

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

The Canine Professional Journal



Volume 21
Issue 3
SUMMER 2020



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

Canine Professional Journal Staff

Editor Mailey McLaughlin
Publisher IACP
Design Evelyn Albertson

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Advertising and Application Address

Per issue Rate:

Business Cards \$100.00, 1/4 page \$350.00, 1/2 page \$450.00, full page \$750.00. Send high resolution files (JPG or PDF in CMYK) to the above email address, and a check made out to IACP to:

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

Deadlines

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

IACP Membership/Journal Information

International Association of Canine Professionals
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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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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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AFFILIATE MEMBER — intended for those who support the goals, positions, and mission of the IACP, but are not canine industry professionals. This membership applies to everyone who loves dogs and wishes to support the IACP's mission to insure the betterment of dogs worldwide. See website for membership restrictions.

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Cover photo: Angelina Nikol DiGeorge

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The IACP is proud to announce that members

Sarah Clusman and Mary Pedersen

have successfully completed their Certified Dog Trainer examinations and can now add the designation IACP-CDT to their name.

and members

Amy Bergen, Matthew Bohn, Brianne Farr, Zoe Heilman, Katrin Helgadottir, and Ashlie A. Miller

have successfully completed their Dog Trainer Foundation Examinations and are now able to add the designation IACP-DTFE to their names.

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President's Letter

by Melanie Benware

Making the tough decisions

Well, 2020 has proven to be a rough year all over the world. Covid-19 continues to take its toll on the physical, mental, and financial lives of our members. It is not lost on me how much our members in the industry are hurting. As we start to see ourselves coming out of stay-at-home measures all over the world, our members are now needing to pivot once again to make necessary changes to be successful. Having to weigh your own health, the health and training needs of your clients, and the financial stress of being out of work or having a reduction in work is not an easy thing to do. There is no one answer that works for all of us, and we each need to do what we think is best while maintaining our professionalism.

Just when things are starting to open back up, the U.S. finds itself amid an emotional and difficult time as we face discussions and needed change regarding systemic racism within our country. On a personal note, I have been very appreciative of all the members who have reached out to me to share their experiences and how they feel the organization should respond. My brother is a Sergeant, and I support honorable law enforcement officers like him and the hard work that they do. At the same time, I understand and respect that there is need for education and reform. I was disappointed, to say the least, to hear that some of our minority members have experienced racism and discrimination at workshops by a few of our own members. I cannot change peoples' minds or the way they think and feel; however, I can say that I do not tolerate racism or discrimination taking place within our organization and

that I support all of our Members of color. We need to take the time to listen and learn from one another, be open to hearing the experiences that our other members have been through and what we, as an organization, can do to create a more welcoming space for diversity and inclusion within our industry.

We are a canine professional organization, so we have had to make tough choices about the conversations we are allowing in our private group, and although some may not agree, we have to do what we believe is best for the organization. These moments have caused us to look at what we can do to ensure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in our membership or the industry. The Board has voted to update our Code of Conduct to reflect this and our Professional Members are voting on these changes right now. The changes are as follows:

1. *Professionally conduct themselves honestly, with trust and respect at all times towards other members, clients and the general public regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, national origin or current county of citizenship.*
2. *Assist in maintaining the honor and reputation of the IACP and their Profession and avoid any form of fraud, deception, impropriety, discrimination or violence.*
14. *Cooperate with the IACP's President, Board of Directors or Ethics Committee (should one be assigned) on any reported violation. Following a full investigation and adjudication of any violation, the Ethics Committee will be required to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on any*



action that may be taken. The final decision will rest with the Board.

The IACP has a zero tolerance policy and will not tolerate any acts of discrimination, acts of hate, acts of violence, bullying, sexual harassment, coercion, intimidation, or any act of that impedes or interferes with anyone's civil rights.

As always, the full Code of Conduct can be found on the IACP website.

We want to thank all our members for standing by us during these difficult times. We realize that our decisions will never please everyone, but we appreciate the understanding that our job is not to always make the popular choice but to make the choice that will best reflect the goals of the organization so that we can continue to support our members and the industry.

Being a leader right now, with everything going on in the world, is not easy. The drive to do what is right by the people that are relying on the success of the organization can take its toll. I am incredibly grateful to be surrounded by a remarkable group of people that make up the IACP Officers, Directors

and Home Office. Without these people, the IACP could not function as successfully as we do. We have made and will continue to make the tough decisions to live up to the trust you have put in us. For those of you that can make it to conference, I look forward to seeing you. For those that will be attending virtually we will make sure you have a fantastic experience too.

