

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

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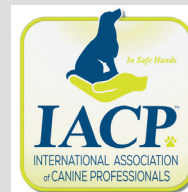
International Association of Canine Professionals

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
the Well Being of Dogs**



How to Join IACP:

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

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

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The IACP is proud to announce that Member

Cherisse Feddock

*has successfully completed her Certified Dog Trainer examination
and is now able to add the designation IACP-CDT to her name.*

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

Well done!

The Board of the IACP



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.

PHOTO submissions are welcome, too!

Photos should be high resolution. Cover submissions should be vertical/portrait orientation.

President's Letter

by Melanie Benware

I started out my career working with dogs at a kennel and rescue outside St. Louis. I had already been using prong collars on my personal dogs for 5 years and even had a trainer work with me with one of them with an e-collar. Back then, it had never occurred to me that someone might think these tools were abusive or inhumane. I loved my dogs, I wanted the best for them, and I also wanted them to be safe and well behaved. So when I started working at the kennel/rescue, I was not surprised that their trainer also used prong collars and e-collars. Fast forward a few years and I had moved to a new area to start up a training program for a large kennel in Richmond, VA. I was one of only a handful of trainers that used these tools, and I was surrounded by the so-called purely positive trainers. That didn't stop me; I put my head down, continued to do good work training dogs, volunteered with rescues, and let the criticism of a few roll off my back. For 16 years now, I have had a very successful training career and a great following in my community. I leaned towards letting my training results and client reviews speak for me, rarely feeling the need to defend my work but knowing the environment was shifting.

We all know that there is a movement out there to have tools banned and methods condemned--all in the name of humane treatment of animals. We also know that many of the "studies" that are cited to support these views are skewed and slanted and very well marketed to the general public in an attempt to gain their support. This movement keeps the IACP Legislative Committee and the Board very busy! Tools have been banned in countries and regions around the world, and they are just getting started. We have all felt attacked at one point or another for our choice to use a tool, all in

the effort to create a better bond between owner and dog, make dogs more adoptable, and even to save dogs from being rehomed or euthanized.

This feeling of attack can lead some to close their mind to possibilities--to shut out those who do not agree with us and our methods 100%. We can be tempted to go on the attack ourselves, criticizing anyone who doesn't use the tools we work so hard to protect. In doing this, we make ourselves no better than those who condemn us. We are shutting out the possibility of changing someone's mind. The IACP was founded on the principles of being inclusive--anyone and everyone who had a passion for training dogs and making this world a better place for them to live was welcome in the organization as long as that person did not work to get tools/methods banned. This is a principle I stand behind fully. By working to change people's minds, show them we are humane, that we love dogs, and that we are passionate about the lives they lead with their humans, the tide can change.

This does not mean we ignore the threat; we will continue to fight against legislation that removes our right to use tools to better the lives of the dogs we care about so much. We will also become more proactive in reaching out to our legislators around the world, putting the IACP in the forefront of their minds when bills are being drafted--making sure they know we are the premier canine professional

industry in the world and we are a voice for the majority of the profession--not just the outspoken few.

That being said, there was a bit of a kerfuffle when a few of our speakers for this year's conference were announced. Myself, our home office, and some directors (past and present) were contacted by a few members. Some voiced concern, some asked questions, some complained, and some con-



demned us-- for bringing in trainers or professionals who have at times spoken out against the use of tools, promoted the purely positive movement, or promoted others that align with it. My response was this: we are simply inviting them to the table. We are asking them to come meet us, see our members with their dogs, talk to those who use these tools, and see with their own eyes that we are not evil. We hope they see that these tools are not inhumane, and that the dogs wearing them are happy and well balanced. We are no better than those fighting against us if we refuse to learn and work with those in the profession that do not use all the tools we do. By inviting them to speak, we are showing them we will listen, that our members are eager to learn, and by doing so we are starting a long overdue conversation.

I am not naïve; I know this is a long and arduous road, but this is one very big step forward to the possibility of opening a few minds (some within our membership and, hopefully, a large number of

those outside the IACP). I have already been contacted by non-IACP members who are very curious now about attending and joining because this conference has made them feel that we are more inclusive and not just for those that use prongs and ecollars. We have also seen a huge growth in our sponsorship for conference and I cannot help but feel that part of that has to do with this diverse group of speakers.

I will leave you with this quote from the "Winningest Musher in the World," Jeff King: "Open your mind WIDE....it's bigger in there than you might think!"

Respectfully,

Melanie Benware

Melanie Benware, President

melanie.benware@canineprofessionals.com



Meeting the Needs of Senior Dogs

by Erica C. Boling, PhD

A few months ago, I lost my 11 ½ year old Doberman to Wobblers Disease. This year I've seen my 9-year-old Malinois showing increased signs of aging. Lately, I've been thinking a lot about how we can slow the effects of aging in our dogs. Just because our dogs are getting older doesn't mean we set lower expectations for them. Our senior dogs need fitness programs just as much, if not more, than younger dogs. Instead of decreasing activities for our senior dogs, it's important to keep them as active as possible. We will at times, however, have to make accommodations for them while considering their unique needs.

People who are familiar with human exercise science know how important it is for us to maintain our physical activity and muscle strength as we age. We also know the benefits of maintaining good balance and flexibility throughout our senior years. Doesn't it then make sense that strength training, flexibility and cardio exercise are equally important for our aging dogs?

