

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

The Canine Professional Journal



Volume 23
Issue 1
WINTER 2022



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

Canine Professional Journal Staff

Editor Mailey McLaughlin
Publisher IACP
Design Evelyn Albertson

The editors reserve the right to refuse any advertising or any article or letter submitted for publication. Copy subject to editing for grammar/length.

Legal Notices

The Canine Professional Journal of the International Association of Canine Professionals is intended as an education and communication vehicle for fostering learning, cooperation, exchange of information, and networking across the canine professions. The Canine Professional Journal is published quarterly. The IACP does not assume any legal responsibilities for published articles. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IACP, its officers or editorial staff.

Reprint Permission/Submission

Copyright 2021 IACP. All Rights Reserved.

No items may be reprinted without the written permission of the IACP and authors. Members should mail requests to the journal Editor. Original letters/articles may be submitted to the Editor for consideration. Email submissions to Mailey McLaughlin at iacp.creative@gmail.com

Advertising and Application Address

Per issue Rate:

Business Cards \$250.00, 1/4 page \$350.00, 1/2 page \$550.00, full page \$750.00. Send request for specs to iacp.creative@gmail.com and arrange payment by emailing admin@canineprofessionals.com. Ad space is very limited and some sizes may not be available in specific issues. Ads will be rejected for not conforming to specs.

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

Officers

President	Tracy Atkins
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Vacant

Directors

Rick Alto, Tracy Atkins, Christine Hixon, John Imler, Laura King, Tory Tilley, Martin Wright

IACP International Hall of Fame

Frank Inn, Vicki Hearne, Carol Lea Benjamin, Lois Meistrell, Winifred Gibson Strickland, Edi Munneke, Weatherwax brothers, Dr. Ian Dunbar, Arthur "Captain" Haggerty, Jack & Wendy Volhard, Bill Koehler, Captain Max Emil Frederick V. Stephanitz, Will Judy, Monks of New Skete, Barbara Woodhouse, William E. Campbell, Dr. Bonnie Bergin, Cesar Millan, Martin Deeley, Scott Mueller, Dr. Daniel F. Tortora, Dr. Bruce Fogle, Konrad Lorenz, Bart Bellon, Sylvia Bishop, John and Sandra Halstead, Bob Jervis, Roger Abrantes, Barbara De Groot

IACP Member Hall of Fame

Martin Deeley, Jay Stull, Dick Russell, Mary Mazzeri, Vivian Bregman, George Cockrell, Cyndy Douan, Lorraine Smith, Aimee Sadler, Pat Trichter, Tawni McBee, Marc Goldberg, Bob Jervis, Leslie Horton, Dody Dunning, Chad Mackin, Mailey McLaughlin

Honorary Members

Brian Kilcommons, Bash Dibra, Cesar Millan, Ilusion Millan

International Association of Canine Professionals

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The International Association of Canine Professionals is dedicated to the education, development, and support of dog training professionals world-wide. The IACP provides a community where experienced dog trainers mentor, guide and cultivate members to their full potential. Our commitment to the highest quality training increases our members' skills and abilities, develops professional recognition, and improves communication on training best practices. We support our members' rights to properly use and promote effective, humane training tools and methods to create success for each dog and owner, while expanding the understanding and cooperation among canine professionals and dog owners across the full spectrum of the canine industry.

In achieving these aims through education and training, the IACP works actively to reduce cruelty and abuse to canine partners.

For Those Dedicated to the Well Being of Dogs



How to Join IACP:

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBER — Less than five years experience as a canine professional but practicing as a professional. Can use the IACP name and logo on business materials. May not vote.

AFFILIATE MEMBER — 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.

International Association of Canine Professionals

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

Cover photo by Nikki DeLuca

IN THIS ISSUE...

President's Letter.....	Tracy Atkins.....	4
Professional Ethics.....	Ruth Crisler	6
Mindful Words: Give vs Take.....	Valerie Ann Erwin.....	12
Marketing for Dog Trainers, Part 2.....	Tori Leigh Tilley	15
What's in a Name?.....	Michael Shikashio	19
Critical Thinking.....	Mailey McLaughlin, Editor.....	22

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. Email treatments or submissions to: iacp.creative@gmail.com

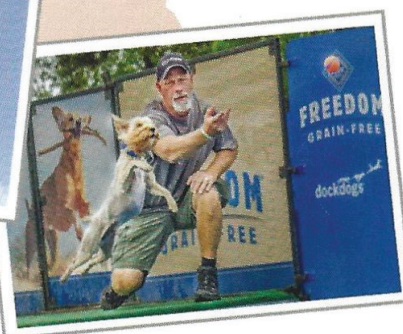
PHOTO submissions are welcome, too!

Cover submissions should be vertical/portrait orientation, high quality, and in original format.

A LIFE of DOGS

"THE STORIES TOLD
ARE GRIPPING AND
TOUCH YOUR HEART"

JAYNE E.



This exciting new podcast is available FREE at:

www.ALIFEofDOGS.com



Google Play
Music



President's Letter

by Tracy Atkins

I begin my writing on the 30th day of being elected as your IACP President. As I sit in the mist of this cool morning, writing my first letter for the SHJ, I am contemplating the impact of IACP on my professional life. I am humbled. So many pivotal changes have happened in the past month, I want to take this time to share with you some opportunities we have before us.