I will close with my favorite Maya Angelou quote: "Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible." We need to make the present accessible to anyone who wants to make the canine industry better and ensure a future for this organization and ALL our members. Stay safe and please, be kind to one another!

Respectfully,

Melanie Benware

Melanie Benware, CDT/CDTA/PDTI, President

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Training in the New Normal

by Babette Haggerty

There has been a lot of discussion lately on the ability to train in our "new world." Our "new normal" can be looked upon gloomily as people predict the next "Great Depression," or gazed upon with hope, the way prospectors looked upon the horizon and headed west during the Gold Rush. Most days, I like to look at the bright side of things.

One text I received from a trainer friend asked, "How are you going to train in the new world? How can you train when you wear a mask? Aren't facial expressions important? I am baffled."

I heard my dad's voice, "Aren't you a dog trainer?" To me, it isn't even a question. For many reasons, I feel that this "new normal" will force us to become even better trainers and help us create even better dogs.

Think about it. How many countries already wear facial coverings? Residents of Asian and Muslim countries have been wearing masks for a long time, and they have dogs just like Americans do, for guarding livestock, pets, and everything in between.

How will wearing face masks make us better trainers? We need to train dogs to get used to people wearing masks. Some experts are even promoting that dogs wear masks. So let's face it, (pun intended)-- it is time we teach dogs to accept people wearing masks along with dogs wearing masks themselves. Dogs will also encounter people wearing gloves a lot more often. I encourage anyone teaching obedience to incorporate desensitization into masks and gloves while teaching the dogs to wear masks into their programs.

I remember many years ago, I visited with a mentor of mine. He suggested that I take off my sunglasses when working with the dogs. While I agreed (he was right), I lived in South Florida at

the time and taking off the sunglasses made life uncomfortable for this blue-eyed, light-sensitive dog trainer. For years, I worked with dogs while wearing sunglasses. I had to communicate with them in ways differently than when I had my eyes to express myself. I had to become more conscious of utilizing my body language and my voice tones. A great example: I trained Jack Nicklaus' golden retriever Cali to answer the question, "Cali, how many times has Daddy won the Masters?" by barking the correct number of times. She and I had a great relationship, and she knew to either watch my hand or my eyes for the signal to stop barking. We performed this most famous trick, along with others, countless times indoors and outdoors. When I had sunglasses on, she knew the subtle finger signal, and she knew the change in my eyes when I didn't. However, when I didn't, I used both my eyes and my finger to signal when to stop barking.

Working with Cali, sometimes hiding my eyes, forced me to use other tools to communicate what I wanted. The mask will make us better trainers, even though we have one fewer tool to communicate with dogs. We will become more aware of our body language, eyes, hand signals, and voice. Our voice is now not as clear as it was before we put on the mask. We may need to use our body more to convey signals to the dog. The opportunities we have to become better communicators are only as limited as we allow ourselves to be.

I do believe this will make dogs even smarter and force them to use their brains even more as they will have to work harder to read our bodies and eyes more than the entire face.

I often hear a young trainer wanting to learn about body language focusing on the ears and the tail. They do not see the forest through the trees. Look at the whole dog! The entire dog tells the

picture. You lose when you only watch the tail (probably the most misread of all); or the eyes, or the stance. Don't look at the details--you will find the devil there. Look at the whole dog. It will tell you more, and much more efficiently.

I think that Zoom is going to make us even better trainers. I recently saw a YouTube commercial for a riding instructor's training program. In the ad, the riding instructor was losing patience with her student. The problem was the instructor was not giving the rider actual instructions that made sense. She was yelling at the rider, "Half halt, half halt," and "Through, no, more through. Don't do that with your feet." The rider lamented to herself, "I have no idea what I am supposed to do with my hands. Should I move them here, there? I don't know what she wants. I will just keep moving the reins until she stops yelling." It was almost like the "hot and cold" game. The teacher continued to yell, "no, don't do that. What are you doing?" Instead of telling her to "pulse the reins faster,

bring the reins gently to the right" or "zip up your core," the instructor in the commercial just kept telling her "more forward, half halt." There was no instruction, no teaching of technical skills. We will need to be more detailed in our direction if we are teaching at a distance and, in some cases, training over the internet.

My employees will often look at me and smile when I am working with a dog and owner because they hear me say the same things repeatedly, "breathe, exhale," and then "right arm straight down." When an owner is walking, and I say, "Right arm straight down," they understand what I mean. In comparison to the commercial's teacher, who would just say, "No, not that, heel the dog, correct the dog, " my direction to the owner is specific. Now that we can't touch the owner and move their arm for them via the internet, we will use specific and descriptive words because we will find ourselves unable to reach through the



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webcam and place the dog or move the owner's body for them.