The Aging Process

What typically happens to many people and dogs is that we start to decrease exercise as we get older. Our sports activities on the weekend frequently end. Visits to the gym become fewer. For the aging canine, many sport and working dogs retire and spend more time in the house than on the training field. During a time when maintaining flexibility, strength and cardiovascular activity is extremely important, many aging dogs are quickly losing mobility, strength and endurance.



The aging process impacts our dogs just as it does us. Eyesight and hearing start to diminish. Flexibility and range of motion decrease. Muscle mass and body strength deteriorate. Balance and body awareness can also be negatively impacted, along with a decrease in cardiovascular endurance. There is hope, however, because the aging dog, like us, can experience tremendous benefits from regular exercise. Staying fit and active is a great way to slow down the effects of aging.

Keeping our dogs fit throughout their younger years can definitely help them as they enter their senior years. Keeping them fit and active as seniors, however, becomes especially important if we want to keep our dogs happy, healthy and mobile, for as long as possible.

As our dogs age, it's essential to keep up with annual veterinary check-ups. Age-related diseases and new allergies can crop up in dogs that previously never had any health issues. Ask your veterinarian to see if there are any exercise restrictions or limitations, especially if your dog has any health issues or is taking medication.

Special Considerations for the Senior Dog

While engaging in exercise and activities with your senior dog, you will most likely have to make some adjustments and modifications along the way. Below are some simple steps that you can take today to improve overall fitness and the well being of your senior dog.

- 1) Make sure that your dog's diet meets his or her nutritional needs. Speak with a veterinarian or an expert in canine nutrition to see if changes need to be made to your

dog's diet. Also, many aging dogs experience some form of arthritis, so be sure to also talk with your veterinarian about joint health.

2) Keep your dog slim and free from excess body fat. Many senior dogs start to experience mobility issues and discomfort from arthritis. Any extra body weight is just creating unnecessary wear and tear on the body. The additional weight can also make daily activities more painful.

3) Provide additional mobility support for your dog on an as-needed basis. This could be in the form of a mobility harness used to help your dog go up and down the stairs or using a ramp to go in and out of the car. Help your dog maintain independence for as long as possible, but know that eventually you might have to provide additional mobility support.

4) Use extra rugs around the house to give your dog more traction while moving. A decrease in muscle mass and flexibility can make it challenging for senior dogs to maneuver themselves on slick surfaces. Even short pile carpet can lead to legs sliding out from under them. Hardwood and tile floors can be especially challenging for the aging dog. Minimize the risk of falling so that your dog can maintain confidence when walking on a variety of surfaces.

5) Limit or avoid high impact and repetitive activities such as jumping. If your senior dog is still engaging in high impact activities, limit the number of days and repetitions of these activities to lessen overall wear and tear on the body. Also when working your dog, train and exercise on soft surfaces such as grass and dirt.

6) Be sure to gradually warm up your dog's muscles prior to exercise to help enhance performance and minimize injury and discomfort. A simple way to do this is to gradually raise your dog's heart rate by going from a walk to a slow trot and then increasing the speed of the trot.

7) Keep your senior dog well-hydrated and always be sure to walk and cool down your dog before crating or confining to a small space. Whenever possible, give your dog plenty of room to stretch out and relax after exercise.

Another activity that I find to be helpful for my senior dogs is incorporating swimming into their exercise routine. Swimming is a great way to minimize impact on the body and help prevent repetitive use injuries. If you swim your dog, however, be aware that older dogs might struggle to regulate body temperature. For the aging senior, swimming in warm water is best. Also be aware that swimming can be great exercise, but it might not be recommended for dogs with back issues, strained muscles or other health problems. Be sure to check with your veterinarian to ensure that your exercise program meets your dog's needs.

Conclusion

Maintain a weekly exercise routine for your dog and be sure to include activities for increasing strength, flexibility, body awareness and cardiovascular endurance. Add a massage or two to your weekly routine as a bonus. Also, be sure to check with your veterinarian before starting a new fitness routine. Recognize that senior dogs can suffer from cognitive dysfunction due to the aging process, so you might see changes in your dog's response to familiar things. Always be prepared



to make adjustments to your dog's exercise program and don't hesitate to reach out to health care professionals and canine fitness experts for support.

Do you have an interest in canine fitness and want to learn how to become a Certified Canine Athlete Specialist (CCAS)? Visit <http://tinyurl.com/k9fit>

Erica C. Boling, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Education at Rutgers University and the owner and founder of Northeast K9 Conditioning, LLC and Northeast K9 Conditioning Academy. Erica helps sport and working dog handlers create peak performance, canine athletes by teaching them how to integrate canine fitness into their training programs. Erica is a Certified Canine Fitness Trainer (CCFT), Certified Canine Massage Provider, member of the United States Federation of Sleddog Sports (USFSS) and a member of their USA National Team. She is also one of the founding members of North Pocono Search, Rescue and Recovery. Currently, Erica teaches canine fitness to officers at the Atlantic County "John Sonny Burke" K-9 Academy. She also does narcotics detection with her Belgian Malinois and trains and competes in French Ring.

