

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

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Newsletter Staff

Editor Mailey McLaughlin
Publisher Martin Deeley
Design Evelyn Albertson

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

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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.

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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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The IACP is proud to announce that IACP Members Andrew Warner and Kathy Marggraff

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

Congratulations to Andrew and Kathy!

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Well done!

The Board of the IACP



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President's Letter

by James Hamm

Hello, IACP! I am James Hamm and I am honored to be your new President for 2015. I retired from the U.S. Army as a Command Sergeant Major in September 2014 after 30 years of Active Duty. In addition to the recognized duties of an Army Command Sergeant Major, I have been involved in training and caring for dogs both in the military and in my personal business in civilian life. The Board of Directors and I stand ready to build the organization and achieve its fullest potential, expanding on the successes of 2014. I personally thank Karen Laws for her efforts and accomplishments as the President, as well as retiring directors Tawni McBee, Chad Mackin, and Brad Strickland, whose list of accomplishments are significant. We welcome new directors Melanie Benware, Nelson Hodges, and Martin Deeley.

Completing our goals requires evolution and revolution. The IACP has grown through evolution and incremental change. The reasons were valid and necessary at the time to mature it from infancy to adolescence. Evolution is safe, secure and necessary, but it also limits growth and caps potential.

In contrast, revolutionary change is intense and leads to reconstruction, overhaul and reshaping. Revolution requires major changes of strategic goals, vision, task and purpose--and many of the changes are irreversible. In January, I charted a course with the Board that combines the best of evolution with breakthroughs of revolution over the next 24 months.

I will make full use of the Board of Directors' skills and knowledge. We will communicate consistently with all of you and increase the speed of decisions, action and notifications. In many areas, we must "Do Less, and Do It Better," while in others we must expand and push the limits quickly to capitalize on talent and opportunity.

These are the goals the Board and I will work to achieve in 2015:

1. Develop a 1, 2 and 5 year Strategic Plan to exploit the IACP's potential.
2. Build mentorship programs:
 - a. One for future governance of the organization
 - b. One to coach, teach and mentor new members
3. Provide the best world-class educational conference in the history of the IACP
4. Create the image and brand we want for the IACP
5. Create strong bonds with industry, educational institutions, and key individuals

6. Develop an education and training bank for trainers to share tactics, techniques and procedures via the IACP website to all IACP members--in essence, a resource pool to draw on for new skills, different strategies, and continued professional development

My approach is to conduct the business of the IACP without emotion, opinion or attitude. I will focus on goals, performance and behavior. In order to achieve these goals, your knowledge, and the skills and abilities of the Board and the Membership, are essential. The most critical skills we need do not involve dog training or running a K9-related business. We are looking for people with history and experience in Information Technology, Sales, Marketing, Education, and Organizational Management. Most importantly, we need people with a sense of purpose who will follow through and complete projects, improving the IACP to the benefit of everyone. If you have a particular skill, please tell us about it. Although I may have been an "Army of One" for many years, I am not a one-man Army, and we need you and your fresh eyes, ears and ideas to make the IACP all it can be (Army pun intended).

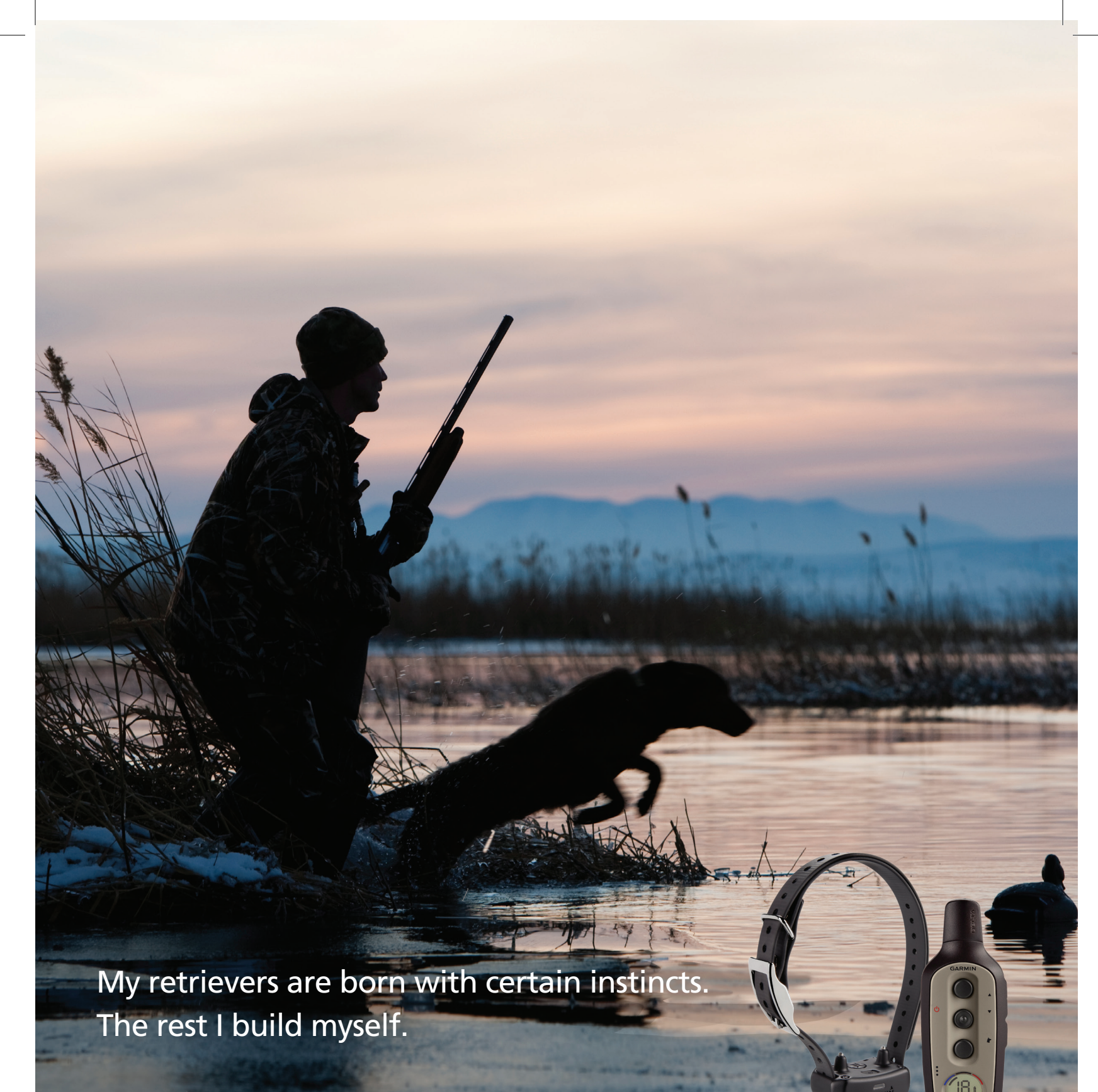
Lastly, let's chat about balance. Balance requires all elements to be equal or in correct proportion. A training program cannot have balance if one component is disproportionate to another. Balanced leadership requires purpose, direction, motivation, and supervision in equal parts. Balanced communication has equal quantities of teaching, talking, learning, and listening. Balance does not have an agenda, an ego, or selfish intent. Balance doesn't argue or fight unless that is the only remaining course of action in a battle that must be won. Balance promotes improvement and understanding even under distress and less-than-desirable terms and conditions. In addition to all of my listed goals, my main purpose is to keep the IACP in balance and to make it a home for all of us, while fostering an environment where we coach, teach, and mentor individuals to become members, groom them to become IACP officers & Committee heads, and develop the leaders we need for the future. I will give you everything I have to build a better IACP. I will not ask you to give more effort than I am willing to double, so I respectfully ask for your ideas, your talent, your skills, and your help. I truly look forward to serving this great organization and working for you in 2015 and beyond.