I have found that the owners that have trouble with Zoom training are the same kinds of people who would have had difficulty in person. Because they are not naturally great handlers, I had the opportunity to become a better instructor. The owners that caught on quickly would have caught on just as quickly with in-person training. Zoom training is about 90% as productive and, in some cases, is 100% as productive as in-person.

When this began, a dog trainer friend of mine and I had a friendly chat one evening. Johannes said to me, "I don't have to work aggressive dogs anymore. I have Zoom. I don't have to worry about the dog going after me, and it is the owner that needs to learn how to handle their dog." So true, I agreed. I reflected on a dog that I worked with several months back, the nastiest dog I had worked with for quite some time. He nailed me reasonably well. However, when I thought about what Johannes said, I realized that I would not have gotten hurt from the dog online, and since the owners would have had to work with him more in the sessions, they would have had more practice in handling him.

Another advantage to owners and trainers is that if you are not handling a genuinely aggressive dog and are doing the sessions via Zoom, you don't have to charge as much. While it is still my time, I do charge accordingly and charge an additional fee for aggressive dogs. If I am sitting in my school on a Zoom conference and the owners are in their home, I don't have to charge more to handle an aggressive dog, as I am not going to get bitten.

Another bonus to Zoom sessions is that you don't have to cancel due to bad weather. You can now stay in the comfort of your center or home. If you do lessons in the house, you have fewer vehicle miles and gasoline costs. It is better for the environment; it is easier for the owners. It costs owners and trainers less time in travel to the training, less money in gas, and consequently, that lower cost can be passed on to the owner if it is an in-home. If a trainer has a facility, perhaps when that lease is up, the trainer wouldn't need so much space and can scale down. Maybe he



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or she could invest in a productive filming space, or equipment.

When this first began, I told my 19-year-old son, who, like most 19-year-olds, has no idea what he wants to do with his life, "look at the world now; picture what was not needed last week, but the world will demand when this is over. We are at the beginning of a new frontier. Think of those who packed their wagons two hundred years ago and headed west. We are at that same moment. There will be plenty of opportunities; you just have to find them."

Better trainers, better dogs. It is there; you just have to make it happen.

Babette spent her childhood working in the family dog training school, training, cleaning up poop and answering the phones. Her books include; Woman's Best Friend, The Visual Guide to Good Dog Training and The Best Dog Tricks on the Planet. She has been featured in the LA Times, Martha Stewart Radio and on the Today Show among others. She lives in New Jersey with her family and German Shepherd, Pug, Standard Poodle and Norfolk Terrier along with the occasional foster dog.

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Phytonutrients In Canine Health And Behaviour

by Narelle Cooke

These natural chemicals deserve a look

While most of us can clearly recognize the connection between diet and physical health, when a dog's behaviour is not what we want, diet is seldom considered to be a possible contributing factor. However, there is increasing evidence to show that what you feed your dog can, and does, influence not only their quality of life as they age, but also how they behave due to the profound impact that certain nutrients have on maintaining normal physiological and biochemical functioning within the body.

Given the breadth of this topic, the focus of this article is to briefly highlight the specific role of phytonutrients in our dog's diets, using a few key examples that most of us have likely experienced within our personal and professional roles.

"When we are considering how a dog is behaving, we really should be considering what is inside the stomach."¹ - Mugford, 1987

Key actions of phytonutrients

Phytonutrients, or phytochemicals, are natural compounds found exclusively in plants – they are what give fruits and vegetables their vibrant color. In recent years, there has been an explosion in research highlighting the potential role of dietary phytonutrients in the promotion of health and in the prevention of chronic diseases; and while phytonutrients are not essential to keep your dog alive like fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals, it is widely accepted that the consumption of such natural compounds confers protection against oxidative stress, inflammation, vascular dysfunction and metabolic dysregulation, thus reducing several risk factors for a range of different pathological states including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular and neurological diseases and certain types of cancer.² Phytonutrients also enhance immuni-

ty and intercellular communication, repair DNA damage from exposure to toxins, detoxify carcinogens, balance hormone metabolism, and provide increased benefits to mood, cognitive function and performance.^{3,4}