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Training Difficult Dogs for Adoption: The Ethics of Rescue Rehab

by Ruth Crisler

Chicago's rescue community was rocked in January by the loss of thirty-one dogs to an early morning kennel fire. The tragedy occurred at a small suburban boarding facility known for housing and rehabilitating dogs that other trainers wouldn't readily take. A long list of foster-based rescues utilized the facility for their most difficult-to-place dogs. Not surprisingly, it was overcrowded.

Tough questions emerged in the fire's aftermath, regarding the experience of homeless dogs undergoing behavior rehab and the ethical obligations that go along with trying to save a life. It's been suggested that the welfare of the sixty dogs on premises was already badly compromised before the fire broke out, that some rescues may have turned a blind eye to poor conditions and questionable practices, that the trainer renting the property was well-intentioned, but overwhelmed.

One of the dogs that died in the fire had been slated for evaluation at my training facility in the following weeks. She was making slow progress, and the rescue wanted a fresh take on her capacity to be made adoptable. I remember that conversation well, including my concern over sounding more cynical or less compassionate than expected. Providing training and behavioral support to dozens of private shelters and rescues has taught me how essential it is to set clear boundaries up front.

It's not just about my own interests, although as a business owner, I have those, too. It's about minimizing the possibility that my involvement could undermine anyone's safety, waste a rescue's resources, or actually worsen a dog's situation.

At the end of the day, I don't want to be in the business of making dangerous dogs look more adoptable—something we all know a good trainer is perfectly capable of doing. I don't want to put my family or staff at unnecessary risk, or put my

name on a dog I could see doing serious damage down the road. I don't want to promote or profit from investment in a dog that stands little to no chance at succeeding long-term, and, in fact, I regularly refuse dogs that are plainly ill-suited to learning in a kennel environment or likely to disrupt other clients' training programs.

In order to minimize risk of doing harm and maximize the positive impact of my work, I do my best to follow some basic rules.

Take a Full History

Gathering an accurate history on a dog in rescue can pose a real challenge. By the time a professional trainer is brought on board, a dog could have multiple failed placements under his belt and sport a narrative based entirely on second and third-hand accounts. It won't be possible in all cases to form a cogent picture or pin down every relevant detail, but it's important to put in the effort.

We require adoption counselors to fill out the same behavior evaluation form as every other client, and request permission to contact previous fosters and adopters. If other trainers or behavior professionals have assessed the dog, we ask for written copies and/or permission to communicate directly with them. If direct communication is discouraged, prior assessments dismissed, or if evidence surfaces that a dog's history has been misrepresented, that's a serious red flag. If another behavior professional either declined the dog or recommended euthanasia, it's worth finding out why. Even if that person's skills or methods differ from yours, it's better to reach out than to assume their input would not be valuable.

It's also a matter of accountability. Individual volunteers may be powerfully motivated to soft-pedal a dog's bite history, offer excuses for past aggres-

sion, or blame the poor judgement of previous owners or fosters. Keep in mind that a history of prior placements doesn't just provide insight into the dog. It tells you something about how the rescue itself operates and what sort of situation the dog is apt to wind up in next.

Understand the Goal

In many respects, a rescue or shelter is just like any other client. You need to understand their goals and expectations, in order to know if you support them and determine if you can meet them.

Are they looking for better manners to boost a diamond-in-the-rough's adoptability quotient, or seeking guidance as to whether a dog should potentially be euthanized? These are different goals that require different approaches, even down to the role of social media. Developing a following for a dog on Facebook or Instagram will surely help in the first situation. In the second, it could easily interfere with a group's ability—or even your own—to make an objective and responsible decision.

What is the organization's standard of adoptability? What are their criteria for fosters and adopters? What is their budget? These are essential questions, even if they are uncomfortable to ask or difficult to answer. Nearly any dog can be successful in the hands of a pro, but if the result of weeks or months of rehabilitation is a dog whose success will always be contingent on a highly structured environment and expert handling, that may not be good enough.

What will happen if you determine the dog poses significant risk? Will your assessment be taken seriously or put aside in pursuit of a more favorable one? Is the priority to make safe and successful placements or to save the dog at any cost?

Know Your Limits

Rescues often ask fewer questions than regular clients. They may be under pressure to move a dog quickly or desperate for help with serious behavior problems. It may be tempting to jump at the opportunity to be a hero, but preparing a dog whose breeding was likely irresponsible, whose early training was almost certainly neglected, and whose background is poorly documented—all for a future you cannot remotely foresee—is a pretty tall order, and the stakes can get very high.

Respect your own limitations, along with those of the dog and any future adopter. If the behavior

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issues in play are outside your wheelhouse to assess or address, consider referring to a more qualified trainer or behavior professional in your area.

