

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.

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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.

Annual Fees:

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

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

Benefits:

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

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

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The IACP is proud to announce that Member

Jamie Burns

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

and Members

**Amanda Corr, Jason Garcia, Helga Gustafdottir,
Nicole Johncox, and Chrissy Rivers**

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

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

Well done!

The Board of the IACP



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!

Cover submissions should be vertical/portrait orientation.

President's Letter

by Melanie Benware

As I sit here, starting to write my first President's letter of 2020, my head is swimming with all the things I want to say. It is early December 2019 as I write this, and with some of the things currently going on in the organization, I could go down the rabbit hole of venting, clarifying and/or defending the whirlwind that is social media. However, I am choosing to focus on the positives of 2019 as we leap into 2020.

Growth: To date, we brought on 596 new members in 2019! Our Public FB page went from just over 7,000 followers to over 11,000 followers, and our FB engagements on the public page have skyrocketed. In 2019 we added 2 new Board members, Monica Davis and Jeff Scarpino. Under Monica's guidance, the Therapy Dog Committee has been able to advance their potential Therapy Dog program and we are very hopeful of getting it launched in the early parts of 2020. Jeff Scarpino brought in fresh ideas for marketing and social media, helping us to engage our members and the public. I am a firm believer that new blood is helping drive this growth and will continue to move this organization forward while respecting our Founding Members and their vision of the IACP.

Change: Although change can sometimes be painful, it is also vital to survival. In 2020, we will be bringing in 3 new Board members. I know I mentioned them in my last letter, but since then I have had the chance to get to know the three of them better and I am already overwhelmed by their level of professionalism and drive. Jason Cohen has already stepped up and

started helping us with our website, social media, marketing and conference promotions. Glenn Cooke will be taking the helm of our EU Committee, looking to build growth in the membership outside of North America. We have seen what he (and Pat Stuart) have been able to do with driving membership in Australia, and I am positive he can bring that same passion to the EU group. Julie Hart will be mentoring under Mailey McLaughlin to become the Director Oversight of the Education and Certification Committee. Julie's eye for detail, her organization, and her problem solving skills, coupled with her enthusiasm to promote growth in IACP Certifications, will be vital for 2020.

Teamwork: Directors don't always agree. However, 2019 will complete my 5th year involved on the Board and I can honestly say that between the current BOD and the upcoming BOD, we have a remarkable team. We can share our thoughts, opinions, and feelings with each other, discuss them (sometimes agree to disagree), and still come together to get the job done. Every single Director and Officer involved in the leadership of this organization is driven to building a stronger organization and protect our rights in the canine industry.

I want to thank our two "retiring" Directors, Brian Bergford and Jason Vasconi. Brian was instrumental in getting the Education Portal up and running. He has impeccable comedic timing for breaking tension and provided thoughtful responses on all the tough questions. I am also proud to call



Jason Vasconi a dear friend; he helped with the Therapy Dog Committee as well as the EU Committee. But I think the most important thing that Jason brought to the Board was a level of professionalism that is sometimes missing in this industry. His calm and thoughtful energy was exactly what we needed. Thank you both for serving the IACP.

Last year marked our 20th anniversary, and I cannot let this pass without showing appreciation to our Founding Members. As we grow, make changes, and move forward, I do not think we can do that without acknowledging that we would not be here if it were not for these 14 people, some of who are still with us and an active part of the organization. I open 2020 with a request of our membership: look these names over. If you do not know them, research them, contact them, and thank them.

Respectfully,

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Danny Thomason
Sharon Benter
Leah Spitzer
Captain Haggerty
Vivian Bregman

CO-FOUNDING MEMBERS:

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Building a Successful Dog Training Business

by Gillian Scarpino

When it comes to building a dog training business, I have found that there are three main areas that need to be addressed: your mindset, your strategy, and your execution. In actuality, everything you do, including dog training, comes down to those three things. If your mindset is negative, you're always looking at the glass half empty, and if you have no belief in yourself, then the other two pieces of the puzzle are bound to be affected. The same goes for your strategy. Most times in business, we are too busy putting out fires to take a step back, look at the broader picture, and make appropriate decisions that will grow our businesses. Execution is the same. If you don't have a well-thought-out plan and a solid mindset, then what are you executing?

Almost everyone struggles with one out of the three. For instance, I can talk about mindset and strategy all day. I love learning all that I possibly can, and my psychology degree will tell you that I love the inner workings of the mind. It fascinates me how changing the way you think about things actually changes how you perceive life. However, I struggle with execution. I get caught up in "paralysis by analysis" and sometimes have a hard time making decisions and moving forward.

In recent years I have become aware of that tendency and consciously pushed myself to act before I am ready, to make decisions about my business before I felt I had all the information, and to learn from my mistakes and then make new decisions from there. After all, you can't edit a blank page.

On the other hand, I see a lot of people in business making quick decisions without anticipating possible consequences, or without having any real plan of growth. They are in full execution mode and even if they have a great mindset about their business growth, they rarely think about their strategy. Strategy requires slowing down, looking

at your business from a broader perspective, and beginning your journey with the end in mind – much like a dog training plan!

No matter what your strength is here, it's important to know that one of these areas could use more of your attention, and has the potential to really shift things in your business.