Aging dogs

The brain is extremely vulnerable to oxidative damage, causing death of neurons and resulting in reduced cognitive function and changes in behaviour.⁵ Senior and geriatric dogs often display canine cognitive dysfunction with impaired learning and memory, increased anxiety, disorientation, a reduced ability to interact socially, house soiling, destructive behaviours, lethargy and disturbances in sleep patterns.⁶ Feeding senior dogs a diet rich in antioxidants from a mixture of fruits and vegetables along with certain mitochondrial cofactors, has been shown to counteract the effects of free radical damage on the brain, leading to decreased rates of cognitive decline as they aged and improved age-related behavioural changes.⁷

Brain-driven neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is a key molecule involved in plastic changes related to learning and memory, and acts to protect neurons against death.⁸ Studies have shown a decrease in BDNF serum levels to negatively correlate with cognitive decline and deficits in long-term potentiation and memory in dogs. Feeding dogs a diet supplemented with antioxidant-rich phytonutrients has been shown to significantly increase serum levels of BDNF compared to dogs receiving a non-enriched diet, and has been proposed as a viable strategy to improve memory and learning, and counteract cognitive decline with aging.^{9,10}

Working dogs

Exercise-induced oxidative stress contributes to increased muscle fatigue and muscle fibre damage, reduced performance, and eventual-

ly impairment of the immune system. A randomized, placebo-controlled, crossover trial was conducted to evaluate the potential ability of an antioxidant-supplemented kibble diet to control the oxidative stress and general health status of therapy dogs involved in animal-assisted intervention programs. The antioxidant formulation used in the study was based on grape seed extract, quercetin, blueberry, resveratrol, and strawberry and blackberry dried extracts. The study concluded that feeding therapy dogs a balanced kibble diet supplemented with antioxidant-rich phytonutrients may be a valid approach to restoring good cell metabolism and neutralizing excess free radical damage due to oxidative stress before and after their work.¹¹

Anxiety, stress and aggression

Stress, anxiety or any behavioural disorders can easily upset the stable neurotransmitter and hormone

balance necessary for normal canine behaviour. For example, low plasma serotonin concentrations have been associated with aggressive behaviour, while impulsivity has been associated with reduced circulating levels of both dopamine and serotonin.¹²

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A randomized controlled trial assessing neuroendocrine blood parameters in dogs with behavioural disorders related to anxiety, stress and aggression found that dogs fed a kibble diet enriched with phytonutrients (pomegranate, valerian, rosemary, linden, hawthorn, L-theanine (from green tea)) and the amino acid L-tryptophan for a period of 45 days had significantly increased levels of serotonin and dopamine (used as behavioural markers) and significantly decreased levels of cortisol and norepinephrine (used as stress markers) compared to dogs fed kibble alone.¹²

Cancer

Nutritional intervention can be a powerful tool for controlling malignant disease and there is increasing evidence that connects the contemporary kibble diet with increased prevalence and incidence of cancer in dogs.¹³ In a study conducted to evaluate the effects of vegetable consumption the risk of developing bladder cancer in Scottish Terriers, it was found that dogs consuming vegetables at

least 3 times per week, in addition to their standard kibble, experienced a reduction in cancer risk of between 69-88% compared to dogs consuming kibble alone. The vegetables highlighted in the study included cruciferous, green-leafy, yellow-orange, tomatoes, green beans, green peppers, celery and peas.¹⁴

The importance of fibre

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now showing similar benefits from prebiotics – the plant fibre found in many fruits and vegetables that act to promote the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut. One of the ways that prebiotics have shown significant neurobiological benefits in the human brain is by lowering cortisol levels and the body's stress response,¹⁵ and evidence is mounting that this may apply to our dogs as well.¹⁶

Conclusion

While it is true that dogs do not have a specific requirement for carbohydrates (such as found in plant matter) in order to survive, as a facultative carnivore, the dog is able to utilise carbohydrates to a much larger extent compared with the more carnivorous wolf.¹⁷

Phytonutrients are an invaluable source of antioxidants and play a significant role in supporting the overall health of our dogs. Many fruits and vegetables are suitable for dogs to eat

and this article has barely scraped the surface of the myriad benefits that plant matter can offer our dogs. If it's not something you're currently doing or recommending to clients, I urge you to consider supplementing the standard kibble diet with small amounts of fresh plant matter as a safe, easy and medication-free first-line approach to the treatment of a range of health and behavioural issues.

Narelle Cooke is a clinical naturopath, nutritionist, herbalist and owner of the wellness clinic Natural Health and Nutrition. Narelle operates her own private practice in Sydney, Australia, treating both humans and dogs, whilst also consulting part-time as a Research Officer for a healthcare company. Narelle is as passionate about the health and wellbeing of our pets as she is about their owners. And it was the strong desire to see her own pets live their longest and best lives that led her to hours of personal research and additional qualifications in the area of natural animal health and nutrition.