Respectfully,

James Hamm

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Working With Fearful Dogs

edited by Mailey McLaughlin, M.Ed., CDT

MM: Recently, I asked on the IACP FB page if anyone would be willing to help me by providing answers to some questions about working with fear in dogs. Several members (a nice mix of old and new) graciously stepped up to offer assistance, and their answers are below. I hope you find their expertise to be of use. If you enjoy this format, let me know what other burning questions you might like to see answered, and I will make this a regular (albeit shorter) feature. Email your feedback to me at mailey@poochprofessor.com.

Please tell us your name, location, how long you've been training professionally, and what types of training you do. If you "do it all," tell us your specialty.

I am **George Cockrell**, IACP C.D.T., in Damascus, Maryland. I have 37 years experience in Basic/Advanced Obedience, Group Classes, Aggression, Behavior Rehab, Veterinary Consultant, Working Dogs Gun Dog, and Tricks training.

I am **Nelson Hodges**. I currently live in Arlington, Texas, and have been based in the DFW area for almost 30 years. I have lived and worked in many different locations over the last 40 + years. I have been working with dogs, wolves and wolf-dogs since 1973, and I don't like talking about myself. I have worked with several thousand canines, and most of the breeds at one time or another. I train my personal pack to help me rehabilitate client dogs. It takes about two to three years of behavior training to get a specific type of dog to assist in rehabilitation of other dogs. I take on any type of case including truly severe behaviors. That can include fearful, shutdown and feral animals, up to dogs that want to kill anything that moves, including humans. I enjoy working with and teaching humans about the behaviors, brain and language of canines. If I can educate the humans, then I have changed the environment for the dog for the better.

Sarah Fulcher here - Trail, BC Canada. I have been training full time professionally for 7 years. I teach basic to advanced pet obedience, puppy

training, nose work, and tricks, but work primarily with behaviour problems like fear, anxiety, aggression, and reactivity. With my own dogs I train and compete in obedience, rally obedience, agility, nose work, tricks, musical freestyle, herding and skijoring.

I'm **Robin MacFarlane**, Dubuque, IA, 20 years training professionally. I teach pet obedience, basic through advanced, tricks, scent work and retrieve classes, puppy training and behavioral rehab. I was previously active in protection work and e-collar applications for Military and Police K9.

My name is **Lisa Marie Daniel**, and I live and train in Bethesda, Maryland. I've been training professionally for eight years. I do mostly private in-home training for pet dogs, which includes addressing problem behavior, but I also teach group classes in Basic Obedience, Obedience Competition at the Novice level, and Competition Rally Obedience at the Advanced and Excellent levels.

My name is **Reid Reynolds**, and I've been training professionally in Powell, Ohio for about 6 years. I teach obedience training and behavior modification.

I'm **Katy Cushing**, owner of A Closer Bond Dog Training in Palatine IL. I've been training professionally since I graduated from National K9 in 1988. The majority of our training includes training family dogs to become great companions. We train therapy and service dogs too. We also teach people how to train dogs and to understand dog behavior and modification.

We know that many owners tend to feel sorry for dogs that exhibit fearful/anxious/phobic tendencies. How would you explain to the owner of a such a dog the reason for the dog's behavior in a way that the owner can understand?

G. Cockrell: Depending upon the owner's overall state of mind, I'll use several different explanations. I often explain it in layman's terms by informing them that in my opinion, the only fear a dog is born with is the fear of the unknown. That any other fear/phobia the dog is currently experiencing has somehow been taught, either intentionally, or unintentionally. I'll then explain how outward appearance is not necessarily a good indicator of the dog's emotional state. Facial structure, coat markings, and hereditary ear or tail set can confuse the inexperienced owner/handler.

I sometimes explain that often, a dog can show apparent emotional issues as a form of mimicry. If the owner/handler is emotionally unstable, even just by outward appearances, many times a dog will start acting similarly. An example would be an anxious or manic human can make a dog uneasy enough so that the dog can begin acting anxious and edgy.

N. Hodges: The dog has either learned the reaction/behavior or it is caused by a medical or nuerological condition (rarely). Living in a human-dominated world, with primate/humans confuses the dog even more. The dog' inability to understand many human actions and behaviors exacerbates the fear or anxiety. Canines are predators. The predatory mind can only see the universe from its perspective. Fear, anxiety or phobias are all weakness. Weakness gets attacked and eliminated in nature. Therefore, the mental state reinforces itself in more anxiety and fear until you can break the cycle. Rehabilitation, whether human or canine, can only be achieved by facing what you fear, without anything bad happening, over and over, to program a different result and response than that previously

learned. The key is to be able to take a dog to the edge without going over it. Human emotion is seen as weakness. If you are out of control of yourself and your own emotions, you are not in a position to be followed (a leadership position). A dog knows the human is out of control, and cannot trust it to be able to handle a situation.

S. Fulcher: Dogs can have fears, anxieties, or phobias for lots of reasons. It can be they are temperamentally disposed to that, they could have not had enough appropriate socialization, or they could have had a negative experience. Sometimes we can guess but sometimes we will never know why. What is important is helping the dog move forward from here on. We can help improve things for the dog by providing a consistent environment, so that their world makes sense. We can do some basic foundation training so that they understand what you are asking from them. We can make sure that the dog is healthy as best we can, as poor health, discomfort and pain increase stress. We can do some training to address specific triggers, but the main goal is to make the dog feel more comfortable and relaxed, knowing that you will keep him safe.

R. McFarlane: I spend far less time trying to explain "why" a dog is fearful/anxious or phobic other than explaining the concept that the behaviors have been reinforced for the dog, and therefore they continue.

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I feel that if we spend too much time invested in looking for all the 'whys' it further solidifies the owners into the sympathy and pity stance. This does not help them overcome, and thus does not help the dog. I focus way more energy on helping owners understand the emotional mind-set they must adopt if they are committed to moving forward and helping their dog to be more confident in trigger situations.

I often relay my own experience having been in a serious auto accident and needing to learn to walk again and also being able to get behind the wheel and drive again. I was afraid and anxious, but my physical therapists never bought into or fed that emotion. They never expressed pity toward me or any hint of concern that things would be anything less than normal. They were always there to catch me if I needed them but never wavered in their ability to push me in order to make me as capable as possible.