Building a successful dog training business will also require something that most small business owners struggle with: delegation. One of my mantras the past few years has been "Do it all to stay small." My husband and I co-own a dog training and boarding facility and in the early years we were doing everything ourselves--from scheduling clients to socializing dogs to cleaning kennels to maintaining the grounds. We did this for a long time until we realized it wasn't making any sense. Neither one of us had the energy to continue down that road, and the truth was that our business would have suffered if we did. We took that first big step and hired a part-time employee. Having someone who could clean kennels, talk to clients for us, and take care of the dogs freed up our time just enough to get that spark back. Since we were no longer working ourselves to the bone, we were able to have weekly meetings where we would work *on* our business, not just in it. We started bouncing ideas off each other and began to implement new revenue-generating sources within the business. Eventually, I outsourced bookkeeping, payroll, and all reception duties. While that required a bigger team, it has allowed me to work on the bigger projects that a growing business demands.

In 2017, we expanded our kennel by 2,000 square feet, which required that I obtain permits, write a bank proposal for a construction loan, and work closely with my accountant about all the new building costs. None of that could have been accomplished if I was still acting as an employee

of my business. I needed to shift into the mindset of the business owner.

This all goes back to strategy – when you're running your business in survival mode, your strategy is usually to get through the day. Growing a business requires that you "practice the pause," integrate new ideas, and allow creative solutions to come through. If you ask any high-level CEO, he or she would tell you that most of their greatest business ideas have come to them when they were not in the hustle and bustle of the daily grind, but instead on vacation, in the shower, or during some other leisurely activity.

Which brings me to my next point: growing a business requires you to make decisions based on where you're going, not from where you are. This is a tricky one, since it requires a level of trust in yourself and your vision. Each time we added an employee to our team, our finances took a short-term hit. If I were to only look at this time frame for proof that I had made a sound business choice, I would have been completely

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misguided. However, my husband and I had bigger plans and faith that we were moving in the right direction. There were several months that we were overstaffed, which allowed us to be present and train our employees without feeling like we always had a thousand other things to be doing. Then, when our business started to grow even more, we were completely prepared for that next level.

Another example of this was the kennel software I purchased in 2018. I knew we couldn't go on forever using Google calendar to organize the business, even if it was still working back then. Looking back at the financials proved an upward trend and I knew I had to prepare for heightened business levels in the coming year. I took the plunge and bought a subscription to Gingr (a kennel software that we have been incredibly happy with). Yes, my receptionist could have checked each dog's file that had a reservation with us, called the owner to let them know their dog's distemper was due, sent emails reminding each client about their upcoming appointments with us, etc. But there was a lot of room for human error in that system. Gingr has taken all of that over for us and streamlined the reservation process, making our facility run more efficiently and making us look more professional from an outside perspective.

Trusting in your vision takes courage, but it is necessary to grow a business.

Which brings me to my final point. I just finished reading *Rocket Fuel* by Gino Wickman and Mark C. Winters, which explains the need for two very different forms of leadership needed to propel businesses into success. They explain that all large, successful businesses have not one, but two people at the helm: one is a visionary and one is an integrator. A visionary is an ideas person, they think big, they have a lot of energy and passion, and create the company vision. This is the person who is the most visible in the business; the front-man or woman. Walt Disney was a visionary. On the contrary, an integrator is the one who follows through with projects. They are

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great at organizing, planning, solving problems, and keeping the team on track. The integrator usually works behind the scenes as the glue that holds the business together. Roy Disney (Walt Disney's older brother) was the integrator of the Walt Disney Company.

Without a visionary, an integrator doesn't always have sight of the end goal or know which direction to take a business, and without an integrator, a visionary doesn't always have the focus to see tasks completely through before changing course. When these two personalities work together, it can be the perfect combination to grow and sustain a business. This of course doesn't mean every business owner needs to find a partner before they can become successful – not at all. But it does give hope when you're growing a team to look for someone who has the opposite strengths as you do so you can work together and bring out the best in each other.

In short, business building requires courage, constantly investing back in your business and in yourself, and trusting in your vision. Becoming aware of your strengths and your weaknesses will set you up for success and give you a much clearer picture of what could lie ahead for you.

Gillian Scarpino and her husband Jeff Scarpino run Off the Beaten Trail Canine Facility in northern Vermont. Gillian has always had an entrepreneurial spirit and a love for dogs. She has her bachelor's degree in Human Services and English and writes weekly blog posts about all things dog here: <https://www.otbtvt.com/off-the-beaten-trail-dog-trainer-in-vt-blog>. Off the Beaten Trail also has an online dog training membership here: <http://otbt.training>. Gillian and Jeff have two sons, ages 3 and 7, and two dogs, a Bullmastiff and an Australian Shepherd/Newfoundland mix. When Gillian is not actively building her business, she is spending time in nature, cooking, reading, writing, and playing with her kids and dogs.



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How Golf Made Me A Better Dog Trainer

by Marc Goldberg, CDTA, PDTI

I'm opinionated.

Some might even say that I am bossy. But on some level, aren't we all? As dog trainers, we spend much of our time showing people, dogs, or both what they should change in order to improve behavior and, ultimately, their lives. At any given time, we might not be the smartest people in the room, but we're almost certainly the most knowledgeable.