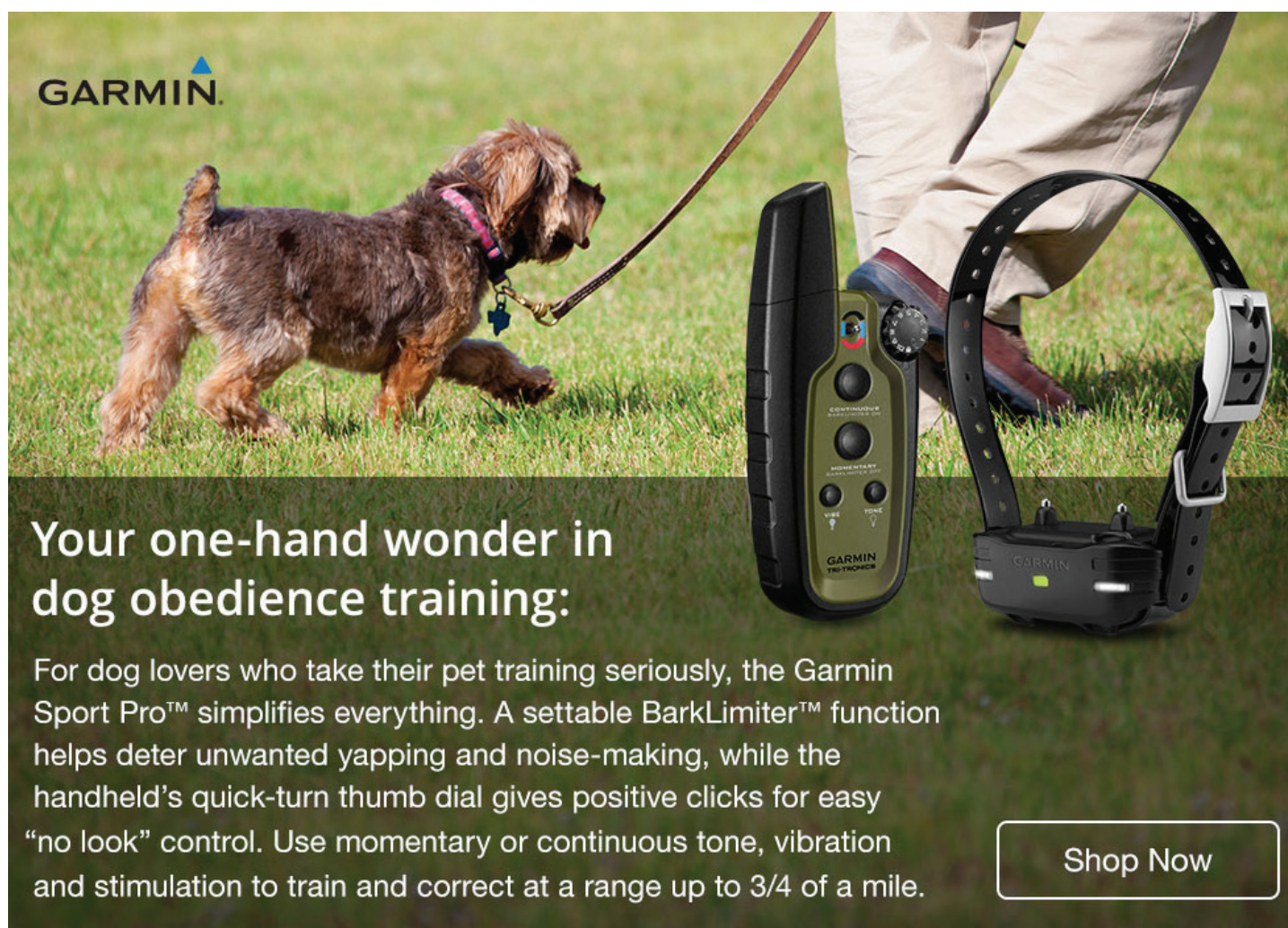
Along with acknowledging the limits of your own knowledge and competency, it's fair to acknowledge personal limits on the types of rescue or adoption practices you feel comfortable facilitating. For example, I choose to lend support to rescues pulling dogs from local shelters ahead of those importing dogs from out of state or overseas.

Guiding a dog in need down the path to his forever home can be profoundly rewarding, and in a world where a professional trainer's stamp of approval could be the difference between life and death for some dogs, it may be hard to make consistently rational choices. Remembering our

own ethical obligations—to the dogs themselves, to their future adopters, to the rescues that hire us, and to our local communities—can help us to stay clearheaded and able to make (and live with) emotionally difficult decisions.

Ruth Crisler, CBCC-KA, is a certified behavior consultant and Ethics Committee Chair of the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants. She began training dogs professionally following a career with horses. In 2000 she founded See Spot Run, a Chicago training and boarding facility focused on pet obedience, socialization, and behavior work. She has provided training support to numerous shelters and rescues, including Dogo Argentino, Rottweiler, and pit bull groups. She currently shares her life with a husband, two children, a pit bull, a GSD, and a westie. In her free time, she practices tae kwon and cooks risotto.

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A Battle of Wills

By Ryan Gwilliam

Jennifer (my customer): I want my dog to stop pulling on the leash, stay out of the trash, stop jumping up, and I want him to poop in the same spot in the yard every time.

Me: Great, let's go outside and get to work.

Jennifer: But most of the issues I'm having are happening inside the home.

Me: Let's go do some of your dog's favorite things and sneak in a little bit of obedience; he won't even know we're training him. Some of the behaviors you mentioned will go away on their own, and if they don't I'll show you how to fix them directly next session. Deal?

Jennifer: Sounds good.

Side note: In the past, I taught customers to directly confront behavioral issues, for example: use this exercise to get your dog to stop jumping and use this one when she begs for food. All the exercises I used worked fine for a few days, but the dogs would eventually out-stubborn their owners. In some ways, I was making things worse because I was taking what little time and energy my customers had to devote to their dogs and turned it into a battle of wills over who was in charge of setting boundaries and house rules. I call these battles "difficult conversations" and at some point, every dog owner has to have them. Much to my surprise, now that I'm engaging dogs in a way that is more fun for them they are butting heads with their owners far less and when they do have a "difficult conversation" it's more of a conversation and less of a battle.