I help people step into the role of being their dog's physical therapist.

L. M. Daniel: There can be many reasons for a dog to exhibit fearful/anxious/phobic behavior, but the important thing is how to move forward rather than staying focused on what may or may not have happened in the past. We will be able to SEE what causes anxiety in the dog currently: noise, perhaps one gender of humans, eye contact, thunder, being left alone, or being approached too quickly.

The most common underlying cause, I believe, is lack of socialization as a puppy, and I explain that in the critical first 16 weeks of life the puppy needs to be exposed to as much of his/her future environment as possible: different people – ages, sizes, shapes, colors, genders; cars, trucks, vacuum cleaners, crates, garbage cans, disposals, whatever. Puppies that are not gently and happily exposed to these things early on may be fearful when they encounter them at a later age. This fear can be misinterpreted as stemming from prior abuse, but that is not necessarily the case. Sadly, puppy mill puppies in particular often spend their early weeks with almost no outside exposure to most of what we expect them to find "normal" in a home environment. This can also happen with a puppy left too long at a rural breeder, if the breeder is not conscientious about getting the pup socialized.

Of course, inherent temperament also can play a role: some animals – dogs and humans included – are born more sensitive to others with regard to a variety of the senses, but especially sound and touch.

A noise-sensitive puppy needs careful and thorough socialization to help him or her deal with the noises of suburban or urban life. It's important to understand that "socialization" does not mean just exposing the dog to things, it means exposing them to things in a way that they have a good experience with it. Which brings us to the next point.

Traumatic experiences, especially during the initial 16-week imprint period, can have a lasting effect that is difficult to surmount, and the dog may generalize a little or a lot. So, for instance, if your 12 week puppy is attacked by a white poodle, s/he may subsequently show a fear of white poodles, white dogs, or dogs in general. The more specific the phobia, the more likely it was caused by a traumatic event, but as I mentioned at the outset, the important thing is to deal with the fear going forward, rather than dwelling on what may or may not have happened. A common problem I encounter is owners who are so filled with pity for what may have happened to their fearful dog that it interferes with them giving the dog the discipline and structure that will ultimately help him/her.

R. Reynolds: I always assure the owner that feeling sorry for their dog is normal and shows that they want to do what's best. However, feeling sorry when a dog is fearful can often be counterproductive. That's why it's important for us to show them the tools and techniques to put that energy into. Showing fearful/anxious/phobic dogs that the situation they are in can actually be a calm and safe environment will build the dog's confidence and their trust towards the owner. Letting the dog know we feel sorry for them can just enable the situation. That doesn't mean the dog shouldn't or can't know that we understand how they feel, it just means that we want to let them know that we will work through it together and, after all is said and done, no harm came to them. I want the owners to know that the reason their dog is letting the fear or anxiety take over is because they don't understand how to deal with whatever the stimuli happens to be, and they need the guidance of the owner to see that the sky isn't falling.

K. Cushing: We explain that most dogs showing fearful/anxious/phobic behaviors did not get the proper socialization and education they needed early on. Puppies learn about 80% of their life long beliefs during the first 16 weeks of life and you won't know how well you've socialized your dog until they're reaching puberty. We explain that improper socialization can be due to several things, including: backyard breeders/puppy mill puppies who don't get positive early

interaction with humans; a shelter dog being over kenneled; a lack of clear communication, leadership, and guidance that a less confident or shy dog needed from puppyhood; a lack of the owner understanding the impact a good social development program has on their dog; and an owner not understanding how they may be unintentionally creating and rewarding fearful behavior. There are many places fearful/anxious/phobic behaviors stem from, and knowing the root cause is very helpful in resolving or managing the situation.

What are some of your techniques and tools for working with fearful, anxious, or phobic dogs?

G. Cockrell: The first step is to determine where the fear and phobias are coming from if possible. Personally I will take as much time as possible to observe the dog with minimal interaction. This often lets me figure out what are the triggering factors.

I also take heredity/genetics into consideration. Whenever possible, I try to get enough history on the dog's pedigree to form some sort of base of probability.

Being very patient, I'll let the dog figure things out for at least a few days. I'd prefer to give them all of the time in the world, but that is rarely practical when dealing with people's dogs. Often, the dog's fear responses are significantly reduced with a complete change of routine. I'll sometimes suggest a board and train program in order to effect this complete change.

A clear obedience program always comes next. I don't worry too much about perfect, but a good, reasonable set of expectations about basic training is a must. I find that many of the so-called fear/phobia based behaviors are a simple lack of clarity. Once a dog is clear on what's expected, they no longer need to throw random behaviors to find their emotional safe place.

In my opinion, a dog cannot consider more than one thing at a time. If the dog must consider some form

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of obedience/calm, they cannot consider their fear triggers simultaneously. An example might be a dog actively sitting, and being attentive, can't exactly think about the evil UPS driver.

I have a Labrador, Gunner, that is somewhat noise shy thanks to an unfortunate event when he was a youngster involving some rowdy kids with a box full of fireworks. If left to his own decisions, he'll leave the area when loud pops such as gunfire are happening. Yet, he'll happily do retrieve work with me shooting directly beside him. This took a lot of work, but to the casual observer, he's not gun-shy while working.

N. Hodges: As stated previously, you have to make the dog face what it fears. It is not the "what," but the "how." It is not about tools, which is why there are many methods. The key is about the way you handle the dog, and how you communicate to a fearful dog. Your influence is paramount to the success of the rehabilitation of the dog. You must remain in complete control of yourself and your reactions to the situation and the dog. At the same time you must be able to communicate your intent to the dog, softly if needed, or more emphatically, depending upon the dog and the fear. As an example, to get a shut-down dog to move forward with you to an area, surface, or material (pool of water for instance), providing an intent to the dog by moving forward, with leash in hand, to the point that the dog resists, providing continuous pressure (much like having an egg under your foot while squeezing a car accelerator down) then having to regain its balance by taking a step forward. In that immediate moment, you release any tension in the leash when the foot moves forward. Repeat. The communication you just had with the dog was, "I am moving forward, ahead of you; I do not fear what is ahead as I am calm; I am asking you to move forward with me; when you move forward, even infinitesimally, all tension and fear is gone in that instant." Give the dog a pause in time to process, and repeat softly. A human has a different perspective and ability to conceive time. A human can always out-wait a dog.



S. Fulcher: I generally like to get an overall wellness check on the animal before doing any serious training. There are some questions I ask and I also do a quick hands on eval to check for obvious things. If there are any red flags I will recommend a vet check, and generally I recommend a trip to the chiropractor for all of them. We may discuss diet as well if I feel that could be a factor. I also like to make sure that the dog is getting enough physical and mental exercise and may recommend this increases. Socialization with other dogs is always recommended, and a goal we can work up to if the dog has social or fear issues.