My clients have included UPS truck loaders, school teachers, NBA basketball players, people on disability, and a Nobel Prize winner. I'm certainly not smarter than the fellow who won the Nobel. And based on my conversations with the UPS truck loader, I'm fairly sure he'd trounce me in the math and science departments of the brain. None of them, however, can dance with a dog like I can.

I can walk a straight line at a brisk pace, maintaining a dog on my left side, loose leash neatly bundled in one hand, managing a slightly awkward collar controller in the other hand while using only peripheral vision to occasionally glance at the dog as I march forward, shoulders back, chin up, eyes focused on a physical point at my intended destination, simultaneously marking the dog's eye contact and throwing in educational shifts of body weight or turns as needed.

If you unpack that sentence, not only is a lot going on grammatically, but I am also describing many small components which fit together to comprise a larger picture, one that quickly makes sense to the dog. This picture helps him almost instantly to alter his behavior for the better. (As an aside, there are so many pieces of that training sentence that I ran it through several grammar checkers to ensure it wasn't a run-on sentence.)

But my point here is not to brag. It is likely that you can do the same if you have been in this business for any length of time. And if you haven't, you'll probably get there. Malcolm Gladwell, in his 2008 book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, suggests that if you practice the correct way of doing something for 10,000 hours, you will inevitably achieve world class expertise in that skill. Although scientists, sociologists and psycholo-

gists have attempted to debunk this theory, I believe that it appeals to most of us. We just believe it. The 10,000 hours concept is a common-sense notion. If doesn't make you a world class expert, assuming you are practicing correctly, you can't help but maximize your personal potential at whatever it is you are practicing.

I couldn't tell you when I passed the 10,000 hour mark of training dogs, but it was probably a long time ago. I was a child bride to what was first a necessity: to train my childhood dog to come when called so he would not be hit by a car...again. I was 11 years old and once that task was accomplished, what began as a utilitarian need quickly morphed into an obsession. By the time I was 15 years old I had read and purchased used copies of every dog book I could get my hands on. At one time I had 200 of them.

My junior high school librarian noticed my fixation and after a conversation with my mother, Mrs. Halpern brought me home with her after school one day. (Yes, people did that sort of thing in the early 70's.) She had two standard size Dachshunds, friendly but wild. I took them outside and told Mrs. Halpern to watch from her picture window. I don't know whether it was me or the dogs who were more surprised when my newfound dog trainer magic began to work. But work it did. Mrs. Halpern took me home and pressed a five dollar bill into my hand. Bear in mind that the minimum wage that year was \$1.45 an hour for adults, and I was just a kid.

Fast forward many years and after working with thousands of people and dogs, yes, I knew my work very well indeed. But something began to ebb out of my connections, not with the dogs, but with the people. Over time I began to realize that an impatience for my human clients had crept into my work. Given that we train the dog and coach the people, it is critical that we can relate to both. Sadly, I have heard aspiring dog trainers over and over again say that they want to be trainers because they like dogs more than people. I always remind them that dogs don't hire dog trainers, and it is the people who must learn to keep their dogs safe.

I know this. And I genuinely like people. Yet impatience had begun to creep into my coaching sessions with clients. In fact, I would go so far as to say that impatience started to curdle into intolerance for what I perceived to be constant and deliberate attempts to ignore key parts of my instructions to the client.

“Why are you staring at the dog when I have told you three times to just look where you are going?”

“Why is your leash hand rising in the air when I have reminded you five times to keep it down?”

“Why are you stopping every time I tell you to turn? Just TURN!”

“You do know your right from your left?”

Don't judge me too harshly. But I'm afraid I have said all of those things to clients. You probably wonder how I got away with it. How could I be so...pointy...without getting punched in the nose? Although I'm ashamed to admit that a couple of clients sniffled, most of them took it in stride because although I said those actual words, I smiled as I said them. I joked my way through many a lesson. My robust sense of humor is likely the only thing that kept my nose intact.

Eventually, though, I realized that something really

critical had leaked out of my client interactions: compassion. After all, I always thought of dog training as a helping profession. I didn't want to just yank around dogs and boss around people. I wanted to help them. At this point, I needed some help myself though.

Quite randomly, I decided to take a golf lesson. A nearby driving range always looked appealing to me with all that open space and people gracefully driving balls in sailing arcs. I decided I wanted to do that, so I went and bought a bucket of balls. I don't think a single one of those balls sailed through the air. They dribbled off the tee. They ricocheted off the end of my club. They sliced. They hooked. And that was if I managed to hit them at all.

So I decided to take a lesson from the driving range pro. That was a disaster. Mind you, it came as no shock that I wasn't a natural athlete; that ship had long sailed. But holy cow, I had no idea you had to do approximately nine things all at once to drive a ball and make it look pretty. Every time I managed to get my hand grip correct, my wrist would come out of position when I got my hips right. If I got my hips right, my shoulders would go wonky. Thirty minutes in, the pro began to lose her patience. I could hear a familiar edge come into her voice as she repeated her instructions over and over.