Once Jennifer and I got out to some open space, I put a 15-foot long leash on her dog and we started walking around the field. Jennifer's dog Smokey is a hyper silver Lab whose brains fall out every time he sees a ball. When his mom reprimanded

him for anything, he saw it as a fun way to get a rise out of her.

I allowed Smokey to sniff and run all around us, as long as his leash stayed loose and dragging on the ground. If he lost focus on us for any reason we quickly did a 180-degree turn to get him refocused. I explained to Jennifer that there is a lot of variation and complexity that comes with this field exercise but today we're going to keep things simple. I said, "my goals are for you two to have fun together, for Smokey to learn that following you leads to fun, and for you to see that by doing this 1-2 times a day for 15 minutes Smokey is far more likely to listen to you in the house."

Smokey was all over the place for the first ten minutes. We had to turn around many times to refocus his attention, but for the last five minutes he seemed pretty happy to let mom decide where to go and how fast to get there.

During the first session, it's always hard for me to keep things simple. I'm tempted to add more detail and steps to the exercise because I know I can speed the process up, but when I do the customer invariably struggles more; I find that the fewer things I talk about each session the better the things I do talk about stick!

And by picking exercises that engage the entire nose, mind, and body of the dog, my training sessions feel more like play and less like training. It's been a wonderful change as I've seen increased follow-through from customers, less head-butting between dogs and owners, and I've shortened my training sessions by an average of 45 minutes. I'm essentially getting more for less and so are my customers! If your customers are anything like mine, they'll do their homework more often and end up telling everyone they know about you.

In a perfect world, my customers would work their dogs 3 times a day, but how many of your

customers would actually follow through with an hour of daily homework? They may have all the good intentions in the world but most won't be able to fit in 60 minutes of dog training for 7 days straight, let alone for their dog's entire life. So sending customers home with an hour of homework per day and then being disappointed when they don't follow through is a recipe for frustration on all sides.

Instead of giving customers a guilt trip, say, "that's ok, life gets in the way, what can you do tomorrow to make sure your dog gets her quality time?" And I'll encourage them with, "I know how hard it can be to fit in quality time with my own dogs sometimes. New habits are hard to form but once it is a habit, you will be subconsciously planning your days around the 20 minutes you always spend with your dog."

Between sessions 2 and 3, Jennifer got slammed with work and only practiced with her dog twice that week. So we talked about it:

Me: That's ok, it happens. What time are you going to work with Smokey tomorrow?

Jennifer: I'll do it at 4 pm because I get off work early on Fridays.

Me: Great, let me know how he does! Did you notice a difference with his behavior at home the first week when you got him out to the field every day?

Jennifer: Yes, definitely! When I asked him to do something he would do it the first time I asked instead of ignoring me or making me repeat myself a bunch of times.

Me: It's funny how that works right? Even though we didn't work directly with his indoor behaviors he doesn't feel the need to push back when you ask for something. It's because he knows you'll make time for his favorite things in your day, so he doesn't need to invent ways to entertain himself or get your attention.

A few weeks after her last training session,



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Jennifer asked me to do an in-home training session to address some issues Smokey was having. I wasn't sure what to expect when I got there, but on the drive over I envisioned him bouncing off the walls and knocking toddlers over. To my pleasant surprise, I found her 4 kids walking around the house and Smokey was wiggly but very polite as I entered. It seems she applied the training she learned with great success and the only issues that remained were minor issues like counter surfing and a little play biting that Smokey still hadn't stopped. When I asked if she'd been doing her homework she said that she had been getting Smokey out every single day, but Smokey already told me that by how happy and relaxed he was.

Hopefully, this success story will encourage you to keep sessions simple by picking one or two exercises for customers to practice. Show them how fun dog training can be so they want to do their homework every day. The dogs will thank you by following your customer's lead, bouncing around

the field and wagging their tails. And your customers will thank you by telling their friends about you.

Ryan Gwilliam is the owner of Train Walk Poop in Salt Lake City, Utah. He started working with dogs in 2007 and has a team of 15 employees. In addition to in home obedience training, Ryan and his team provide dog walking services, run a daycare & boarding center, an Invisible Fence dealership, and a premium dog food line called Utah Paw. Ryan also has a semi-regular TV spot on Fox news teaching basic training concepts.

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To Medicate or Not: Some Things to Consider

by Sarah Dixon

It is common to have a negative stigma towards behavior medications – however, responsibly utilized, they can be an excellent addition to a behavior modification program. Medication can help a dog learn new skills faster and retain new behaviors longer term. It can drastically improve success for cases involving panic disorders like separation anxiety, or dogs that struggle with environmental fear.

Not all dogs need medications, of course, and training and lifestyle adaptations are often sufficient. However, medications are often considered a last resort when they can drastically improve the success of a case and the dog's welfare. How can we determine when a dog may benefit from the addition of anxiety medications to a behavior modification program? How should we bridge this sensitive topic with our clients?

I personally have become a lot more open and familiar with behavior medications since moving to Manhattan and practicing as a full time dog behavior consultant here. Before moving to the "Big Apple," I recommended medication twice in my practice – of course for the most extreme cases I worked with. In both instances, medication improved the outcome and quality of life for these troubled dogs significantly.