My next step is a home manners plan, which creates structure and consistency in the environment and rebalances the relationship between dog and human. It also promotes calm, self controlled behaviour in exciting situations for the dog. This program includes sitting to earn privileges (more relaxed than NILIF), calm stays at doors and other thresholds (crate, car etc.), moving out of the way for people on cue and automatically (yielding space), using meals for training or enrichment, and working up to a 30 minute down stay every day.

We will then work on some basic obedience, which provides clarity to the dog, builds their confidence and builds a stronger relationship based on trust between dog and owner. Generally I will teach stay on a bed/place, recall, attention/focus, and polite leash walking.

Lastly if needed, I like to incorporate counter conditioning and desensitization towards and specific triggers, should that be necessary after going through the previous stages of training. Often, structure, relationship building and obedience skills incorporated into the counter conditioning process will solve the issue. For example, put the dog on place which should have a positive association (the place becomes a 'mobile safety anchor') and have the trigger appear at a distance so that the dog can remain under threshold. Using the place as a 'safety anchor' and giving the

dog a job to do during the counter conditioning and desensitization speeds this process up dramatically.

R. McFarlane: My go-to tool is the e-collar for the obedience. I use marker training for the counter-conditioning. I use Wade collars on dogs I have any hesitation may come up leash or if I feel they may try to back out of the collar and bolt.

Techniques and basic outline of sequence are addressed above. Obedience for the first few days (assuming it is B&T) then add in counter conditioning + urban agility and pack socialization (once we've established some foundation of trust via the OB) is the simplified formula to get us back working around and with key triggers.

For some cases I withhold food for the first day or so and then utilize a hand feeding routine for a bit. I use fairly strict crating schedule in the beginning as well. I believe it helps set a faster stage for leadership/trust relationship to build. Dog is basically 'bored' unless they get to do something with me. Don't want them having too much free-time to reinforce undesirable habits.

L. M. Daniel: A lot depends on the degree of fearfulness. For many dogs who are just mildly fearful about new people, new situations, strange dogs, etc., the owner can usually accomplish a lot simply by projecting the right attitude and managing/directing situations.

As a first step, with a fearful dog I will be coaching the owners to take a calm, nonchalant, cheerleading attitude, rather than a "oh don't worry" sympathetic tone. I think it's Sarah Wilson who says "be the way you want the dog to be." I explain to owners that what they believe is a soothing tone is likely to be heard by the dog as a worried tone and also a weak tone – neither of which is reassuring. Instead, I coach them to be upbeat and confident.

Second, the owners need to manage the dog's experiences and interactions with whatever s/he is afraid of, so the dog can experience success in handling it, rather than constant failure. A simple example may be asking people who are new to the dog NOT to make eye contact and NOT to approach the dog, but to wait for the dog to approach them. I may have them direct cooperative friends to sit on the floor, look away from the dog, and either toss or hold a treat toward the dog, depending on its anxiety level. I do also impress upon owners that a worried dog can become a biting dog if it's cornered and fearful enough.

If the fear is over inanimate objects (say the vacuum cleaner) or other dogs, the key to getting the dog to success will be keeping enough distance that the dog does not go over threshold, i.e., get so close that it cannot function because the fear is overwhelming. I usually recommend counter-conditioning under threshold. The exact form of this varies, but the basic idea is to allow the dog to see or hear the feared object from a distance close enough that s/he is aware of it, but not so close that s/he goes into a fear response. At that point I use language such as "see the dog" and reward the dog if it is remaining calm. A big part of the reward may simply be praise and moving AWAY from the scary object. I frequently also use food (and whether or not the dog will take food can be a good indicator of whether you are over threshold), sometimes play with a toy, and even sometimes the two-treat-recall game which many dogs really enjoy. In any event, once the dog has succeeded in staying calm after seeing the feared object, I will increase the distance. The goal is to be able to get closer and closer to the scary object over time (not necessarily the same day), i.e., to see the threshold recede.

I should mention that with certain very discrete fears – going down one large (15 inch) step into a sunroom and getting into a car come to mind – I have found

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simple pressure and release very effective. The key is to keep leash pressure on in the desired direction with no talking and simply wait for the dog to move even slightly toward you and then to immediately release pressure for a moment, then renew pressure and repeat until the dog ultimately goes where you want them to go. Then reward!!

R. Reynolds: I like to start out with leash work while making slow, predictable movements. Not letting them run away is a big factor, but more importantly you have the opportunity to teach them to follow you and teach them how you move. This is a way to open up a line of communication between the dog and the handler.

Teaching a fearful or anxious dog to hold a “Place” can make a major difference. “Place” isn’t just for management purposes—it can be used for duration work with distractions. Holding still for an anxious dog is a difficult thing to do. Not allowing them to obsess or pace puts them in the situation where they have to actively deal with what frustrates them. When a dog becomes overly-stressed from a stimulus or situation, they behave impulsively and may want to get out of there as quick as possible, feel like they have to defend themselves, or maybe just roll over and submissively urinate. If that dog has a solid understanding of “Place,” you eliminate those options. They have an understanding of what they SHOULD be doing, and then it’s our job to make sure we don’t put too much pressure on them while trying to work on desensitization and their impulse control.

Perception Modification is extremely helpful. A lot of anxious and fearful dogs can basically shut down when confronted with a stressful stimulus. Teaching them to be cognizant of their state of mind can help them calm down quicker. Doing “Name and Explain” is another awesome tool. Letting a dog know you are aware of what they see and hear can help them realize you aren’t in a panic about what is going on, and they shouldn’t be either.

K. Cushing: When faced with a fearful, anxious, or phobic dog we employ several techniques and tools in our protocol. We use a combination of making the dog a Wall Flower, Obedience Commands, Agility, Perception Modification and creating a Collapsing Circle to help dogs overcome their fears and become confident.

Attaching a dog to a wall allows us to observe the dog’s behavior and reactivity and determine triggers that induce fear. Obedience commands, especially Heel and Sit, allow us to establish leadership and a line of

communication we can use to give the dog something else to do and think about in the face of a fear-inducing situation. Adding agility builds confidence in the dog and helps us create a stronger trusting relationship. A Collapsing Circle helps the dog overcome fears as it allows us to control the pressure the dog feels when faced with a fear-inducing trigger. And finally, Perception Modification, in particular Conditioned Relaxation, allows us to help the dog choose to stop adrenalizing and be calm around fearful triggers.

What do you prescribe for owners of fearful, anxious, or phobic dogs to do to assist with the dog’s rehabilitation (for example: socialize with other dogs, pack walks, daily structured obedience, classical conditioning, etc)?

G. Cockrell: The first thing I prescribe is for the owners to get better at knowing what is real, vs. what is conjecture.

A favorite quote of mine is “Nobody has ever interviewed a dog.” If the owners act on what they “think” vs. what they actually see, they’ll tend to be wrong a lot more than they are right. I try to get them to act on what is actually right in front of them. Is the dog in flight mode? who really knows why? I encourage them to deal with what is happening instead of the reason why. That can come into play later. Is the dog quivering with anticipation, or is it anxiety? The meanings are obviously quite different, yet outward appearances are very similar. Piloerection is another commonly misunderstood reaction. It’s not only fear or aggression.