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For a moment it froze me up even worse. Then I began to laugh. I laughed and laughed. I thanked her for having put up with me, paid for the lesson, tipped well and left. What a lucky break for me that I was such a terrible golfer! That pro had her 10,000 hours in and she could do all of those nine things unconsciously. But I could not. Lacking muscle memory, I was awkward and clumsy, just like my clients.

That one golf lesson miracle solved everything for me. I started to put myself in the place of every client and I still do. They don't have 10,000 hours. They have 15 minutes. And most of them look a lot better with the leash than I did with that golf club. To make you a better teacher, why not go take a few lessons for something radically outside your wheelhouse? If you're a skilled outdoors person, go learn knitting. If you have two left feet, take tango lessons. A good teacher will inspire you. A bad teacher might just help you more, though.

I still can't hit a golf ball. But I have a blast with my clients.

Marc Goldberg is a past president and long time member of IACP. He is co-author with the Monks of New Skete of Let Dogs Be Dogs. Marc enjoys travel, wine and not playing golf.

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Cowboy, belonging to member Barb de Groodt, was voted IACP mascot for 2020.



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Selecting a Service Dog-in-Training (SDIT)

by Morgance Ellis-Anthony

An SDIT goes through many tests and training to become what the industry considers a “trained service dog.” One may start this journey as an 8-week old puppy, a young adult, or a rescue of unknown breeding, history, and background. There currently are two recognized avenues of training for an SDIT: a puppy raised and trained through a service dog organization’s training program and paired with a pre-screened handler, or an “owner-trainer,” where the handler themselves provides the training, often utilizing the assistance of an experienced service dog trainer. Regardless of which avenue the SDIT goes through, it must meet the obedience behavior and trained task work definition under the DOJ (Department of Justice) Service Dog Laws. https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

Though this article focuses mainly on purebred pedigree puppies, a great majority of the information can be applied to rescue dogs. The process starts with taking an honest look at how a dog’s particular breed traits and size will fit into a handler’s lifestyle. What are the needs of the breed(s) for exercise, care, grooming, energy, and activity level? What are the breed traits, work ethics, personality, attitude, temperament, adaptability, and trainability in regards to a working service dog? Is the breed of dog inherently capable of performing the trained tasks that are directly related to a handler’s disability needs? What was the intended purpose of the dog’s created breed and its motor pattern? A service dog requires a unique personality and temperament

for the rigors of daily, repetitive, public access work. Even with all the essential criteria met in the selection process and early training stages, an SDIT candidate can still fail to meet the required standards of a trained service dog. Dropout rates can be sufficiently reduced by researching and gathering a vast knowledge base before the SDIT candidate is selected.

Study online informational resources on dog breeds. Visit dog clubs that have play days to observe dogs and talk with owners. Talk to breeders who have a track record for producing service dogs and ask for references of clients who are willing to talk with you about their dog(s). Talk to service dog organizations, service dog trainers, and handlers who use a service dog.

The breed traits matter. A service dog should have a calm demeanor, and be friendly, inherently driven to perform and seek out work, handler focused, highly trainable, and not bored repeating the same job every day.



If the pup is coming from a reputable SD breeder, does the breeder give the puppies extensive socialization, exposure to a wide range of experiences, and early learning & bio-conditioning?

Visit the puppy’s parents and get to know their personalities and temperaments. Puppies do inherit their parent’s characteristics, so make sure you like what you see in the parents before you commit to purchasing a puppy, and make sure the medical histories of their parents are known.

Hips and elbows should be certified by Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) and Pennhip.

Does the breeder produce puppies that have gone on to be service dogs and therapy dogs? Do the parents have any obedience certifications or titles such as rally or agility? Look for the type of work requiring handler focus.

Temperament matters greatly in this choice, as you might expect. Does the puppy show any signs of aggression, timidity, aloofness, overstimulation, or dominance? Does she have too much boldness, or the need to cling? If the puppy is hyper-vigilant to everything in the environment, this can produce anxiety and the inability to relax and come to a place of balance.

Utilize at least two basic puppy temperament tests and bring along another person who is well versed in puppy temperament testing. Two sets of eyes are always better than one.

Puppy Aptitude Test: <http://landofpuregold.com/puptest.htm>

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/getting-a-dog/pick-puppy-service-dog-prospect>

Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test: <https://www.searchdogs.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Volhard-Puppy-Aptitude-Test.pdf>

Suzanne Clothier's CARAT: <https://suzanneclothier.com/carat-certification/>

Personality, or Attitude?

Attitude usually depends upon the kind of personality your puppy candidate has. What kind of qualities or behavioral traits does the puppy's personality display? The puppy's behavior or the way it responds or thinks in a particular situation shows its attitude.

Drive

Look for a puppy who is not over-the-top and obsessive trying to get a hold of a toy or food treat where nothing else matters. A puppy who does not give up is desirable, if it can be redirected to use its front brain to think before it chooses to react versus using its hindbrain to react without thinking

first. When a puppy voluntarily chooses to focus on a trainer over a distracting environment, it should be considered as a possible SDIT candidate.

Each country's federal government, state, city, and province has laws and regulations regarding service dogs and service dogs in training. It is the responsibility of each trainer to educate themselves about those laws on how to utilize and implement them correctly and respectfully.