In 2022 we expect to have, for the first time in over three years, an Executive Director. The role of the ED will be a paid, professional position, without voting rights. The extensive duties of the ED position will be critically important as our organization grows forward. The ED Search Group has been assigned and consists of myself, our past four IACP Presidents Melanie Benware, Tyler Muto, Chad Mackin, Karen Laws, and current board member, Rick Alto. The selection process includes job postings on the IACP website, various job search platforms, a complete interview process, background checks, formal offers and finally, formal employment contracts created by the IACP attorneys specifically written for the employment of executive roles. It may take several months before a final candidate is brought forth for the Board of Directors' consideration and vote. After the selection has been determined and the candidate chooses to commit, an announcement will be made on our website, social media and via email.

The yet-to-be-selected Treasurer will be a part of the Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) who serve the IACP Board. The position of Treasurer will be a non-voting member who will serve a term of two years. Candidates must understand financial accounting for non-profit organizations and have a commitment to the IACP goals and objectives.

Our new Board members, Laura King (Therapy Dog), Christine Hixon (Legislative), Tori Tilley (Marketing) and Martin Wright (Website) are currently onboarding with their respective committees/workgroups. They each bring fresh perspectives and energies to the Board. I am, admittedly, extremely excited and full of gratitude for the talents and experience they each bring to the table.

It is interesting to note that 70% of the 2022 Board demographics are members with less than 14 months experience as IACP Board members. Because our tradition allows oncoming Board members to listen, but not participate in voting, prior to the start of their term, they have already gained knowledge as to the current hurdles, hills, and straight tracks before the organization. That said, I ask for your patience as they learn their new duties, find their voice as your representatives, study the By-Laws, participate in Board training, and participate in our twice monthly Board meetings.

As the Board moves forward with formal Board education and By-Laws study, we create the balance that comes with a sort of triangulation of controls. 1.) The Board actively makes motions then votes to determine the directions and timelines for the organization based on the By-Laws. 2.) The Executive Director is the primary spokesperson for the organization, who controls, administers, and organizes the organization, including staff. 3.) The President serves as the Chairperson of the Board, overseeing all Board and Executive Committee meetings. The President also works with the Executive Director to ensure Board resolutions are carried out, and also acts as a liaison between the board, officers and executive director and serves as a spokesperson for the organization.



I am eager to share with you my excitement about the IACP Annual General Meeting (AGM) held virtually and in-person for members on February 11, 2022. For the first time in IACP history, the Annual General Meeting will be accessible to all members through our virtual portal. Members may register to attend and receive a link to the meeting virtually if they are unable to attend in person. (We certainly would love to see people in person too!) During the AGM, Officers and Directors will review their committees and workgroups, and the Treasurer will give a financial report. Registration will be available mid-January. We request registration so we can assure proper in-person space and virtual streaming capabilities.

Following the AGM, any member or guest may attend, with pre-registration, the Regional Gathering at Dogs Playing for Life in the afternoon. A casual meal and refreshments will be served. The Board and Officers will be available to meet and greet, get to know the local membership and any members who may have traveled to the event, as well as introduce ourselves to prospective members. A full schedule with details will be presented mid-January.

On February 12 and 13, 2022, the board will have its Face-to-Face meeting. For two full days, the board and officers will use their time to create a foundation for strong working engagement where amongst other things, we can discuss how to integrate our IACP Core Values: Inclusion, Attitude, Curiosity, Play and Standards.

On behalf of the board, the Marketing Committee will be sending out surveys for targeted feedback throughout the year. The membership will have the opportunity to maintain anonymous responses as a way to give transparent feedback. This will help us learn more about who we are as a demographic, which will be helpful in particular to the Member Support Committee.

This board welcomes observations, encouragement and even criticism because we want to continue to develop what we believe to be the finest organization for canine professionals. The reality is, however, even with a hard-working Executive team and Board, this organization can only go forward in 2022 with the support of you,

the membership. You are the hands and feet of the organization. The IACP has many abundantly talented, generous volunteers but there is always room for more!

I want a stronger organization, so I will encourage you to consider becoming a volunteer at some point in your membership. There are many wonderful opportunities (short and long term; several hours a month to several hours a week) which you may find very rewarding and that will make an incredible difference to our organization. I wish to extend a huge thank you to all of our current and past volunteers who have helped us get to where we are today!

Which leads me to the IACP Annual Conference 2022 to be held in person at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort and Spa in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. This will also be a hybrid event, for those who wish to attend virtually. I am heading up a new workgroup of volunteers to work with our event coordinator to create a terrific event this September! So if you'd like to help, watch in the coming weeks for information on how to engage in the Conference Workgroup.

In closing, I am reminded of what Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is a progress, working together is success." I eagerly look forward to 2022 and all the potential it holds for the success of IACP.

Happy Training!