An urban environment presents several unique challenges – it is congested, loud and chaotic, for one. For dogs who are sensitive or fearful of sounds, people, dogs, or vehicles it's an absolute living nightmare. Rehoming is not an appropriate answer for all of these dogs, although it is a solution for some more difficult cases. Since moving to New York City, I've had multiple clients who were able to keep their dogs in the city because of utilizing behavior medication. Although we made significant headway with training and behavior modification, desensitizing to the chaos of the city can be nearly impossible. There's no escaping it,

and no working up to it – what's more, dogs MUST go out into the terrifying world multiple times per day to use the bathroom as it's extremely rare to have private outdoor space.

What makes the city even more challenging is it is extremely difficult to provide a dog with biologically fulfilling exercises – decompressing from the urban stimulation is often not possible, and it's extremely difficult to let your dog have opportunities to run free and be a dog. Dog parks are not an option for many canines, and even then, they are small, bland, mulch-filled boxes which are not stimulating to the senses in the slightest.

So, precisely how do medications help? They do not and should not make the dog 'drugged up' or sedated. When used properly in appropriate doses, they help dogs in several ways: they increase their threshold for tolerating stress, reduce frustration threshold, and improve their ability to recover from stressful events. This means that dogs are operating at a lower baseline stress, are less likely to be volatile, and can get back to normal faster after a less-than-optimal experience. For many of my clients, this can make or break their ability to live happy lives in the city.

I frequently work with dogs who are too fearful to even walk outside, and adding medication to their behavior modification has allowed them to blossom into dogs who joyfully accompany their humans on walks. Dogs that break out of the apartment when left alone can be left peacefully for several hours by adding in medication to separation anxiety training, allowing their owners much needed ability to sometimes 'have a life' and preventing the dog from escalating into a panic every time his people have to go to the grocery store.

As mentioned previously, not all dogs need medication. In the vast majority of cases, I will want to try training first. However, sometimes progress plateaus and adding in medication may make a world of difference. Sometimes a case is so drastic that I will recommend medication be started right away, if I feel that the dog is currently suffering from such a poor quality of life, or if I feel like they are too stressed to be able to learn new behaviors. To assess if a dog may be a medication candidate, I essentially look at several factors:

- **Stimulus** – what provokes the stress response from the dog? Is it something unusual that happens rarely or infrequently? Or is it an 'every day' or 'all day' type of encounter? If it is something that the dog is constantly barraged with, training and behavior modification may be difficult and medication may be recommended sooner rather than later. However, if the other two factors are low, this may not be necessary.
- **Frequency** – refers to what proportion of potential triggers produce a volatile response. For example, if a dog reacts to every dog it passes on the street, that is a high frequency (100%). In comparison, a dog that reacts to 2 out of 10 dogs is a low frequency.
- **Intensity** – this refers to how volatile the dog's reaction is. For example, a low intensity reaction may be a few barks, but a high intensity reaction is barking, lunging etc. Higher intensity reactions are more difficult to interrupt and may be more difficult to modify with behavior modification only. However again, if it's an infrequently encountered stimulus it may not be needed.
- **Threshold** – refers to how much distance the dog needs to be

away from the trigger to remain calm. A dog with a large threshold may react to another dog down the block or across the street, whereas a dog with a small threshold may only react when passing a dog on the sidewalk.

- **Recovery** – refers to how quickly a dog returns to normal after a stressful event. A dog with good recovery may bark at a person passing by, but quickly 'get over it' and move on. A dog with poor recovery may bark and one dog and remain stressed the remainder of the walk, often escalating with each encounter of a trigger during the session. Some dogs have such poor recovery they can be more volatile for days after experience something stressful.



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A dog who is high on only one of two of these factors is likely not a candidate for medication. However, it becomes easy to see how a dog who is high on 3 or more can potentially not be in a very good state to learn new behaviors and also potentially have a poor quality of life.

If you feel a client's dog may benefit from medication, I suggest having a calm, educational-but-empathetic conversation with them. Most people are understandably hesitant to utilize medication with their pets, but when explained how it can help their dog, they may become open to it. Often resistance is based in misunderstanding, so simply asking your client what their concerns are and answering with fact can help a lot.

It's important not to recommend specific medications, but instead suggest your client discuss with their vet. You may say something along the lines of "Based off of my observations, I feel that Dexter may be a candidate for behavior medication. I suggest you have a conversation with your veterinarian about this. I'd be happy to speak with them if they need." Maintaining positive relationships with veterinarians is important, so we must exercise caution not to overstep our boundaries in these conversations.

I usually inform my clients that the medication can be utilized for as short term as 6 to 12 months before fading off, but some dogs may do better remaining on them long term. You can reassure them that for the most part, long-term side effects of commonly used medications are minor, and if they have any additional concerns along these lines to discuss with their vet.

Most general veterinarians have a good understanding of pharmacology, so in many cases I will just instruct clients to approach their vet. In complex or especially challenging cases, a Veterinary Behavior specialist is an excellent option – they have a higher knowledge of not only pharmacology and supplements, but how health issues play into changing an animal's behavior. They can be invaluable assets in difficult cases or for dogs who don't respond well to 'first line' medications. If you do not have a veterinary

behaviorist local to you, there are several who will do a distance consultation with your client's veterinarian.