An SDIT trainer must be careful not to put the dog into a situation it does not have the skills or experience to handle successfully. Ongoing evaluations and testing should be administered to judge what stage of the training process the SDIT has accomplished so each consecutive step can be chosen wisely for a particular SDIT's needs. Public access training sessions should be about training the SDIT, not about dragging the dog around to do your errands. Consider these benchmarks for deciding if an SDIT is ready for



public access training: reliable potty training, obedience beyond basic, learning the trained tasks it will be performing for the handler. The stress level of the training environment should be below the SDIT's threshold of current experience.

The training for a SDIT includes many hours of public access training that spans 18 to 24 months, along with instruction to become skilled at performing trained tasks for the handler. The end result of the training is to produce a service dog that is a thinking partner who is handler focused and psychologically balanced to handle the environmental stresses of public access work without negative reactivity or shut down.

Morgance Ellis-Anthony is an IACP CSDT, SD Committee member, and leads the SD Committee's international project. She is a dog trainer, educator, presenter, service dog trainer, and user. Her current service dog is Ellie, a lab/border collie mix. .

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The Ancestral Canine Human Relationship, Part 2

by Valerie Ann Erwin

Lets Go Hunting: Integrating the Canine Human Relationship Into Training Programs

The day I watched my dog kill his first rabbit was one of the most beautiful and moving training moments of my life. My dog was the teacher and I was the student. I had never hunted with a dog before. I had learned many ways to turn off, redirect, and desensitize the seeking system and prey drive on a dog on a mission to hunt, but I had never just stood back and watched a dog hunt to kill. We were in a field hiking, when suddenly he chose to start circling through the long grass, mouthing the grass, air scenting with his nose, moving forward 4 or 5 steps, tasting the long grass, and looking at me as if to make sure I was watching. I saw him move 4 or 5 steps, taste, scent, look, taste, scent, look, around a twenty foot circle until he exploded in one leap into the center of the circle, pounced, head down, head up, brutal shake left, then right once again, and then I watched him celebrate. The rabbit flew through the air in slow motion as he tossed it up and caught it. With quiet joy, as he caught the body, he quite deliberately ran around the trampled circle swinging his prize. When he finished this victory lap, he went quiet and soft as he swung the rabbit left and right, over his back, down his chest, other side, over his back and down his chest, again and again in what appeared to be a slow dance of reverence for the rabbit, celebration, pride, and achievement. When he was done, he looked at me, ran over and dropped the rabbit at my feet and backed away. It was the most primal activity I had ever done with a dog. He had been sure to make me a partner to this hunt, both in tacit approval and acceptance of the bounty.

It was intimate and visceral, awful and lovely. I was shocked at his unpracticed prowess and my lack of compassion for the rabbit. So, I didn't go there.

I chose to be honored to be part of that natural moment with my dog and that he had brought the spoils of his hunt to me, the respected and predictable leader and source of all food for the family group. His true nature as a healthy predator and respectful pack member was revealed and acknowledged.

This was my first personal experience of the depth and breadth of cooperative living from the canine perspective. This dog was my 3rd trained medical alert dog for my cardiac condition. He had awakened me to go to the hospital many times with cardiac arrhythmias, helped me learn to walk again after that bad heart caused a stroke, and yet, I had never experienced the world of survival from his perspective--until the day he killed a rabbit and offered it up in elated partnership.

I have been honored to study and work with trainers who specialize in specific dog breeds ranging from the very primitive to the most domesticated. They are working with the genetic drives of the dogs rather than against them. Their training programs honor the emotional needs of the dogs, by providing healthy adaptations for high drive dogs living in the modern world without their historical jobs. Knowing about a variety of breed types and how they are fulfilled has evolved into a training program that promotes the perspective of the dog in our canine-human relationships. I use this as the foundation for my rehabilitation and training programs.

Dogs thriving mentally, physically, and socially is the goal. The first step is a health and relationship assessment with the owner to determine how the dog is interpreting its sensory organs and emotions along with any behavioral issues and goals. Successful outcomes are attained by bridging the language gap between dogs and their owners. Clients learning to properly interpret the dog's body language, intent and communication skills,

while learning to manage their own, is imperative. Clients are counseled about the predatory nature of dogs and how this affects their behavior and choices. If the owner cannot see the predator, they cannot know the dog.

Dogs' emotions are similar to our own. These emotions interact with each other to help the dog make decisions about its environment, people, and other dogs. Unbalanced or unfulfilled emotions may cascade into switches from seeking to rage, seeking to obsession, fear to shut down, or panic to anxiety. All of the emotions are useful to the survival of the individual and their group when balanced.

Activating the dog's seeking system produces dopamine, motivation, curiosity, imagination, and self-confidence. My dog's rabbit hunt sequence: see, stalk, chase, catch, kill (we call it conflict in play) and finally, celebration fulfilled his drives, genetics and very importantly, his consideration of me as a partner in that hunt. Almost all human-designed breeds have had their seeking systems manipulated to produce dogs that enjoy herding, hunting, stalking, chasing, running, pulling, smelling, and protecting in cooperation with humans. Unfulfilled drives can default to unwanted behaviors when these genetic emotional needs go unmet.

Through the seeking, care, and play systems, trust and intimate relationships are used to heal and correct emotional imbalances by choosing cooperative activities that simulate the jobs the dog was programmed to do. Play creates and supports social bonds, social skills and social competency. Play also hones the survival skills required by the seeking system.