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Self-Care: A Messy Journey

by Birdy O'Sheedy

I'm sitting here in Australia with a cup of coffee, my dog Luna at my feet in front of my laptop, reflecting on the past few months. What a crazy and brutal year 2020 has been for many for various reasons. And I have to say, I'm feeling a big knot in my stomach with the challenges that canine professionals are facing in times like this. And I know I'm not the only one feeling this knot in their stomach. Many of us do. And nearly all of us appreciate our dogs more than ever, as they are a source of comfort, routine, love and connection.

As a clinical psychologist, times like this make me wonder what helps people be the most resilient and able to cope from a psychological perspective? What does self-care in times like this look like?

So let's start by looking at what actually helps a healthy adult cope.

What is a healthy functioning adult from a psychological perspective?

According to E. Roedinger et. al (Contextual Schema Therapy, p. 125, 2018) building a healthy adult coping mode is "the state of mind that embodies maturity and psychological health. It equates with sound judgement in making decisions, responsibility in relationships and good self-care."

Furthermore, the authors discuss the following key characteristics of a healthy functioning adult:

The Healthy Adult is Self-Aware

This means that you are self-aware of how your actions, thoughts, or emotions do or don't align with your internal standards and have successfully identified the triggers, thoughts, feelings and reaction tendencies in your life. You are able to self-reflect and to step out of any unhelpful automatic coping impulses.

The Healthy Adult is Mindful

In a nutshell, mindfulness is awareness gained through observation. The key is to be able to take a step back, and observe what is happening without clouding it with any judgment or engaging with it in an automatic fashion. Mindfulness is a behavioural skill just like any other.

The Healthy Adult is Accepting

Most of the time it is easier for people to identify what changes in the outside world would be needed to make their life easier. This is easier than learning to accept they that need to work on themselves and look at their own triggers, and how to deal with their emotions and what behaviours they are engaging with. We only have control over our own healing.

The Healthy Adult is Self-Compassionate

This means that the person is able to be empathetic to their own suffering, and not engage in a critical way with themselves. For instance, their inner dialogue is supportive, kind, acknowledging, and compassionate, which is reflected in their behaviour.

The Healthy Adult is Connected to Personal Values

It is important to someone's health to be aware of their needs and core personal values. Values are landmarks guiding us toward long-term needs fulfilment.

Common pitfalls when self-caring

So here are a few common pitfalls people make when focusing on self-care:

- They would often like the surroundings or people around them to change, rather than acknowledging that they can only control their own behaviour, thoughts, and how they deal with their emotions.

- People avoid being uncomfortable and rather engage in self-care if it makes them “feel good” in the moment. For instance, learning to hold boundaries never feels pleasant (and usually takes quite a bit of practice) and is based on delayed gratification. Assertiveness is a key life skill to have and needs to be mastered, but whilst learning it, feels very uncomfortable.
- The values you chose to live by are maybe not shared by your social circle. And that’s okay. What a healthy work-life balance might be for you might not be for your peers. Everyone is different. But have the courage to really listen to your own needs, not what works for other people.
- People focus on quick fixes rather than looking at the root of why things are triggering them or causing them distress.
- People increase activities that numb their feelings or distract from how they are truly feeling (e.g. always keeping busy, excessive eating or consuming alcohol, etc.)

16 Practical tips for self-care

Here are 16 practical tips for self-care that should bring some lightness into your life.

Feel free to take a pen and circle one or two things you would like to work on:

- Be curious and find out what nurtures your soul and body deeply and sustainably. Once you have found it, integrate it in your daily or weekly routine.
- Learn how to ground yourself and stay centred around chaos and adversity.
- Learn to observe your mind, rather than being caught up in it.
- Learn to speak kindly with yourself and others in times of distress and pain.
- Learn to recognise your needs. If you don’t know what your needs are, educate yourself--especially in trigger situations.



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- Create connections in your life with people that you can have meaningful, honest conversations with.
- Learn to appreciate and be comfortable with stillness and silence.
- Ask yourself what values give your life purpose and who and what do you want to represent in this life.
- Realise that we are all connected and that life isn't black and white.
- Be brave enough to investigate how life has shaped you and how things trigger you.
- Learn to forgive yourself and others.
- Learn to accept and be with your emotions.
- Start noticing what gives you energy and what zaps your energy.
- Spend more time in nature.

- Learn to let go of your ego and notice when it is triggered.
- Learn to set and hold boundaries with other people.