Tracy Atkins, IACP President

Tracy.Atkins@canineprofessionals.com



DOG TRAINERS
*Sell more training packages
and help more dog owners*

Grow your business	Get paid directly	Decisions in seconds
-----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------

To learn more about offering financing to your customers
call 800-574-9945 or visit go.lendingusa.com/dog-training

 **lendingUSA** | pet

Professional Ethics

by Ruth Crisler

Protecting Yourself as a Business Owner

Model legislation for state licensing of US dog trainers was recently published by The Alliance for Professionalism in Dog Training. The Alliance represents a partnership between The Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT) and The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), and reflects a shared goal to both promote and shape such legislation.

It makes sense that dog training organizations should take the lead in deciding what industry licensing should look like, but there are a number of problems with the proposed model, including the recommendation that state licensing boards be dominated by non-trainers, the thinly veiled effort to exclude most balanced trainers from any licensing scheme, and ableist language that could threaten many competent trainers' right to work. But there is also momentum behind the idea of regulating dog trainers, driven by industry politics and competition over market share, steady growth within the pet industry sector, which topped \$100B last year in the US, and high profile news stories involving dogs who were lost, injured, or killed by professional trainers. Pet services are big business, roughly 10% of the entire pet industry, and dogs are increasingly viewed as family, so it's not surprising that dog trainer qualifications and professional practices are coming under greater scrutiny.

Proponents of licensing schemes argue they are necessary to protect both our industry and consumers from bad actors. Licensing would create a barrier to our profession that only those with adequate experience and education could cross, and provide a straightforward system for filing complaints and disciplining professionals who violated standard codes of conduct. In theory, licensing would facilitate universal adherence to local laws, humane training practices, truth in advertising,

etc, by setting clear rules and holding professionals accountable. However, licensing can also have negative impact on an industry if barriers are set too high or if state boards fail to act in the interests of the professions they represent.

It's impossible to predict when or if dog trainers will be licensed in the US, but with or without government regulation and enforcement, there are compelling reasons to operate according to basic professional and ethical standards.

Dog trainer debates tend to center around questions of methodology and acceptance or rejection of specific tools, and our different trade organizations have famously different attitudes. But a brief perusal of their professional codes of conduct also indicates vast areas of convergence. Everyone agrees that following local laws, keeping accurate records, treating clients with respect, and refraining from working outside our individual areas of competency are pretty important. And when I look back on my own career as an animal professional and business owner, from managing a stable to operating a dog training and daycare/boarding facility, I can say that the most pivotal decisions I made often had nothing to do with tools or methods.

Like most professional dog trainers, I wasn't motivated to enter this field by a passion to study local zoning laws, defend unemployment claims, respond to medical emergencies, or apply for pandemic loans and tax credits. Yet these are all challenges I confronted since founding my business twenty-two years ago, and exactly the types of legal, safety, and financial issues that no business owner can afford to overlook.

Here are some basic rules drawn from our industry's professional ethics codes, including the IACP Code of Conduct, Best Practices, and Certificant Code of Ethics, that will go a long way to protect you, your business, and your professional reputation, come what may.

Know Your Local Laws

Professional ethics codes generally stress the importance of respecting the law, for obvious reasons. When alleged professionals casually disregard local ordinances, or otherwise operate outside the law, it can undermine trust in an entire industry.

As a dog trainer, it's important to remember that some of the laws that impact us most directly can differ broadly from place to place, and that just because a given practice is common—even pervasive, that doesn't mean it's legal or ethical.

In Chicago, any person boarding or training dogs for a fee out of their property is technically operating an Animal Care Facility and requires a kennel license and annual inspections. Not surprisingly, the average residence isn't zoned for that, and neither are most available commercial spaces. In fact, the building I have leased for the last 18 years wasn't zoned for kennel use when it was originally listed. It took months of research, two attorneys, and a trip to City Hall to amend the code, but that seemed wiser than accepting the risk of being shut down in the middle of a 7 year lease. Of course, many trainers get away with working out of their homes and flying under the radar. I did in the beginning, while searching for a permanent property to buy or rent. In hindsight, that was a risk that could easily have backfired. All it would have taken was one unfriendly neighbor or unhappy client to undo the business I was working to build.

If you are an employer, you also need to know local and federal employment law, including minimum wage requirements, health and safety standards, and choosing the correct tax classifications for workers.

By the time I was ready to hire my first employee, I knew a lot about what type of employer I didn't want to be. I had worked for bosses that didn't pay on time, tolerated harassment, or ignored plainly unsafe work conditions. But it takes more than good intentions to be an ethical employer,

and I made my share of rookie mistakes. I incorrectly paid employees as independent contractors, which could have run my company afoul of the Internal Revenue Service. I failed to notice that my business insurance didn't cover workers' compensation, which means I could have been personally liable for hospital bills related to on-the-job injuries. I neglected to establish clear policies related to paid time off or unpaid leave, which likely violated both state and county codes.

Today, See Spot Run offers healthcare benefits, professional development opportunities, and a paid time off policy that surpasses state requirements. Starting wages are above Chicago's current \$14/hr minimum for small employers, which is itself nearly double the federal minimum. Our payroll costs have gone up significantly in recent years, but having approximately zero staff turnover while growing my business has been invaluable. Furthermore, a big chunk of our payroll costs over 2020-2021 were reimbursed through forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans and Employee Retention Tax Credits. These programs allowed my company to avoid laying off key team members, even during the bleakest months of the pandemic, and left us poised to resume business as usual earlier this year.