Urban and environmental agility can be used with all dogs to fulfill their need to hunt and migrate thru new landscapes. They can learn loose leash walking more quickly, gain self confidence, and find canine fulfillment, when the journey is around, over, under and curved, rather than following straight paths on all walks. If the dog is always wondering what wonderful thing he might do next,

his full attention is always on the handler that provides those rewards.

Sessions of scent and nose work should be used for rehabbing all dogs with emotional imbalance. A dog that knows how to use his nose properly will perceive and interpret his environment more accurately and healthily. A dog that knows its human companion understands and appreciates his superpowers of perception will see them as a partner and competent leader rather than boss.

The most primitive dogs will usually enjoy games and activities that make sense to their concept of survival. Spitz dogs and sight hounds consistently fall into the least intelligent dog lists, but in my experience, it is a list skewed by human perspective. They will often enjoy luring, running and/or pulling as a reward.

For working, herding, and hunting bred dogs, the activation of their seeking systems by adding mental puzzles to solve can reshape their behavioral choices by restructuring the hormones they are using. Anxious and biting dogs will naturally exchange dopamine for excess adrenaline when solving puzzles or feeling motivated to do a job that will bring a high level reward. For many of these dogs, the work itself can be the reward. We may not be able to give a field lab birds to

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retrieve in an urban home, but he is just as happy to learn to pick up items, move around cones, target objects and choose which cup has coffee smell under it.

It is important to understand and know how to fulfill our dogs who were bred to enjoy conflict. The most hyper-domesticated dogs are the bully breeds. Games like tug, wall climb, and flirt pole teach these dogs to enjoy conflict in play with rules that have been defined by the leader, while learning impulse control, energy modulation, conflict resolution, and a reliable out.

Knowledge of breeds, their genetic jobs, environmental agility, and games that teach multiple skills while ensuring the health, well-being and social competence of dogs are skills central to preserving the ancestral canine human relationship. When we reach our dogs in their world

to help them live in ours, we create the magic of the primitive partnership we co-evolved in.

Valerie Ann Erwin has been teaching, training and mentoring for most of her professional life. Her degree in Medical Technology was granted with a minor in Evolutionary Biology. She also worked as an archaeologist for 10 years after earning a BS in Art History with minors in Anthropology and Medieval History. She has an AS in Engineering.

After 40 years experience training and competing successfully in Equestrian 3-Day Eventing, she started training personal service dogs and therapy dogs in the 1990s. She currently instructs at the Canine/Human Relationship Institute and is certified in the NePoPo method of obedience as a Gold School Graduate with Bart and Michael Bellon. Valerie has been an avid hobby wildlife rehabber and conservationist since childhood. She is a Professional member of the IACP, and a 3 year member of the IACP Therapy Dog Committee. She owns New Paltz Dog Training and Canine Adventures in New Paltz, NY.

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Hiring Convicted Felons

by Dee Hoult

The Benefits Outweigh the Perceived Risks

Business owners have a lot of perceived risks when it comes to hiring someone who was convicted of a felony. I'm here to tell you first-hand that although there may be perceived risks, my experience as a business owner has been nothing but fantastic overall when it comes to hiring people who have made mistakes, served their time, and come out with hustle in their heart on the other side. As professional dog trainers, we're in an unregulated industry where good help is hard to find, and extraordinary talent is even harder. Yet what many of us are overlooking is the talent pool of inmates who are currently participating in dog programs behind bars.

In 2010, when I started working with Florida Department of Corrections, dog programs were still a relatively new thing. Although the first dog program had been around for ages, the popularity of such programs just hadn't caught on yet. Fast forward to today, and there are dog programs in just about every state. Here in South Florida alone, we have five programs between the prisons and the county jail. One in particular is called a Re Entry center, which means that every single inmate participating in a dog program will be released back out into the local community in under three years. Just think about how skilled an apprentice trainer would become if they had the time to work with several different breeds of dogs, every single day for three years, under the tutelage of an experienced canine training instructor. Compare that to the newbie trainer who applies for an apprentice trainer job with you and although is eager and willing, will likely expend all your time and energy just to leave you in order to become your competition in a few years. I have found that ex-inmate employees are a much lower risk of leaving my company to start their own competing company than the typical apprentice. Why?

Because they are truly grateful.

The biggest thing you need to understand about inmates participating in dog programs at Re Entry centers is that the inmates who qualify to participate are already the cream of the crop as far as incarcerated individuals go. Their crimes, which vary in nature, don't pose a risk to working with animals. These men and women have never had disciplinary actions while incarcerated, and are hardworking and responsible. Yes, they made a mistake in the past that landed them in prison, but the past is in the past. The felons you have to worry about are not those participating in dog programs. Dangerous criminals are not your future employees because they'll never get out.