In conclusion, medication is not for every dog, nor should it be viewed as a quick fix. Medication is seldom very effective on its own, and is best utilized in conjunction with a behavior modification program. Many dogs can experience improved quality of life and quicker, longer lasting results to training with the addition of behavior medication. Especially in condensed urban environments, utilizing medication may increase success rate and permit more dogs to remain in their homes.

Sarah Dixon is an IAABC Certified Dog Behaviour Consultant who works full time in New York City. Sarah has trained many different canine personalities as well as multiple other species of animals including cats, chickens, parrots, and horses. She has trained, competed, or titled in many dog spots with her canine companions of past and present. Sarah specializes in behaviour problems such as fear, aggression, anxiety, and reactivity. Most of all, she loves helping people build strong relationships with their pets.

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The Danger of Reductionism

by Tyler Muto

One of the many strategies recommended by conventional dog trainers to help a dog overcome fear of new people is to counter condition the dog by having new people approach and give the dog treats. This is not a strategy that I personally employ very often, and here is why:

Let's put it into a human context. Let's say that I have reason to believe that strangers are untrustworthy. Along comes this new person, who approaches uninvited and says "Hey Tyler, come hang out over here, and I'll give you a dollar." The offer of a dollar is unlikely to make me feel comfortable with this new person, or to earn my trust. In fact, it triggers warning signs in my mind because it's a little reminiscent of the "Free Candy" van, and that's creepy.

Now, let's say that I was in the same room with this person, only instead of trying to bribe my confidence, he recognized that I was uncomfortable. He gave me my space and went about whatever it was he set out to do; perhaps he just sat down, enjoyed some quiet time to himself and let me do my own thing. Maybe he occasionally glanced at me, acknowledging my presence in a non-confrontational way, and then again gave me the space I needed to feel free from threat.

In the first example, the seemingly innocuous act of trying to give me a dollar only added to my discomfort. It indicated that there was an expectation of me, a type of social pressure. The person was trying to pull me in, but that act of pulling only gave me something to push back against.

In the second scenario, there is no pressure. The person showed through his behavior that he understands, and he is okay with the fact that I need some space. There is no expectation, and

that lack of expectation creates an opening that I can freely choose to explore.

I want to take the second scenario further, but first, let's go back to using a dog for the example, with the "I" being the role of the stranger.

So, the dog is nervous, and I am in the same room, but have been giving space and zero expectation. The dog's natural social curiosity may motivate her to explore and experiment. She may come closer, pause, and then move away. Eventually she comes within several feet and air sniffs. As more time passes, she begins to become neutral to my presence.

From here, one of two things may occur over time (sometimes this takes hours or even several sessions over several days). Perhaps at this point, when the dog chooses on her own to approach and come near, I casually and without saying anything, toss a treat on the ground, and then go back to whatever I was doing. After several repetitions of this, the dog begins choosing to hang out near me as I toss treats in her direction. The kernel of a bond is formed.

Alternatively, perhaps I notice that the dog really wants to go outside, so I open the door to let her out. She walks over to a tree to sniff. After she passes, I wander over to the same tree and have a look around. The dog shows interest in a stick, so I pick one up and give it a toss, in a way that shows that I share the dog's joy for sticks. What I am communicating is that I am interested in the same things that she is, and am willing to follow her lead and engage in the activities that she chooses. I am not interested in changing her behavior--I am trying to learn more about her and understand her.

If the dog is a real foodie, the option of tossing some treats (when she is ready and has approached on her own), has a decent chance of working.

“Treats! I LOVE treats!” This dog exclaims. But not all dogs are so enthusiastic for treats. Some dogs like to sniff, some enjoy walks best of all, some like sticks or certain toys.

If we look at dogs as simple input/output machines in the purely operant sense, it seems like the typical counter conditioning techniques should work. But there is danger in reducing dogs to this simplified view. We should not ignore the fact that, like humans, our dogs think, feel, get angry, get lonely, have motives, instincts, trust issues, attachment issues, angst, and the whole colorful spectrum of emotions. To be fair, even the second scenario that I have outlined is a form of counter conditioning, but it is one that takes into account the dog as a unique individual. It honors the dog and gives her the sovereignty to let us know when she is ready to engage. It respects the uniquely dynamic qualities of dogs that have given us humans the privilege of evolving alongside them for tens of thousands of years.

While I personally think it is important for us trainers to have a firm grasp on the science of dog training, let us not allow ourselves to become too far removed from the spirit of simply being with a dog, striving to understand each individual for what makes them unique, showing compassion through our actions, and letting our heart guide us.

Tyler Muto is the owner/founder of K9 Connection in Buffalo, NY and past President of IACP. In addition to running a training/daycare, supervising and coaching hundreds of professional trainers, and teaching workshops around the world about canine behavior, he believes that the most important and effective thing we can do in the field of canine behavior is to try to understand the world through our dog's eyes. Most recently, Tyler founded Consider the Dog, an online platform for experts in the field to share their knowledge and skills to help people and dogs live together in harmony. Find more at tylermuto.com and considerthedog.com.