If you do any amount of aggression work, or even if you don't, you need to know your local laws

D.T. Systems

R.A.P.T. 1400
RAPID ACCESS PRO TRAINER

RUNNING UNLEASHED

- 1,400 YARD (3/4 MILE) RANGE
- WATERPROOF/FLOATABLE COLLAR & TRANSMITTER
- PATENTED RAPID ACCESS BUTTON FOR "HANDS FREE" USE
- EXPANDABLE UP TO A 3 DOG SYSTEM

related to dog bites and reporting them. It's easy for professional trainers to become desensitized to dog aggression, or feel obligated to protect a dog or client from the consequences of reporting a bite. But as members of a growing profession and members of our communities, we are equally obligated to do our part in identifying dangerous dogs and keeping the public safe.

Follow Professional Business Practices

IACP's Code of Conduct & Ethics requires its certificants to follow professional business practices and avoid any form of fraud, deception, or impropriety. But the reality is that many small business owners hide income, run personal expenses through their business, or pay part-time employees or independent contractors under the table. Although these are arguably victimless crimes and the risk of being fined or audited is low, failure to follow good accounting practices can have other negative consequences, such as loss of opportunity.

My company qualified easily for pandemic aid, because our books were in order. We also secured a commercial loan to buy our own building and received a neighborhood grant that is helping to fund its build out. Lenders and grant organizations, whether public or private, don't like sloppy bookkeeping or shady accounting strategies geared toward minimizing tax liabilities. They want to see a history of steady revenue, predictable costs, and profitability. You need to have hard numbers, and you need to understand them, in order to answer lender questions and generate reliable projections of future growth.

Keeping accurate books was not always a top priority for me, but my first conversation with a banker was a reality check. It opened my eyes to the true cost of running a business like a dog trainer, rather than a business owner. It also inspired me to look for resources to help me up my game.

There are a lot of free workshops and programs out there for small

business owners, as well as local business associations that may charge a membership fee. If you are located in the US, you can visit the SBA's website and find your local SCORE Association, or apply for an intensive program like Goldman Sach's 10,000 Small Businesses (10KSB). I completed the 12-week 10KSB program in 2019 and it was definitely a game changer, not just in terms of learning how to read a balance sheet, but by challenging me to define my mission as a business owner and the role I want to play in my industry and community.

Another business practice that our professional ethics codes universally encourage is obtaining signed contracts prior to providing services to clients. A well-written contract should protect both the professional and the client from misunderstandings, such as what may fairly be expected from a given training program and when payment is due. If you board dogs for any reason, you will also want to spell out what happens in case of a medical emergency, including who makes the decisions and who will pay the bill.

In the early days of my business, a client dog died due to a medical crisis while in a board and train program. It was unrelated to negligence, but it could and should have been prevented. At the time, I was told by the client that the symptoms we were observing, which resembled fainting spells, were "normal" for their dog and that no exam or treatment was necessary. I consulted with their

"Our Customer Service will jump to serve you and your clients. Join our team and be a part of the fastest growing e-collar company in the World."

E-Collar Technologies, Inc.
www.ecollar.com

No Minimums - No Shipping Fees - Same Day Shipments - All IACP Members Qualify as Dealers

veterinarian over the phone, who confirmed that the condition had been present for years, but that they couldn't guess at how serious it was, since the owners had declined diagnostic tests. I repeatedly expressed my concerns for his welfare and asked the client to take him home, but they declined. I knew it wasn't right to keep him in training, but I lacked the confidence (and a contract giving me the explicit right) to have the dog examined against the owner's wishes. He died a day or two later on the way to the hospital, following a massive seizure.

No one blamed us, but I knew I had failed to get that dog the care he deserved before it was too late. I was the one with eyes on the dog and should have acted.

Afterward, we added questions regarding medical history to our behavior evaluation form, and revised our boarding contract to give us the right to seek any medical treatment deemed appropriate for any pet in our care at the owner's expense, *even if they disagreed*. I've had to present that contract to veterinarians twice in recent years, and both times it did its job. The first involved a dachshund who had ingested some bathroom trash at home, just prior to entering our facility the previous day. By midmorning, she had already vomited one foreign object and was showing clear signs of bowel obstruction. At the hospital, the vet confirmed it was a dangerous situation, yet the owner angrily rejected further treatment or hospitalization, insisting they release her to me. I showed the hospital my contract and instructed them to keep her overnight. In the end, the client thanked me for saving her life.