Here's my quick list of perceived risks I commonly hear from other people and why they aren't things you need to worry about:

- **People with an armed robbery charge are dangerous.** In the decade I've been working with corrections, I would not consider any of my guys with an armed robbery charge to be violent people. They were young, fell in with the wrong crowd and got caught doing something stupid. So no, this is not the type of person who is going to be a risk to your clients or other employees now that they're adults that have served their time.
- **They'll steal from me.** I've had three employees steal thousands from me. Guess what? They weren't prior offenders! ANYONE can steal from you. The chances of an ex-con re-offending by stealing from their new employer is slim to none. They are beyond grateful and will look out for you and your business.
- **It will hurt my reputation to employ someone like "that."** You mean a human who made a

mistake? No one's perfect. At some point in the growth of a business you'll end up with employees who have a not-so-perfect past. That's just the reality if you choose to grow and take on the risk of hiring employees; whether they're prior offenders or not is irrelevant. Without you even realizing, your current employees probably put your company at risk every single day. A convicted felon knows better, and when you know better, you do better. When you embrace the wonderful people that rehabilitated inmates are, your clients and fellow employees will too.

- **They're going to re-offend.** Look, I don't have a crystal ball. All I'm saying is, you can't worry about something that hasn't happened yet. I will tell you that in my experience you're less likely to have an offender re-offend when their charges aren't related to drug use. Unfortunately, there's too many offenders who re-enter society and don't have the support group or resources required to stay clean. Learn from my experience and steer clear of those who have been incarcerated more than

once for drug use-related charges. Keep in mind that drug use is not the same as drug trafficking. You're either the salesman, or you're the user. One of my best dog trainers served eighteen years for drug trafficking. He was excellent at selling programs to clients.

Now, here's my favorite benefits for employers like myself who decide to hire a convicted felon:

- **Uncle Sam will give you a tax credit.** Per the Dept. of Labor website, "the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment." This includes those who are convicted felons.
- **Helping other people gives your clients a warm fuzzy feeling about you.** The fact that I give these guys a chance when no one else will has essentially made me a champion in my local community. It gives my clients something to talk about as it pertains to my business when maybe the topic of dog training

A photograph of a tan and white pit bull puppy running on a green lawn, holding a red KONG toy in its mouth. To the right of the dog, the word "KONG" is written in large, bold, red capital letters, followed by a red silhouette of a KONG toy. Below this, the phrase "Dogs Need to Play." is written in a black, cursive script. At the bottom, the website "KONGcompany.com" is listed next to three red circular icons for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, followed by the social media handle "@KONGcompany".

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is otherwise boring. I stay top of mind for a lot of people because of my involvement with prison dog programs.

- **Your applicant pool just got a lot bigger.** Why exhaust yourself trying to groom a green trainer when you could have one with 3+ years experience already. Some even come with 10+ years experience training dogs. All that's left to do is show them how you like it done. Newsflash: ex-inmates know how to follow directions very, very well. They're also super tidy and take a lot of pride in a clean work space.
- **These new hires are likely to be very, very loyal.** A good job is hard to come by when you're a convicted felon, so you can imagine that whatever employer is kind enough to give you a fair shot is someone you're going to hold in high regard. You want an amazing culture where employees are just as appreciative of you as you are of them? Add a few ex-cons to your roster. Because you have helped them, they will go out of their way to help you, however they can, time and time again. They will be invested in helping you grow your business because you believe in them, which is a lot more than most people in their life have done.

I highly encourage anyone reading this to get involved with a prison dog program in their area or consider helping a local non-profit start one. Not only have I been hiring felons for several years now, but I have the opportunity to train them myself while they're behind bars. I get to know them very well and have been able to place them successfully at my company and other dog training companies in the area. The next time you're looking to make a hire for an experienced dog trainer to join your team, don't overlook the trained talent that's about to be re-entering the workforce. Just put "Prison Dog Program [Your State]" into Google, and a whole list of programs will pop up. Contact the organization and ask to speak directly with the trainer who is responsible for coaching the inmates. And, if you're in Florida

and are lucky enough to get one of my guys down the line – you're welcome.

Dee Hoult is the owner of Applause Your Paws Inc, South Florida's largest privately-owned pet dog training company. Dee shares her home with two border collies, a 2 year old human and her husband. Dee offers workshops for aspiring dog trainers and spends much of her free time behind bars running multiple prison dog programs in Miami. To learn more about Dee, visit www.doggiedeeva.com. You can follow her business on Instagram @ApplauseYourPaws.

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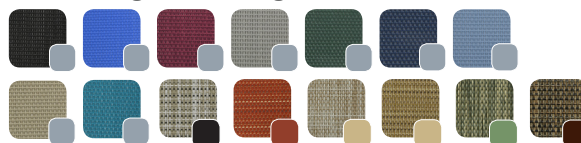
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Critical Thinking

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

Meeting Their Needs

“You don’t get to choose what your dog needs. What you get to choose is: will I step up and do what is necessary to meet my dog’s needs?” ~Sarah Wilson

I know I’m not the only canine professional who hears the quote above, or some version of it, and nods vigorously. All too often, we encounter human beings who aren’t meeting their dog’s needs, and it is our job to teach them what those needs are and how to effectively meet them.

Sounds straightforward, but we all know how simple it really isn’t.

Canine professionals are constantly exhorting our clients to meet their dog’s real needs, and not just their own selfish ones for having dogs. It’s an uphill battle and it brings us together online to commiserate and vent practically on a daily basis. Dogs need an effective leader, and people are often too busy using the dog to meet their own emotional needs to understand that they are failing their dogs. They don’t have a healthy relationship with Fluffy, and that is why they call us. That’s not what they tell us, mind you—but we can see it from the moment we meet them.