Educating the owner in both obedience and general behavior is critical. I spend at least as much, if not more time getting the owners into the right frame of mind as I do the dogs.

It’s a tricky thing to try to calm a dog down without feeding and reinforcing the fear response. That’s the biggest mistake I see from owners. We tend to have a nurturing instinct that often does not translate well to dogs.

I coach the owners on how calm certainty is a much better tactic than coddling and telling the dog it’ll be OK. The easiest way to get that idea into the owner is to have them calmly direct their dog into another behavior. This is where the obedience really comes into play.

The tools I use for fear-based work are as varied as the dogs I see. They run anywhere from pure patience to all the commonly used tools available, to some tools that weren't meant for dogs per se. Drug therapy, while never my first choice, has a place in fixing fear. I'm blessed with lots of veterinarians who trust my judgement and will follow my suggestions when drugs can help. Let's not forget about holistic remedies. I've found them to be useful from time to time. The most important tool of all is the knowledge and understanding of how dogs tend to process information, and giving them that information.

N. Hodges: First of all, the owner must change their behavior in order for the dog to be able to understand and trust them. Whatever they were doing up to that point not only didn't help, but probably made it worse. You have to take each step at a time, and not skip steps. There has to be a trusted sequence and order, or structure, in the dog's life. Daily timing and routine will help the dog with both repetitions, and with familiarity. If a dog is shut down, or removed from daily life (as in hiding or avoiding) then I tell the owner to affix a lead with a cut-off handle to the dog. Let them drag it around. Without any emotion, just business,

on a routine basis, "ask" the dog to come be part of a routine inside. Feeding, laying in the den while they watch TV, and sleeping in the bedroom with them can help create a bond. Once there is an interrupt in the avoidance routine, and the "being with" routine becomes habit, they can move to more challenging routines. One that I use a lot is nose work. By asking the dog to find strong food scents in a daily walk (like a liver or salmon treat rubbed on to various locations on a walk), the dog can begin to relate to the human, since the human is not only interested in what is interesting to the dog, but seems to "smell" it first and lead the dog to it. There is an entire protocol that I have developed for scent work for rehabilitation.

S. Fulcher: It will depend on the dog and the situation, but generally they will work on my home manners program, obedience homework, and feeding enrichment program for certain. Depending on the individual issue they may also be asked to do tasks like counter conditioning, socialization, group walks, structured play, or independence training.

R. McFarlane: I use all of the above mentioned bits and pieces. I often utilize other stable dogs to assist

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not only with dog-dog issues, but also for dogs that are nervous with humans as well. I believe being able to follow a stable dog's lead makes the learning easier on the one being rehabilitated. Structured obedience is always the foundation for ALL of our work, including rehabilitation. But that is only the foundation and provides a communication platform for us and the owners to begin the socialization and reconditioning process.

We also utilize an "urban agility" approach with many of our rehabilitation cases. Typically these dogs have been sheltered from the world and stress and not asked or expected to do much. Once we have a foundation of obedience, we use it to get the dogs out and about. Everything in the environment becomes an obstacle for us to use to either heel on, jump over, crawl under or place on...this physical manipulation of the body changes the minds of the dogs. They go from "I can't and I'm afraid to try" to "I can," and confidence grows. I explain this process and the ideas of why it is important to my clients by saying it is the same reason we teach our children to ride a bike without training wheels, or we encourage them to learn to inline skate, and it is why we teach them to swim or jump off the diving board. It is less about the need that these are vital life skills and more about the reality that they create a more resilient and able-to-cope individual. The urban agility does the same thing for the dog.

L.M. Daniel: I am a big believer that structure per se (predictability of routine in particular) and obedience training can help anxious dogs a great deal. I also want to mention that when I have a dog who is worried about a particular gender, e.g.: is afraid of men or women, that having the member of the feared gender hand-feed ALL the dogs' food has worked real wonders. The dog may not be willing to eat from their hand at first, but it will speed the process if that person gets on the floor and looks away (NO eye contact), and they can start by placing a small amount of food on the floor a foot or two away, and then stay very still.

If the dog will play with toys, that can also be a huge help as a reward for handling difficult situations. Obedience training should build the dog's confidence, aid with structure and predictability of life. I would certainly incorporate classical and operant conditioning as discussed above. When you reward the dog for staying calm in the presence of the scary object, you are reinforcing good behavior (operant conditioning), but simultaneously counter-conditioning in the classical sense by making something good happen when something bad was expected.

R. Reynolds: I prefer to do a board-and-train program with these dogs because it gives me the opportunity to begin to make what they learn routine for them, whereas it can sometimes be difficult for owners to work through some of the walls and problem solving involved in the process. Every day we work on a combination of obedience training, structured walk, pack socialization, and some sort of confidence-building activity. When they return home, I do lessons with the owners and figure out a way to make it all work into their schedule as best as possible. To start out I have them use the crate any time they can't directly supervise their dog. While they are out, I like the time to be used doing some sort of structured activity. Some examples of structured activity are: obedience, walk, be in a "Place," structured tug or fetch, and treadmill. When the owners feel like they have a good understanding of the basics, we then begin to up the distractions and duration of activities.

K. Cushing: Always set your dog up for success and that means work on the fear-inducing situations as often as you can but only when you are ready and have the time to work on them! It's okay to use your kennel when you can't stay focused on your dog and any time you leave the house confine your dog so there is no accidental exposure to the fear-inducing trigger or situation. Daily work should include perception modification with conditioned relaxation and if/then statements, and use obedience commands as often as you can to continue establishing new rules and structure. Remember, each command has a goal and a purpose! Include your dog in everyday life, remembering to keep your dog's world black and white but be colorful in your training. Practice obedience in many different areas including in the house, yard, and on the go and expect the same responses and results. Follow through with your expectations showing your leadership skills everywhere as often as you can. As you practice including your dog in everyday life, it's important to look at yourself and make sure you are not being reactive when your dog is being fearfully reactive. It's your job to be thoughtful, not reactive! Keep your emotions in check when helping your dog overcome fearful situations or triggers. Focus on what you want your dog to do, not what makes your dog fearful. Ask yourself how you can use conditioned relaxation and obedience commands to help your dog overcome fear-inducing triggers and situations without being emotional about it. And continue your follow up lessons with us!

Describe at least one situation in which you were able to help a fearful, anxious, or phobic dog become more outgoing, or at least be able to tolerate, if not enjoy, activities that once made him afraid.

G. Cockrell: I recently worked with a 2 year old Chesapeake Bay Retriever named Moses. His fear of strangers was so intense that he had become a dangerous dog. His fear response was full on fight and it took me nearly a week before I was able to enter the kennel to handle him. I used those first days to build some trust. I visited the kennel area often and just sort of hung out nearby. Occasionally I would address him and just walk away before he had a chance to light up. I put protective gear on when it was time to go in. I used a special slip lead to get some control and let him just go ballistic while I calmly held on. A few minutes later, we went for a walk. We started standard obedience. We would then just hang out quietly, sometimes for hours. We built trust, then we built work ethic. I kept him for more than a month. We delivered him to a large estate on Maryland's eastern shore and spent a couple

of hours educating and inspiring his mistress and all of the hired help that would be working with and around Moses.