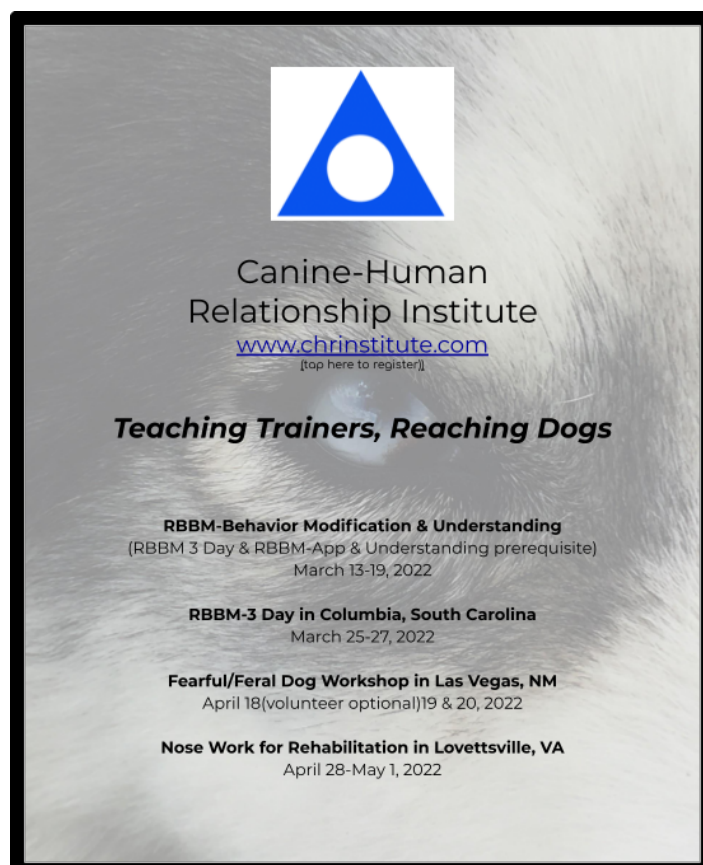
Work Within Your Competency

All of our industry's professional organizations take the obligation to work within our individual competencies pretty seriously, for good reason. Catastrophic events are most likely to occur when we are doing something we lack the knowledge or skill to do safely. Taking on dogs you are not qualified to handle or behavior problems you are not qualified to assess can have tragic results—for your clients, your business, and your professional reputation. Best case scenario, you waste some-

one's time and money. Worst case scenario, a person or dog gets badly hurt.

Aggression cases are the most obvious example of where trespassing outside the bounds of your expertise can go south, but any behavior problem that is complex, extreme, or atypical, should give us pause. Pica and separation anxiety, for example, can carry a high risk of self-injury. We can't afford to dole out boilerplate or novice advice and hope for the best.

It isn't always simple and straightforward to avoid cases you aren't ready for. It takes a measure of skill and experience to identify those dogs and clients you probably can't help. A trainer I admired once said, "If you're absolutely certain you can fix the dog, you haven't learned proper humility. Don't take the job." I would add that *if one or more experienced trainers declined the dog already, there is probably a reason*. Seasoned trainers don't decline dogs because they're lazy or hate money. They have a keen sense for a dog's capacity to learn, and for the limits of their own abilities. That doesn't mean you should never take a case that challenges you or pushes your boundaries, but



Canine-Human
Relationship Institute
www.chrinstitute.com
(tap here to register)

Teaching Trainers, Reaching Dogs

RBBM-Behavior Modification & Understanding
(RBBM 3 Day & RBBM-App & Understanding prerequisite)
March 13-19, 2022

RBBM-3 Day in Columbia, South Carolina
March 25-27, 2022

Fearful/Feral Dog Workshop in Las Vegas, NM
April 18(volunteer optional)19 & 20, 2022

Nose Work for Rehabilitation in Lovettsville, VA
April 28-May 1, 2022

stay away from cases in that category where the stakes are high or the margin for error is small.

It can sometimes feel risky to say no, even when you know you should. When the rent is due and someone is offering to pay up front for a six-week board and train, it's easy to talk yourself into believing a dog is a slightly better candidate than they objectively are. When the rescue that refers to you regularly begs you to take a dog sight unseen, or rehabilitate a biter, it's natural to wonder if refusing them will sour your relationship or make you look less capable. It might, and your rent might be late, but those are outcomes you and your business will likely survive.

There are sound alternatives to simply refusing a client you don't feel confident about taking. IACP's Code of Conduct advises seeking outside support or referring to a more experienced colleague. I have personally sought assistance from more experienced trainers and veterinary behaviorists in certain cases, which not only insulated me and my company from unnecessary risk, but provided the opportunity for productive collaboration with a

respected colleague and an education in how they approached difficult cases.

Conclusion

The surest path toward avoiding nonsensical or draconian government regulation of the dog training industry is to commit earnestly as individuals and members of a noble profession to self-regulation. Our industry's ethics codes provide excellent and mostly coherent guidance in this area, and are designed to protect us as well as our clients and communities. Read them, follow them, and participate in their development.

Ruth Crisler has been working with dogs and horses since 1991 and founded See Spot Run in Chicago in 2000. She is a CCPDT Certified Behavior Consultant (CBCC-KA), IAABC Behavior Consulting Principles & Practice course mentor, and served as IAABC Ethics Committee Chair for five years ending in 2020. Her current focus is building out See Spot Run's new facility, scheduled to open in early 2022. She believes that different dogs require different approaches and that the best tools a trainer can possess are experience and an open mind.

iACP



KONG®

Dogs Need to Play.®

KONGcompany.com

   @KONGcompany



Pet Products



PROFESSIONAL PET TRAINING PRODUCTS MADE FOR EVERY-DAY DOG TRAINING.