Most importantly, be patient with yourself on this never-ending journey of self-caring. No matter how broken you feel at times or how dark the world may seem, there is hope. No light exists without darkness and for you to be able to shine, you also need to understand your dark, shadow side to really evolve and find your purpose and flow in life. Self-care is a messy, continuously evolving journey, but totally worth it. You've got this!

Birdy O'Sheedy lives in Sydney, Australia, and has a degree in Clinical Psychology and a certificate in dog training (National Dog Trainers Federation, Australia). She has founded Paws In Life Coaching (www.pawsinlife.com.au) with the mission to help canine professionals and dog lovers increase their emotional wealth and resilience.

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Is it Abuse?

by Mary Mazzeri

John was a mischievous child. He was in trouble regularly due to his impulsive nature. His actions sometimes resulted in the front of his dad's fist coming forcefully at his face.

Abuse is a terrible thing for any person or creature to have to experience. Abuse crosses the line of decency. Some abuse is black and white, but sometimes it is elusively subjective. Current experiences or events can trigger a strong emotional response with flashbacks to past experiences.

In dog training, there is an important distinction between abuse and punishment. In the behavioral scientific sense of the word, punishment is a well-timed consequence to a behavior that is intended to reduce or extinguish that behavior. In dog trainer jargon, some are likely to use the term "correction." I teach my students that a "correction" is a reasonable action that helps their dog to be "correct." I know that is not very scientific, but the average dog owner seems to get it. However, some students avoid correcting their dogs when the dogs need that information to be helped. As a result, the dogs are confused, and the relationship often suffers.

I have trained dogs long enough to see patterns emerge in how various people react to emotive concepts like abuse, punishment and discipline when it comes to dog training. Based on decades of experience and observation, I have thoughts about why some people react to these terms emotively rather than logically.

I was raised in a family of five siblings by two average parents. We were lower middle income, had a modest home, and some hardship. However, one thing was certain. We knew our parents loved us and each other—sacrificially and selflessly. There were rules and predictable consequences for infractions.

We learned age-appropriate responsibilities, and we knew the consequences of breaking the rules. We were affirmed for good behavior, and we were, on occasion, spanked and lectured when we broke the rules. Their discipline was very "scientific." But our parents added other important dimensions to that discipline: Grace and Love, that we sensed even in the discipline. As a result, we grew up (finally) and didn't have a negative or traumatic view of discipline. Their even-handed authority served as an umbrella of protection over us.

I also saw the effects of true abuse in the lives of others. One friend had an abusive father. He took his bad day and lack of character out on his family under the excuse of alcoholism. This gal, who I'll call Becky, often came to school banged up. She said she was "clumsy." I got to see one of her dad's tirades one day and I ran home to tell my folks. They called the police and never let me play there again.

My sister-in-law's father was an abusive alcoholic. She never knew what would set him off. As a child she found herself knocked backward off the kitchen chair one evening and was "awarded" a split lip for "laughing too loud" during dinner. She grew up, finished a Master's degree in Social Work, and became a therapist ministering to battered women. Back at home, she was extremely permissive with her only son and would get easily overwrought when her husband so much as grabbed his arm for inappropriate behavior.

A few years ago I read an article where the author recounted an incident. His wife came home to the dog jumping all over her, scratching her legs and clawing for attention. The author reached out and swatted the dog on the butt. The dog was startled, jumped down, and ran off a few steps. The man was overcome, stricken by the surprised look the dog gave him. He felt he had betrayed the dog's trust. He further stated in that article that he was

“not like his father.” Other clues in the article hinted at his personal level of angst over the incident. There were other phrases that suggested past mistreatment. They alluded to pain caused by the emotional scars of his childhood. His well-timed, reasonable correction triggered painful associations of abuse from his own life.

That article, and my experiences with relatives, friends, and students I have had in my dog training classes over the years, have led me to believe there is a strong correlation between a person's life experiences and how they relate to the concepts of “discipline” and “abuse.” I believe the lines blur easily. Not all people have the same view of discipline. There is personal experience that influences their perception. They assume “abuse” because that is their experience or the experience of those close to them. Discipline takes them too close to that edge.

It is good to be compassionate. In the balance of life there are consequences—good and bad.

We all relate to dog training through our personal experiences. Some people have experienced abuse and moved on. But those emotional memories can trigger pain or fear when it comes too close to the boundaries of those life experiences. No one makes it through life without experiencing physical pain resulting from sickness or injury, or the emotional pain of abuse, grief, loss, or mental anguish over temporary or long-term strife. Some cope better than others, and some even come through it stronger. But it does color our world.