While we often make up stories about the reasons why humans will not meet the needs of their dogs, we need to be careful about assigning motives and labeling people. I like to assume they lack knowledge versus they have the knowledge and just don’t care. Just as my go-to when I give a dog a command and he doesn’t respond as I wish isn’t “he was being stubborn/stupid/dominant,” I no longer assume the same of people when they aren’t doing things they way they should be doing them. If I can’t see an obvious reason why the owner is doing X with their dog, I ask them (gently, and with humor). The vast majority of the time, they simply didn’t know the right way.

I was performing a behavioral assessment the other day on a 3-year-old Maltipoo to see if I could help her human with some of Snowball’s “problems.” Part of my assessment is taking the dog’s leash and having the owner sit about 4 feet away. They are told to ignore the dog. I give the dog 2 or 3 feet of leash and pretend to ignore her while I speak to the owner. I’m sure the owners don’t even realize that the assessment has begun at this point, but I’m listening to the answers to my questions and I am watching the dog and the owner to pick up on their dynamic.

In this case, Snowball paced and whined, straining her harness to get to her human, who had a very worried look on her face and fidgeted in her chair. I smiled warmly at her and made purposeful eye contact to get her attention focused more on me than the dog. “I can tell that you really love Snowball,” I said, “and she obviously adores you.” The woman relaxed a little and continued to answer my questions. After 3-4 minutes of pacing and whining, Snowball decided to lie down at my feet. I calmly praised her and got a quick glance and a tiny wag before her attention was again riveted back on her human. She didn’t budge until her owner looked at her and said, in the gooiest voice imaginable, “You are Momma’s widdle snookums, aren’t you?” Snowball leapt up and hit the end of the leash, standing on hind legs and waving her front paws, practically screaming. The woman visibly brightened and started fidgeting again with her hands. I asked a question requiring a more detailed answer and I could tell it was hard for her to look away from her dog and look at me. It was probably taking all of her willpower not to get up and come pick up her dog, too.

Snowball’s list of “problems,” as you might guess, included separation anxiety, general fearfulness on walks, and barking at strange men out in public. Who would have ever guessed, right?

If this scene makes you cringe, you are not alone. It used to make me cringe, too. But then I decided to do everything I could to meet my clients where they were, without judgment. This process has not been easy, but it has made my work so much better than when I would sit there, a bit smugly, and “educate” them. (Let me tell you a secret: no one wakes up in the morning and says to themselves, “I can’t wait to go be educated by someone today!”)

We often find ourselves wanting more for our canine clients than their owners want for them, which is a recipe for burnout. As sages in our industry are fond of saying, “You can’t be more invested in the dog’s success than his owners are.”

As coaches, we inspire our human students to do the work so that they can get the results they claim to want. (I’m a big fan of public goal-setting, as I have mentioned in this column previously; it really can help with compliance). But what if we aren’t actually meeting our clients’ needs?

Just like dogs have shared needs, all humans share some common needs: to belong, to be treated respectfully, to feel safe, to experience joy, to create (or find) meaning, and to be heard and acknowledged.

Are you hearing and acknowledging your clients, or are you just listening to respond? Do your clients feel a sense of belonging in your classes, perhaps bonding with one another as they learn how to train their dogs? Do their dogs bring them joy, or frustration? Most importantly, how are you showing your students that you respect them and what they actually want from their dogs?

Well, first you have to know what they want, and that might be wildly different from what you think they should want from Bosco. But if they understand how to meet Bosco’s needs and are doing so, your job is to meet their needs because that, not dog training, is what they are paying you to do.

Meeting our clients where they are is crucial to developing rapport, which is crucial to making sure they feel understood and heard. Everyone brings his or her own perspective to life events. Customs, stereotypes, past wins and failures, pre-

vious trauma, and a host of emotions are part of everyone’s baggage. When we allow our human clients to show up and be where they are, without judgment from us, we are meeting their needs.

And in doing so, we will meet our needs, because they are intertwined.

Snowball’s owner really, really wanted to engage with her dog when the dog demanded it. At that moment, I was focusing only on Snowball’s needs, though. And after she calmed back down and her owner relaxed, I met her owner’s needs and let them visit a bit, explaining what I was doing.

People’s emotions cannot easily be separated from their dogs. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing depends on your perspective, of course, but once you understand your clients’ needs, you can help them in more positive ways. Emotions aren’t the enemy, and they aren’t something you or your clients need to “get past.” They are part of being human, and healthy. When our clients’ emotions are not helping the dog, that is where we step in—but the goal is not to make our human students less emotional. It’s to help them understand their emotions and make sure they are healthy in regards to their dogs.

When we can teach people fully, and see progress, our need for creating meaning is met. When we bond with them over their dogs, the need for belonging is met. When they listen to us and implement the things we have taught, we know we have been heard and acknowledged and we feel respected. Both of us experience the joy of success as we watch the dog blossom each week.

Teaching your human clients how to meet their dogs’ needs will empower them to be better dog owners and have a true relationship with their canine companions. Striving to meet your human clients’ needs will help you meet your own.

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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