Designed by professionals for professionals. Blue-9's solution-based pet products and training tools will help your customers succeed.

As a thank you to IACP members, please use promotion code **IACP20** to save \$20 on your purchase of a KLIMB dog training Platform. Interested in 6 or more KLIMBS? Wholesale pricing is available.

VISIT [BLUE-9.COM](https://blue-9.com)



[/Blue9PetProducts](https://www.facebook.com/Blue9PetProducts)



[/Blue9PetProducts](https://www.instagram.com/Blue9PetProducts)



[Blue9PetProducts](https://www.youtube.com/Blue9PetProducts)



NEW

DESERT TAN COLOR

is perfect for both outdoor applications or blending with home decor.

Mindful Words: Give vs Take

by Valerie Ann Erwin

I have been working on the concept of Give and Take in my training for quite some time. The idea of creating and practicing a relationship based training style for the dogs, the owners, and myself has been evolving for many years now. It started with a seed concept of understanding why dogs do what they do and reaching them in that natural place, rather than always asking the dog to join me and my human students in ours. It has shaped how I utilize the many techniques and tools available to assist in these interactions. I have found that by helping my students to embrace the idea of training without conflict by embracing new ways of using our words to carefully shape our attitudes and respect for the dogs, and quite possibly each other as well, I have reached them on a deeper and more meaningful level for the dogs' and owners' quality of relationship outcomes.

I have embraced the idea that by deeply practicing using words with positive associations, we are able to change our emotional associations with the actions related to those words. It all started with 'thank you'. I had been suffering a certain level of frustration with teaching a particular puppy to let go of something to me a number of years ago. She has a dollop of genetic resource guarding towards other dogs which I wanted to shape into a learned default of sharing, especially with me, to neutralize it as much as possible.

I am one of those people who can maintain a calm and rational mind as long as I am able to keep my voice level in check. As soon as I find myself raising my voice, I know I have engaged my emotional, weaker, non-leader self. Over the years, I've watched many owners and trainers struggling with 'out'. "Out,.. Out, OUT,...I said OUT, damn it!" The handler has either become irrelevant or ridiculous to the dog, and is in no way building a foundation of trust and leadership with

this frustrated behavior. I decided that "out" was not the cue for me. I didn't like the way it could be perceived in public spaces when I travelled with my dog, and in my personal self, has negative associations with compulsion and frustration with the word as cue.

It started with the cue 'Thank you'. The cue was actually a silent hand held out (lots of solid comprehensible body language in that for the dog). As soon as the training item was released to my hand I rewarded. When that was solid, I added the second cue 'thank you' a moment after the dog provided the item as a marker. Within a few sessions the marker became the new cue and "thank you" is my "out." "Out" certainly has its place in traditional obedience training and with sport and working dogs. It is part of the demonstrations of skill in those venues, but not necessary for pet owners struggling with frustration in a world turned on its ear in recent years. I have had more than enough clients become successful at curbing frustration with "thank you" as an out, that it led me to contemplate on how to utilize words and mindful thinking in all of my training.

I strongly believe that what we practice with our mindful words creates our mindset and the quality of our relationships and the environments we inhabit. We are able to influence others with our words, both mindful and reactively offered. It is dang near impossible to get frustrated with a dog while saying "Thank you, .. thank you, I said THANK YOU, *#\$%#*er!!" Even the most reactive human will generally end up laughing at how off that feels and re-engage their positive association with the phrase "thank you."

Next, I started to think about the mindset for the dog in all of this. How many times have we heard or used the word 'take' in reference to retrieving an item from a dog's mouth from owners, trainers, people in general? Take is something people

regularly do to dogs, but wouldn't it be easier if the dog was conditioned to 'give'? How pleasant for the relationship if humans could be conditioned to think and talk in terms of allowing the dog to 'take' sometimes and learn to 'give' willingly? Maybe we would not be required to take from them compulsively ever again. How would that feel to the relationship with the dog? I think fair, consensual, giving and taking is the basis for sharing, which I find to be a foundational quality of all good relationships. How many contexts could we apply this in? Items in the dog's mouth, space, time, attention and focus, etc... the applications to both family dogs and working dogs may be infinite.

For the purpose of this article I will continue with the example of the 'out' cued as "thank you." In this mindset, it's still a bit of a command. I'd like the dog to find the giving fulfilling, and feel there is something rewarding in it for him as well. I started by reversing my training to reinforce something the dog knows and enjoys well first, and then teaching my asks. I usually do not give any exercises a name until the dog is pretty perfect with the action. Most dogs are born with a refined sense of taking. I begin teaching and rewarding the action of taking with the word "take" as the item is offered. When the dog learns "take" in a game, it wants to continue the game, and the give back becomes his idea so he can "take" again. The dog feels some autonomy in the game, which makes the taking and giving self rewarding. It's really another take on fetch or other games. Rather than throw the frisbee every time, if we train the dog to take and give from the hand as well as from the chase, the dog learns a positive association with giving, as he will usually get to take it again. I have found this method to be very effective at neutralizing mild to significant resource guarding with this technique. When 'giving' has greater value, 'keeping' becomes less important to the dog.