When it comes to our dogs, the difference between discipline and abuse is sometimes a hazy line. What we choose to see depends on our emotional vision. When we talk in dog training about punishment, correction, or disciplining, we each hear different words with different levels of meaning. For me, discipline means measured, instructive information given appropriately to teach a dog a desired behavior. For someone



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else, it may conjure up that vision of the front of a fist coming at their face.

So how does a dog training instructor bridge that kind of history? In my experience in working with adopted shelter dogs with a known history of abuse, the solution to restoration is to quietly acknowledge the emotional state of the dog. But empathy is not enough. The dog needs to be led out of crisis, moved forward, and safe boundaries established. We need to teach rules of behavior that empower the dog to live under the protection of loving authority. It takes time to rebuild trust, and that requires allowing the dog to learn what we expect of it and then to experience reasonable consequences, both positive and negative, for its choices and responses--consequences that allow a healing language to flow between the dog and its adoptive family. All training is done in small gradual steps, building success on success for each new skill level.

Conversely, when an owner can't bring him or herself to correct the inappropriate behavior of even a confident dominant or spoiled dog, there is the possibility that the owner is projecting their own history into their dog's situation. The ability to bring humane, effective, appropriate compulsion to bear in training their dog, to administer an aversive, or even withhold a reward, may be affected, consciously or unconsciously, by abuse memory triggers. They may fear triggering anger or rejection from their own dog.

Nearly twenty years ago there was a middle-aged woman in my classes with a timid white German shepherd. They were two-of-a-kind. Fran was not very effective or leaderlike with this dog and commiserated with her when she acted fearful at the approach of a stranger. Her husband came weekly and observed her lack of progress from the sidelines, with arms folded and eyes rolling in disapproval. During the class he would recite a litany of all the things she was doing wrong.

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On more than one occasion, I had to tell him that I would be giving the instruction, and he was welcome to watch but not interfere.

Her whole demeanor was the same as that of her dog. Halfway through the class, she called me at home one day to tell me she was doing a terrible job training the dog and her husband would take over. I do not allow a change of handlers in a class, so I complimented her for the areas in the training where she had been successful and was making some progress. I told her that she was the only one who could build her dog's confidence. "I have faith in you, and I will do whatever it takes to help you teach Blanca to learn to trust. Please reconsider and continue the class."

Fran continued. She learned how to hold Blanca accountable without enabling her fears. She learned how to communicate with her dog more clearly. The transformation was parallel: as Fran was encouraged in each small success, she became more self-assured in her handling. As her handling became clearer, the dog's confidence developed. At the end of class Fran and Blanca

had a new level of self-esteem. They graduated as the "Most Improved" handler team.

In your student interactions, resistance to training techniques may be related to past experiences. It is an observant instructor's job to consider the emotional state of the handler in such situations and be able to adapt. Dogs flounder when there is indecision. Discipline is not an emotional issue for the dog. We can help that student move toward recognizing safe disciplinary limits. They need to see and understand the benefits of clear commu-

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nication –to themselves and to their dogs. Setting understandable boundaries allows a healing language to flow.

Instructors can help students to build a healthy relationship with their dog by working in smaller training increments. It may take a little more time and patience. As the dogs begin to respond the relationship improves. They learn the differences between discipline and abuse. When we are aware that these people are silently carrying these scars, we can establish trust through sound teaching principles. Then perhaps we can help affect just a little healing in their lives as well.

Mary has been operating Care Dog Training for over 45 yrs. in Carpentersville, IL. She is a skilled communicator and teacher. Mary is a 'trainers' mentor, having personally apprenticed dozens of other professional dog trainers who now operate their own successful dog training businesses. She instructs effectively, by breaking down concepts and exercises into understandable sequences and components for both dog and handlers, helping the owner translate from human speak to dog speak. Familiar with many different approaches and techniques, she helps students 'think outside the box' and learn how to link language between the human and canine species. She remains a 'student of the dog' and enjoys sharing her knowledge with others at conferences and workshops. Mary is a Co Founder of the IACP, IACP Member of the Year 2010; Hall of Fame 2011; Ambassador 2012

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Critical Thinking

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

“Shovels serve two purposes. One is to dig holes, and the other is to fill them. And I must say that my life evidences my expertise with the first, but apparently I can’t figure out the second.”

