicious antidote to lazy thinking.

But I don’t really want to talk about leashes, training collars, markers, and place boards today.

The quotation at the top of this page, perceptive as it is regarding the training and care of dogs, can apply to many disciplines and situations beyond our profession, can’t it?

I mean, the word “tool” can mean just about any tool, from hammers to pistols to homework activities to prescription medications, really.

It can also apply to people, and especially to our clients.

Fundamental Attribution Error

A term in psychology called the Fundamental Attribution Error says that human beings tend to judge others’

faults by incorrect attribution. We tend to see problems in people as *character flaws*, and not as pertaining to the situations people find themselves in. In other words, we incorrectly ascribe a negative label to a person instead of what is possibly (probably) behavior *related to the immediate situation*, and not a character flaw at all. An example of this is when another motorist cuts you off in traffic and you immediately assume he is a horrible human being with zero redeeming qualities, a complete inability to drive a car correctly, a habit of beating his wife, and you hope he crashes his car. The reality is more likely that he’s a decent human being who is having a crappy morning.

Now, labels are a necessary part of being human. Our brains order and compartmentalize things so that we can function on a daily basis without expending more mental energy than necessary. If we didn’t label things, we would have to relearn everything we know about the world every morning, which is a huge waste of time and energy. Labels help us identify our world, and, like tools, are, in and of themselves, not negative.

But we have a propensity to assign labels and then consider our work finished, when in fact we may have assigned an incorrect label. Once we assign a label, we have a difficult time changing our minds about it. And that’s the problem. If the label turns out to be wrong, we go through life believing the wrong thing about the person, the dog, the tool. And that can be disastrous.

Human beings also tend toward the negative in our thinking, so most often, the effects of incorrect labeling are that we assign a negative label when one was not needed, and we will not correct it. You know the old saying about the word “assume”? (It makes an “ass” out of “u” and “me,” in case you didn’t know.)

We get annoyed when our clients call their dogs “stubborn,” “spiteful,” and “guilty,” right? We know that dogs don’t behave out of spite, and that what looks like guilt is simply appeasement. So we correct our clients gently and help them to see that the labels they’ve placed are incorrect. (I don’t blame my clients for having done this; they are assigning labels from a human perspective—the only perspective they

possess--and have no idea how to label their dogs' behaviors any other way. That's why they hire us.)

So why are we so quick to apply the Fundamental Attribution Error to our *clients*? Why do we label them and not their behaviors? Why do we assume the worst of people as an automatic, and then are pleasantly surprised by positive behavior? (Canine professionals aren't the only culprits in this, of course. I imagine it happens with many professions that serve people.)

"The dogs are easy. It's the people who are hard."

If you haven't heard that quote, you haven't been training dogs for very long. And while I understand that it contains truth, if you live by the above, you are prescribing for yourself a more difficult road, and you will likely burn out sooner. It is not helpful to assume the worst in our clients, who call us because they need our help. It sets us up for negativity before we even begin, and for what? So that we can be triumphant when they prove us right?

"People are stupid. They don't want to learn. They want to baby their dogs, not train them. They don't want to do the hard work. They are lazy. They choose the wrong dogs. They don't listen. They don't follow through." On and on and on the refrain goes, on blogs and message boards and social media and at gatherings. Sometimes it seems like some dog trainers spend more time blaming people (including other dog trainers) than training dogs.

Now, don't get me wrong. People can be rude, condescending, horrible, nasty, selfish, cruel, and ignorant. They often are all of these things at some point. And you are within every right to complain about their behavior when they are. But what if you didn't presuppose that behavior? And what if you labeled their **behavior**, and not them personally?

Anytime I'm confronted with some negative behavior that annoys me, and I make a snap judgment about it (as we all are wont to do), the very next thing I do is take a step back and ask myself a powerful question. I am always glad after I ask it, because it changes my mindset about the person from negative to positive. Even if I am wrong (and how would I know, in most situations?), I move quickly out of annoyance to empathy. I have never found that result to be anything but positive for me.

The question I ask myself is, "Is there any other possible explanation for this person's behavior right now?" As soon as I hear it in my head, I can think

of a dozen possibilities, and most all of them soften my annoyance, just like that. *Whether any of those possibilities are actually correct doesn't matter at all.*

My default position nowadays with clients is that they are decent people who simply do not know what their dog needs, and it's my job to help them understand this. Once they know what the dog needs, it's their job not to question it, but to act upon it. If they do, the dog improves and the relationship improves. My job is done.

If they learn the dog's real needs, and they do not meet them, my job is to find out what may be stopping them. Dog is destructive and they won't confine him? There may be something about crating that is a sticking point. Can I find out what it is? Open-ended questions will usually uncover the answer. Once I can show them that dogs don't view confinement the same way we do, they are usually receptive to it. (See Marc Goldberg's article in this issue for a more detailed explanation and a clever way to present it to the client.)

"What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity."

~Chip Heath

When I choose to view my clients as decent people who are just lacking clarity, I am more receptive to helping them. If I choose to view them as dolts who don't give a damn about their dogs, I will feel resentment, then smug satisfaction when they "prove me right." Who, exactly, is being helped by this? Not the clients, and certainly not the dogs.

Let's stop judging the people we like (friends and family, celebrities we admire, compliant clients) by their best qualities, and the ones we dislike or are skeptical of (potential clients, celebrities we don't admire, people who don't look or act like us) by their worst traits.

Better yet, let's take a step back from judgment until we have exhausted all other options, and see if we can't improve people's and dogs' lives in the process.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, is Editor of The Canine Professional Journal and currently co-Vice President of the IACP. She has worked professionally with dogs and their people for almost 35 years, holds a Masters in Education, is a CDTA and PDTI through IACP, and is Behavior and Training Manager for the Atlanta Humane Society. Read more at www.carpek9.blogspot.com.

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