Several follow up trips followed, and he's had no further incidents. He's confident, happy, and above all stable now.

N. Hodges: Turk is a recent and current long term behavior case that I am working with. He is a white male Siberian husky who was shut down, terrified of new situations, including crossing lines on the floor, or changes on surfaces or materials. He would go into an escape mode state of mind, and spread eagle while try to skitter his legs as fast as possible. He would shut down while trying to escape at the same time--abject terror. He had bitten many and gotten in many dog fights. The first thing was to get him to simply tolerate me to begin a relational trust. I asked nothing of him the first day and a half. Then we began acting together upon his curiosity and initiation, by moving in conjunction. I asked him to follow by moving and he moved with me. Once I had a minimal trust relationship, I began small steps in asking him to move forward across floor surfaces he would go ballistic on. I asked him, with mild leash tension, to come with me.



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He would resist and flail until he felt no tension and had to deal with being on that surface, then calming. We repeated this for several days. One the 5th day, I moved outside, across the floor surface he was most fearful of, and propped the door open. I was in sight of him, and squatted and asked him to come to me. His desire to be with me (someone he could finally understand and trust) had become greater than his fear of the surface that I showed him he could survive. He came to me, after some trepidation. Then we repeated on that surface and others. I want cognitive, not just associative learning, so you must change locations and surfaces (or fears). It is not about the phobia, is it about the power of trust in understanding. It has taken several months, but now, Turk moves across all surfaces without regard, loves to be with dogs, and loves humans.

S. Fulcher: I recently worked with a young shepherd/heeler mix named Loki. Loki was very anxious on our initial consult, so stressed he would not accept food. Loki's owners originally came to me because he lunged aggressively at a child and they were rightfully concerned. It became clear that Loki had several issues, including general anxiety and fear of strangers (not just children). He was frightened going to new places and of novel experiences.

We started Loki off on a home manners/structure and foundation obedience program. Training-wise, we focused on place and a look at me cue, with a bit of leash handling skills, as Loki was already pretty good on the leash and not leash reactive.

One of the most effective things was the feeding program in the home manners protocol. Loki's owners were instructed to feed Loki only through training or enrichment games such as foraging for food or puzzle toys. This was essential in developing a work ethic for Loki, giving him more of a mental outlet, and it changed the relationship dynamics between him and his owners in a hugely positive way.

The foundation training lowered Loki's default stress level and made counter conditioning to specific triggers much easier to accomplish. By this time Loki was friendly with me, I had been working on him accepting my touch and he was excited (instead of stressed) to come to our training facility. He was meeting new people regularly and doing quite well. His owners even reported that had two get-togethers at their house where Loki happily and calmly met multiple new people each time. He was able to go to the chirporactor as well and handle being touched and manipulated by a stranger.

We were able to use both the place and 'look' cues in the cc/ds procedure. The owners would bring Loki's place mat to different locations and feed him his meals for staying calmly on place. We also worked through his fear of children in a similar manner – having him on place and having children move at a safe distance and feed Loki his meals while he stayed calmly on place, gradually reducing the proximity of the kids. The 'look' cue was used if Loki become too focused on a trigger, to call him to focus on the handler.

Loki was also reacting aggressively to being grabbed by the collar. Once we lowered his baseline anxiety, counter conditioning him to this (using his meals) was easy. It is no longer an issue.

Loki is now a confident, relaxed and much happier dog. He still doesn't particularly enjoy children, but he is not afraid of them or reactive to them. He greatly improved in his fear of strange people, eagerly meeting new people now. He is also much more confident going into novel situations, knowing that his owners will keep him safe and not put him into any situations he cannot handle.

R. McFarlane: I worked with a 4 year old Dachshund about a year ago. He had nipped, (puncture, no sutures) the owner's nephew. The owners freely admitted he was 'their baby,' and he had not been through training nor had he been out and about much. He was king of his domain at home and he did not like the nieces and nephews coming over. On evaluation I could see he was very insecure, didn't like anyone 'new' touching him, showed lots of alarm barking and only wanted to cling to his owners. He focused a very hard eye if you went to touch him. We did a 3 week B&T with a combination of obedience, lots of counter-conditioning to touch and massage with a variety of people, some pack work and the urban agility concept described above. He returned to his home with dedicated owners who put in the work. A month after he went home they sent pictures of him playing and willingly participating with the nieces and nephews. They informed me a month or so ago they would be expecting in a few months and wanted any other tips to make sure he was prepared for the new arrival in the house.

We gave the dog a good jump-start, but the real key has been owner compliance. These folks have done everything requested of them, including dietary and health changes (which I believe are foundational for success) This is the reason I believe our own personal skill set as trainers is only a fraction of what is needed to have a successful career. We need to focus our

efforts on being extraordinary coaches to not only 'tell' our clients what to do, but to actually help them muster the motivation. A professional who can really do that well will never go hungry nor will they need to expend much effort on marketing themselves. The word of mouth in solving those cases is priceless.

L.M. Daniel: Quite recently I had a client couple with an approximately year-old female Lab-mix rescue I'll call "Blackie." They called me after they'd had her several months and were considering taking her back to the rescue. Blackie was skittish around strangers and men in particular, and one of their primary concerns was that she was still skittish around the husband – generally leaving the room when he entered and staying out of whatever room he was in. Blackie did play after a fashion (many dogs like this I see have never learned to play), but the play they developed with her consisted entirely of throwing a toy, and then chasing her around as she ran with it. Their other big concern, not coincidentally, was that she had a habit of bolting from their not-entirely-fenced-in yard and then running away from them leading them on sometimes hours-long chases.

When I first came to see them I avoided eye contact with Blackie and mostly ignored her, but if she approached within five or six feet I tossed her a treat as I talked to her owners. I continued this until she was literally eating out of my hand after about 20 minutes. I did not look at her or try to touch her. I learned that, despite her concern about the husband, Blackie would allow him to put the leash on her (apparently because she very much wanted to go out) and he did walk her every day. However, she would not hang out with him inside and avoided any physical contact from him.

By the end of our two-hour session, I was able to touch her, play tug with her, begin teaching a retrieve and taught both the dog and owners how to play two-treat recall (dog is on-leash: you toss the first treat and tell the dog to get it, then once they've gotten it, you call them to come while quickly backing away, and reward with the second treat once the dog has come and sat in front of you). I was also able not only to make eye contact with her, but to begin teaching her to make eye contact on the command of "Look," which I heavily rewarded with praise and food.