~Craig Lounsbrough

There’s a school of thought in psychotherapy called the Theory of Holes. A hole in this sense is a deficit, an absence of a certain part of our essence, and they are often caused by something we were denied in childhood, or a traumatic experience in our lives such as a death or breakup where the person we lost seemed to “complete us.” And, as you can imagine, when human beings feel an emptiness somewhere, we want to fill it: with a romantic relationship, with the promise of a new baby or pet, with busyness, with food, with risk-taking, and especially with mind-altering substances like alcohol and drugs.

The problem with this approach is that most of those “fills” are temporary at best and they don’t actually fill the deficits anyway—they simply hide our knowledge of them temporarily. The important thing is that we need to *feel* the holes, not just fill them. Taking the time to feel our losses and process them fully is a frightening proposition to most people. It’s painful to acknowledge loss: of a lover/spouse, a parent or child, a friend, or even a job. So we deflect those feelings, shove them down, and seek to assuage our hurt with externals.

A great many people try to fill their holes with dogs as pets. And many of those same people contact us for help training their dogs, which means we dog trainers become responsible for filling in people’s holes—work that we are not always qualified to do.

Sure, we are qualified to train dogs, but not typically train them to be emotional support ballasts for people who mean well but only think in terms of their own needs and not fulfilling the dog’s needs. If we know how to work with people in a caring way, and we work to understand their motivations for getting a dog, and we can be fully honest with them about the requirement that they must meet that dog’s needs first, we can absolutely help both human and dog live in harmony. But this can be a daunting task.

When people acquire dogs to fill their emptiness, they have expectations that often don’t mesh with reality. They frequently choose breeds or individual dogs that are incompatible with their lifestyles, and they give affection freely, often refuse to set boundaries, and minimize behavior problems until they become too much to bear any longer. We know how to solve these problems, but convincing our neediest clients that setting boundaries is crucial to fixing behavior problems requires a compassionate approach and resolve. When they do finally hear us, and they set the plan in motion, each party feels fulfilled.

Those of us who work with dog owners are more than trainers, of course. But we’ve known this since we had our first client, haven’t we?

And here’s the thing: our culture accepts the “reality” that we are all full of holes that need to be filled. Our economies, in large part, rely on this belief, this belief that we are “less than,” that we need something we do not have. Meaningful work fits into this category, so being able to help people with their dog problems can fill a hole for the canine professional the same way that getting a dog fills a hole for our clients.

Our business is, whether we like it or not, vastly about filling holes for people by way of helping them live in harmony with their dogs. And there

isn't anything wrong with that as long as all the parties benefit appropriately. But what are you sacrificing in order to be "everything for everyone"? Your family? Your own dogs? Hobbies? Friends?

It is very easy to overextend oneself in this profession. We take on clients to pay the bills, of course, but how many times have you taken on a client for other reasons, too? "I just know I can help this dog, and if I don't step up to do it, the dog will suffer." So we say "yes" a lot and we plug away, often successfully fulfilling our promise to the dog and the owner, but at what cost to ourselves, our personal lives, and our sanity? How is it helpful to fill one hole while we are creating more holes on the opposite end of the boat? Burnout in the canine industry is very real--and often it is the result of us trying to fill holes in ourselves with our work. Compassion fatigue is neither a weakness, or a fault. It is an occupational hazard .

You may think that the work should always come first, but the truth is that if you don't take care of yourself, your work, your health, and your sanity will suffer greatly. If you try to fill the holes of all your clients without acknowledging, feeling, and filling your own holes in healthy ways, your hole will get deeper and you eventually will not be able to get out of it without help.

You need space and time away from your work. Most of us don't feel like we can take it. But it's not optional. If you don't have non-dog hobbies, cultivate some. Seek out friends who are not dog professionals and go do a physical activity where dogs are not encouraged or allowed. Take up painting, drawing, sewing, cooking, shooting, tree climbing, Judo. You will meet new friends, and your dogs will get a break from you. Set aside one day a week minimum to not train dogs you don't own, and don't even take calls or emails that day. Just as dogs need balance in training, so do we need hobbies or activities that help us stay on track.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, is Editor of The Canine Professional Journal, and is past Vice President of the IACP. She has worked professionally with dogs and their people for 35+ years, holds a Masters in Education, is a CDT/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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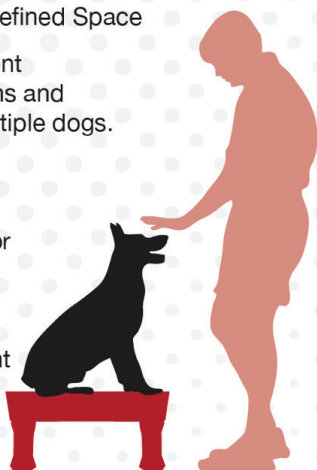
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