I have found that when dogs learn to find value in giving, it is not only our desire to acquire something from the dog that improves. The concept of giving, when embraced by the dog, seems to naturally seep into the other contexts of his life. Like the human using mindful words, the dog begins to make mindful choices about possession. He finds

life to be more equitable not only with humans but other dogs as well. I have found this method of shaping the dog's association with possession of items, space, and proximity to be very effective in improving their levels of prosocial choices in multi-dog households and group interactive activities. Leadership by the humans in the home becomes more benevolent as well as more effective for the dog and the human. The dog who learns through positive associations with give and take learns to trust his leader, and will offer them that position rather than be forced to accept it. The perception of the meaning of words to us and to the dogs becomes a practiced and practical mindset of partnership rather than compliance.

My clients are succeeding with their interactions with their dogs by choosing words and thinking patterns that change their perception of their relationship to the dog and I think the relationships are succeeding better overall, because the dogs are finding the mindfulness contagious.

Valerie Ann Erwin has been teaching, training and mentoring for most of her professional life. She has a degree in Medical Technology and worked as an archaeologist for 10 years. She has an AS in Engineering. 40 years experience training and competing successfully in Equestrian 3-Day Eventing began dog training when 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.

iACP



Help Support the IACP Organization

Premium Weave IACP Logo Place Mats - A portion of each sale goes directly to IACP.



- Available in 40" x 30" size in the two colors, as shown
- Free Leg Grippers & Plug accessories included (\$8.96 value)!
- Sold at wholesale pricing everyday, to anyone

<https://www.4legs4pets.com/product-category/iACP-cots>



K9 Lifeline is excited to announce
our new pet product line...
Heather's Heroes!



Same great products
and discounts
as before!



Plus exciting
new products!



Check us out at
www.heathersheroes.com
or scan below



Marketing for Dog Trainers

by Tori Leigh Tilley

How to Save Money and Time, Part 2

Welcome back for Part 2 of “Marketing for Dog Trainers: How to Save Money and Time”. In Part 1: “Build a Community that is Eager to Share YOU with the World,” we discussed blending old and new marketing tactics together to create a marketing team out of your customers. This useful skill will grow your audience in an organic way through meaningful and intentional relationship building. How else can you grow your audience in less time, with less money spent? Every canine professional’s favorite word: consistency.

Consistency in Branding

Are you in love with your logo? Not love, but in love, if you know what I mean? Does it exemplify who you are and what your company does? What about your brand colors? Was there a thought process behind the selection, or was it just your favorite color? Is your motto a standard slogan, or maybe you don’t have one at all? Can people read your name and instantly know what you do? Is it catchy? Where’s the pun? Does your website remind people what company they’re looking at? Does your social media pass the vibe test? What’s your voice? Does your audience know who you are? Do they want to?

If you haven’t considered any of these questions, it may be time to take a step back, and look at what your company portrays to the public. Your creation and selection in your name, logo, motto, colors, and voice all impact your potential customer’s desire to learn more. For example, let’s pretend that you’re a breeder of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. It may not be in your best interest to have a name like “Killer Cavs” or “Cavy K-9s”. Why? Well, Cavaliers aren’t known for aggression and the term “K-9” lends itself towards working dogs. “Catherine’s Cuddly Cavs” or “Cincinnati Cavaliers” may be more suitable.

Add in soft colors, a logo with a CKCS in a play bow with its iconic ears as the focus, and a soft but knowledgeable voice on the website and posts, and now we have a brand image that is appropriate.

When analyzing your existing brand and planning your adjustments, sometimes it is easier to start with your mission and vision statement. Why are you in this field? Why does your company exist? What service or product do you want to be known for? Now build. You’re a trainer? Great, maybe include “Dog Training” in the title. My company’s name is Pawlished Dog Training, LLC. I think that I’m a fairly witty person when I have enough coffee in my system. The idea of a pun seemed right, and who doesn’t love to picture a dapper doggo in a bow tie?! But if my company was just called Pawlished, clients may have guessed that I was a groomer, right? My colors are Tiffany blue, grey, and white. Why? Because they look classy, like a dapper dog in a bow tie should, but they are also young, fun, and stand out. I don’t have a motto, but every single one of my clients and potential clients have heard me say to their dog, “Make Good Choices!” in farewell, so if it pops up in my social media content, it usually gets good engagement levels. My voice is simple, straight forward, focused on explaining who the dog is, what we’re doing together, and what type of program they’re in. I always post the same hashtags for each service (#Pawlished#ResidencyProgram#PrivateLessons#GroupClass#PuppyPreSchool), and I try to keep posts under 3 sentences, because most people just don’t care enough to read beyond that.