A black and white photograph of a dog, likely a Weimaraner, interacting with a KONG Wobbler toy. The dog is leaning over the toy, which is a large, dark, bean-shaped object with a hole in the center. Several small, dark, bone-shaped treats are scattered on the floor around the toy. The dog's head is lowered, and its front paws are near the toy. The background is plain white. The KONG Wobbler logo is in the top left corner, and the text "Feed a meal or just some treats.™" is at the bottom.

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I advised them to implement the following:

1. Husband was to avoid eye contact with Blackie when in the house for the next week and to begin hand-feeding her all her meals. He should also avoid approaching her unless taking her for a walk. During that week, the wife would work on training "Look." After a week, husband could start asking for "Look" and rewarding with food. I also recommended that he "reward" as well by closing his eyes briefly for a second after she looks.
2. No more games where they chase her, ever. Work on the two-treat recall inside and outside, always ON-leash. Recommended also doing this exercise on a 16ft retractable leash.
3. Seek out and manage interactions with strangers: ask them not to make eye-contact, but just to hold out or toss a cookie while averting their gaze. The more of this with the more kinds of people, the better.
4. Begin basic obedience exercises/structure: sit for food, etc.

Long story short: a week later wife called to report Blackie was sleeping on the couch with her head in husband's lap. Over the next few weeks her recall improved, her wariness with strangers was improving, and they had decided to keep her and do more obedience training.

R. Reynolds: Earlier this year I had clients contact me about their fearful dog they rescued. She was a one-year-old Brittany that was in a hoarding/puppy mill situation. After the place was shut down, over 100 dogs were taken in by fosters and rescues. My clients thought it would be a great opportunity to rescue one, seeing as they loved their previous fun and out-going Brittany. However, this particular Brittany was afraid of people outside, terrified of people inside, would bark nonstop and run/back up when people came in, would become hysterical when anything beeped or made noise: doorbell, microwave, dishwasher, washing machine, computer noises, gameshows, commercials, cell phone. The husband wasn't able to leash her up, get up off the couch without her barking until he sat down, he couldn't pet her, when his wife left town the dog would avoid him at all costs - staying upstairs and running away from him when he walked in her general direction. She was basically an overly-sensitive alarm that would pee on the carpet and was attached at the wife's hip. The rest of the world was out to get her. After

two weeks staying with me and about 4-5 lessons in their home, she made much improvement. We worked on her walking skills, obedience, "Place," "Name and Explain," and lots of socialization. She wouldn't react at all to all the beeps, she was much less reactive to the doorbell or knocking and would settle down, the husband was able to call her over to him and she'd jump up in his lap, she stopped barking at everyone any time they moved around the house, they were able to have a family get-together at their house and, while she showed some initial hesitation, was able to be comfortable around all of them.

K. Cushing: Cher was an 11-month-old Great Dane whose owner explained that she had to "rescue" the puppy from the breeder when Cher was 4 months old because the breeder kept the pups inside, never letting them out of the house. Cher became fearful, anxious, and phobic during her first year of life from several things. While she was missing out on the most important social development time, there were other things that helped solidify fears in Cher's mind. When she was eating, her ID tag got stuck on her food stand. When she looked up, the bowls crashed on the ground and the stand was stuck on her as she ran

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off. While out for a walk, Cher dragged her owner into traffic when a truck backfired. Then at Christmas time, Cher became tangled in Christmas lights she and got zapped from them.

Five minutes after arriving at our facility, Cher noticed a ceiling fan above her and started to panic, pouncing back and forth and diving under the owner's chair. The noise of the chair moving made her more fearful and she dragged the owner to the door. Cher stayed with us for 3 weeks.

In making her a Wall Flower we saw how random noises would make her reactive. We taught her Heel and Sit so she had something to do as we made random noises. When she panicked or tried to run off she was redirected into the commands. As we built a trusting relationship we created collapsing circles so we could control the pressure of the triggers and overcome sounds that she was originally reactive to. A collapsing circle is like an extremely controlled group social and is set up uniquely based on what behavior needs changing. We create the distraction or the fear inducing trigger until we see a change in the dog's behavior. For example, in one collapsing circle, Cher and I were in the middle of 8 people circling around us. The circle started far enough away for Cher's ability to handle the trigger without reaction and then gradually got tighter, flooding her with the trigger from 8 places. As the group circled, they continually clapped their hands. This action caused Cher to panic at first but as the group circled around getting closer she began to relax. She knew I wouldn't let anything bad happen to her because of the trust we built. As soon as she sat and relaxed, the noise stopped and the group spread out again.

This controlled work lead to our ability to go outside and face uncontrolled noises like lawn mowers, cars, buses and trucks; all things that Cher was extremely fearful of. Cher went from being fearful and reactive to noises to a confident companion who defaulted into a sit when she heard a noise out of the blue.

In relation to the case described above, were you able to change the owners' attitudes, as well?

G. Cockrell: Yes, see above.

N. Hodges: Being able to change the humans is key to not only maintaining the gains in trust of a fearful dog, but paramount for continued improvement. By changing the owner's understanding of the behaviors, fears and universe of their dog, they can then see the signs and signals, and know how to help the dog out of the wrong state of mind. I spend, on average, 6 to 8 hours educating the owners about canines, and specifically the issues and solutions for their dog. That is as important as working with the dog. I can change the dog, but when I leave, if I haven't changed the humans, the dog can revert.

S. Fulcher: I was and this was pretty essential to Loki's progress. One of the really neat things that happened is by having them use Loki's meals in a proactive an interactive way they found that they began to enjoy him more. They found they were looking for new fun things to teach him every day.

Some other things we had to work on was their perception of why Loki was behaving how he was. They suspected he was acting out of dominance and

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protectiveness of them, but I explained to them that in fact he was insecure and protecting himself. Changing their perception that they had to be Loki's advocate and protector made a huge difference.

Lastly we also had to address that they were feeling sorry for Loki and giving affection at inappropriate times. We talked about being careful not to reinforce anxiety, and the difference between reassuring and coddling. I also explained to them that in order for him to move forward they had to stop feeling sorry for him and move forward themselves. Loki's owners were excellent students and took everything I said to heart and worked very hard with him. As a result they have changed their dog's (and their own) life for the better and have a dog they enjoy a lot more.

R. McFarlane: Yes, see above.

L.M. Daniel: Changing the owner's attitudes was key here – none of their success would have happened without it. The husband expected this dog to be just like their previous dog, who was very confident, very attached and "never ran away." He initially kept describing Blackie's behavior as "misbehavior." By being patient and empathetic with his frustrations and (unvoiced, but obvious) feelings of rejection, I was able to help him to reframe Blackie's behavior and even to see how he had inadvertently created and reinforced some of it by doing the chasing game so much. The wife was easier, but was also creating problems for Blackie by over-pitying her and therefore expecting nothing and getting what she expected. When I worked with Blackie towards the end of our session, the owners repeatedly stated, in evident surprise, that she suddenly seemed "trainable." Sweet little Blackie was perfectly trainable, she just needed the right kind of help.