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Critical Thinking

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

A few weeks ago, my wife and I were visiting friends who have been a couple for over 2 decades. While one never really knows all the ins-and-outs of another couple's relationship, my wife and I consider these two, who we have known for most of their relationship, to be in a solid partnership, and well-matched. As occasionally happens with companions who spend time together, we just happened to be visiting on a night where things seemed a bit "off" between our friends. We had a nice meal and a few drinks, but there was a mild tension in the air that all of us sensed. After dinner, we settled into some conversation, but it wasn't long before my wife and I found ourselves the unwitting participants in a spat. We weren't sure whether it would be best to say our goodbyes and leave them to their argument, or stay and make sure things remained civil. Our discomfort went mostly unnoticed by our hosts, who began to argue in earnest. Eventually we did make a retreat, and no blood was shed that night. In fact, the fight was actually over before we left—and we got to witness a main reason why communication is the glue of relationships.

No worthwhile relationship in which humans engage—friends, lovers, spouses, parent/child, boss/employee, teacher/student—exists without bumps and problems. People who have been together for long periods of time have made their partnerships work not because of an *absence* of problems, but because of an understanding of how to solve them. They stay together not because everything is hunky-dory all the time, but because when problems arise, they willingly deal with them, and find solutions. Just like dogs who are engaged in problem solving become more adept at it with practice, humans who refuse to shrink from their problems, and instead do the uncomfortable work of fixing (or at least exposing them), tend to have deeper, more lasting relationships.

A dog trainer I highly respect said the following once (I'm paraphrasing): "Look, I get the allure of 'all positive' training. I wish I could train a dog to criteria without using anything but R+. That would be lovely! But I cannot—because the dog isn't getting all the information he needs to be successful, and I know it. I am not setting him up to succeed if I am purposefully leaving out the uncomfortable bits."

All relationships have stumbling blocks and problems and stressors, but the way to keep the relationship humming is not to avoid the problems or pretend they do not exist, but to address them, break them down, and scatter them out in finer granules so that they may dissipate more easily. Clarity fixes so many issues. No relationship worthy of having can exist in a communication vacuum. Just as dogs require clarity to succeed, our relationships do, too. You probably preach the clarity model to your clients, but how often do you apply it in your own life with your fellow humans?

Humans and dogs want to avoid conflict, but it's not always possible. So we need to figure out ways to meet it head on and not shrink from it. We study and practice how to provide negative information in ways that will not scare the dog or cause him to give up completely. We can figure out how to accomplish this with the humans we care about, too. So what is stopping us?

Every partnership has its stress points. These can vary over time, as we age and grow, or they can burrow in and remain constant, regardless of how the outside world changes around them. Some of us are so attached to our triggers that we just carry them from relationship to relationship like an old piece of luggage we can't bear to give away.

There are always going to be "tics and fidgets" that irk you about your partners and friends. These are actions that your partner does that serve him or her in some way (meaning: they are not a problem to that person), but only serve to annoy you. Some of these are best ignored. If they are not dangerous or damaging to the relationship, you are probably going to be less frustrated by them if you just let them go. If you can't do this, then the problem must be squarely owned and you must find a way to bring it up and air your frustrations. You may be successful doing so (e.g., your hubby or friend acknowledges that his nail biting habit could be seen as unhygienic, and you'd rather not witness it, so he changes his behavior to not do it in front of you), which will bring you peace, and the relationship thrives.

Sometimes, though, you will not be successful in changing the other person's behavior. Then what?

Can you ignore it? What will the end result be if you cannot? Will things eventually come to a head and boil over? This might actually be a good thing that will help you in the end. Airing grievances and exposing them to light does a couple of things. It communicates to the other person that someone is unhappy with his behavior, which allows him or her to make changes (“when we know better, we can do better”). It also can serve to put things in a different perspective for both parties, and this can help diminish some hurt feelings because when we fixate on problems, they grow in importance in our minds. Once we voice them, and especially if the other person acknowledges that we are frustrated, the problems lose some heft. This is what happened with our friends after dinner.

In my relationship with my dog, I cannot expect that it will be “all positive.” I need to be able to give my dog feedback, and some of that will be about things he does that I do not like. There is nothing wrong with doing this, even if the dog experiences some temporary discomfort, even stress, while receiving the information—especially if he is given instructions on how to make it disappear and not return in the future. The dog cannot understand how to behave unless he has experienced some negative consequences to his actions and been given appropriate ways to deal with those bumps.

It doesn’t seem rational, then, when we are talking about people, to avoid having uncomfortable conversations, to kick the problematic can down the road forever, if we can solve them by rolling up our sleeves, bracing for discomfort, and pushing through it.

(Now, sometimes the relationship is just not worth it, and you may make the decision to cut and run instead of buckling down. I’m not talking about those types of relationships, or toxic ones. For those, you must take care of yourself first.)

If you feel unequipped for how to do this uncomfortable work in a valuable relationship, or know that your spouse may not be able, I recommend professional help. Often, we are so close to our problems that we cannot see them clearly, and a professional is not as emotionally attached as we are. (See some parallels with dog training here? I thought you might.)

Before my wife and I were about to leave, our friends had a breakthrough. They were able to have it because they didn’t shy away from the discomfort. They both listened. They acknowledged fault. And they acknowledged gratitude, too. The specks of what remained of their argument, exposed to the air, simply blew away.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, is Editor of The Canine Professional Journal as well as the electronic Bulletin, and is co-Vice President of the IACP. She has worked professionally with dogs and their people for 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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