R. Reynolds: Definitely, but I wouldn't say it was to the full extent I wanted. They were very caring and dedicated owners and they were willing to learn a new way of understanding. I emphasized the importance of running training drills to work her through things that set her off (like the doorbell), and not wait for the situation to naturally happen. I explained that it's like a fire drill: You periodically go through the drills so when a fire actually breaks out, you can keep your wits and you know how to deal with it. The drills are beneficial for both the people and the dogs.

I think another issue that developed was that the wife liked the attachment from the dog. And once the dog became fond of the husband, he liked it too. Affection

overpowered self-improvement. So while she improved with some behaviors, she wasn't given the chance to fully continue to work on building her confidence and independence.

K. Cushing: The owners were willing to do what was necessary to help Cher succeed. They saw the changes in Cher's behavior around normally fearful triggers and they followed up with lessons and employed the techniques we used with Cher. With the owners confident handling, Cher blossomed into a happy companion, confidently running up to people, playing outside even when the landscapers were mowing the lawn, walking past busy streets, hanging out with the family instead of hiding under the table when the ceiling fan was turned on and looking towards them for guidance instead of reacting fearfully. They also reported that Cher was so confident she was becoming a little naughty! But that's a different story.

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NEWS from a NEWBIE

by Alyson Rodges

Being a NEWBIE is a right of passage, a necessary step on the path to becoming a mature, contributing member to your field. Being a NEWBIE is scary. It's intimidating. It's exciting. It's bursting with newness. It's fraught with mistakes and missteps. It's also the first necessary step to making your dreams of becoming a full-fledged dog trainer come true.

When you make that life-changing decision to become a dog trainer and you begin to reach out to others in your profession, and you're a NEWBIE, it's like reaching into the vortex of the unknown, a land filled with new people, ideas, and apparently, its own language. I have heard enough acronyms that would make the largest government institution proud: APO, CYA, IBD, B&T, BAT, IMO, IME, GSD, EAS, SATS, just to name a few.

Once you've chosen to become a professional dog trainer, it's like an exclusive club that you so very badly want to be a part of, but you're not quite sure how to go about it. Joining the IACP was my first necessary step and I thank Marc Goldberg for that invitation. Going to my first IACP conference was the next big leap. Where else can you be in the midst of so many legends in this industry, rub elbows and listen and learn? Where else can you be instantly thrust into a melee of ideas and people sharing a similar passion?

What I discovered at my first IACP Conference was that there is an over-whelmingly welcoming attitude. After traveling across-country alone, I uttered a sigh of relief when there was a welcoming smile and a "Hello, come sit with me," invitation when entering a room of complete strangers. I was warmed by the genuine kindness of Alicia Hewitt, Bob Maida, Babette Haggerty and Chad Mackin. I was thrilled when Tyler Muto took time to talk to me during a break about strategies for e-collar use and "Place." I was encouraged when Sean O'Shea, Jeff Gellman and Laura Morgan made me feel that there is a place for me in this business even though I don't work with aggressive dogs. Jen Freilich & SuperB were voices from home. Mailey McLaughlin's helpful insights and warm smile made me feel like I was part of something bigger than

myself. Martin Deeley made me feel that I was part of the family. I was totally in awe of every presenter and class I attended. I listened. I learned.

After having my mind bent by people and concepts that challenged and inspired me, I took away the knowledge that although I'm a NEWBIE, I'm not alone. The IACP is a place where there is room at the table for all. There have been many others before me that have helped pave the way for me to find my own vision and voice in this new land. I'm grateful and humbled. I only ask that those of you with experience and wisdom keep reaching out to the NEWBIE. Invite us in, teach us, mentor us, give us tips, correct us, challenge us, keep us aspiring to move past where we currently are, and accept us for who we are and where we are in this season of our journey.

Remember, you were once a NEWBIE too.

Alyson Rodges is a dog trainer specializing in puppies. She loves people as much as their pooches and teaches the necessary skills for them both to enjoy a balanced life with each other. Aly's approach is rooted in relationship, not commands alone. Aly trains multiple dogs at once in her own home, complete with teenagers, a bit of chaos, and a lot of real life. Aly's Puppy Boot Camp is located on the gorgeous central coast of California in the small town of Santa Maria. You can find out more about Aly at www.alysonrodges.com or email her at alysonrodges@gmail.com.

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Clear Communication and Compatibility

by Trish Schommer

To be easily understood with information that is conveyed and received equals a state in which people are able to work together without trouble or conflict. Clear communication and compatibility help build a good rapport between trainer and client.

There are a lot of quizzes online and much information about how people can select the dog that will be a good match for them. Qualities sought may include: exercise requirements, intelligence level, loyalty, size, energy, protection ability, breed, grooming needs, and temperament.

How about a checklist in finding the right dog trainer? Questions a person may include could be:

- how much do you work out?
- what is your IQ?
- are you loyal, supportive?
- how much do you weigh?
- how tall are you?
- are you protective, vigilant?
- what are your emotional and behavioral tendencies?

All joking aside, imagine that for a potential client, locating a suitable dog trainer may be as important to them as finding the right dog to fit one's personality and lifestyle. In seeking a trainer, they may look at such things as: education, certifications, experience, methods, recommendations, costs, location, website, social media, and associations. A decision may not be made until there is an initial meeting, demonstration, or class observed. After this, the client should be ready to make their determination.

Ideally, communication will be open and honest between both parties from the beginning to the end. As many have experienced, this is not always the case. We can encourage a handler by being truthful and straightforward with them and their dog. For the benefit of the trainer, client, and dog, be honest and timely in decisions. If you are unhappy about a situation, it is

likely that your client is, also.

When a trainer decides they can no longer help, or the working relationship is over, it should be communicated clearly and directly to the client. Often, it is for a combination of reasons that have, perhaps, built up over time. There can be multiple explanations. Anything from disagreements in training approach, personality conflicts, misunderstandings, lack of taking advice or follow through, losing a dog or adding a new dog, to losing attention or interest. Sometimes it is just time to move on, whether it is determined by trainer, client, or mutual agreement. Both parties may actually be of the same opinion that it is not working out and the client may feel relieved to be dismissed. If appropriate, a different trainer could be recommended.

Over time, friendships may build between trainer and client. This could make it even more difficult to move on when the need is there. Keeping clear communication and integrity become even more important. Do not let feelings simmer if the determination has been made to end the training association. As with other matters in life, things can change. It could be decided you are no longer compatible in the working relationship. Perhaps it is not worth dealing with the problem, situation, disagreements, or events that may have occurred. We learn the lessons we can from each experience.

Develop and maintain a good trainer/client connection. Be honest, open, and clear in communications. This will encourage an amicable training and learning environment. Also, it leads to compatibility, which is defined "can work well together, in agreement." This will benefit trainer, client, and dog!

Trish has been an IACP member since 2007 and has attended most conferences. The last three, her German Shepherd, Rex, has traveled with her. Since 2003, she has been an evaluator for Miami Valley Pet Therapy Association (mvPTa) in Dayton, Ohio. In June 2014, Trish started teaching Basic and Advanced group classes at Homeland K-9 Dog Training in Springboro, Ohio.

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