Speaking of keeping things brief, did you know that it takes about 50 milliseconds (that’s 0.05 seconds) for users to form an opinion about your website that determines whether they’ll stay or leave. Google confirmed this in a 2012 study. Even

more shockingly, “It takes 2.6 seconds for eyes to settle on key areas of a web page,” and “the better the first impression, the longer the participants stayed on the page.” A British study stated that, “Of all the feedback the test participants gave, 94% was about design:

- Complex;
- Busy layout;
- Lack of navigation aids;
- Boring web design;
- Use of color;
- Pop-up adverts;
- Slow introductions to the site;
- Small print;
- Too much text;
- Corporate look and feel;
- Poor search capabilities.

Only 6% of the feedback was about the actual content. Visual appeal and website navigation had the biggest influence on people’s first impressions of the site. At the same time, poor interface design was associated with rapid rejection and mistrust of a website. When participants did not like an aspect of the design, the whole website was rarely explored beyond the homepage.”

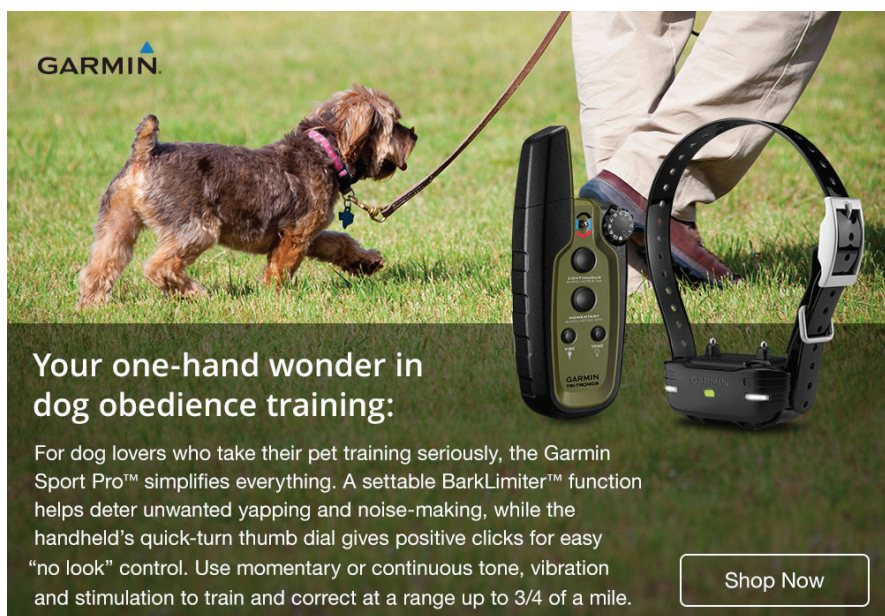
So as you are discovering your voice and your brand identity, remember to keep things simple, but also entertaining, and not too busy, but flashy- (I am just messing with you). If all of this seems too much, focus on one thing at a time. Think of your business like a person, and build their personality slowly. Each component of your business is a trait waiting to be discovered to make your individual company stand out.

Now take all of those characteristics and find a way to incorporate it in everything you produce. A sticker on the folders you hand out, a small logo on each photo you post, a tag line to end each post, a font that is easily recognizable, a faded logo on your printouts, a color combination framing your graphics, etc. If you can isolate one or two of your company’s personality traits and plug them in

your potential customer’s line of sight, you’ll stay relevant more than you think.

Consistency in Posting

Once you have figured out what the essence of your company is, if you need to do some rebranding, and get the work done, it’s time to share your new and improved look with the world. Staying relevant is critical, and based on the average consumer’s attention span, it’s not easy. In the past decade, I have been fortunate enough to be asked for guidance in marketing by a couple dozen members of my network starting their own projects. When investigating their companies, there was one glaringly obvious issue for those struggling to gain an organic following: they weren’t posting. Anywhere. Or they would post somewhere, sometimes, but it was inconsistent and an eyesore. Download some easy to use applications like WordSwag, PhotoGrid, VideoShop, and Canva. There are plenty of free and inexpensive, but incredible, content creation applications available that can help you to quickly create eye-catching designs. Pick a couple design functions, fonts, and use those same apps and combinations for your posts. Decide which apps you want to be on (e.g. FaceBook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube), decide where your customer base is, and make an effort to post as often as you can while still pumping out high quality content. When I first started my



The advertisement features a photograph of a small, scruffy brown dog on a leash in a grassy field. In the foreground, a person's legs in khaki pants are visible. To the right, the Garmin Sport Pro training device is shown, consisting of a handheld remote and a collar. The background is a soft-focus green field.

GARMIN

Your one-hand wonder in dog obedience training:

For dog lovers who take their pet training seriously, the Garmin Sport Pro™ simplifies everything. A settable BarkLimiter™ function helps deter unwanted yapping and noise-making, while the handheld's quick-turn thumb dial gives positive clicks for easy “no look” control. Use momentary or continuous tone, vibration and stimulation to train and correct at a range up to 3/4 of a mile.

[Shop Now](#)

company, I did not have enough dogs actively training to do this. I posted “Selfie Sunday” with myself and my dogs; “Meme Monday” was for a funny meme that would easily get shared; education and information about tools, classes, books, and my own training advice went out on “Training Tip Tuesday.” (Yes, I like alliterations a lot.) I’d spend time on a Sunday scheduling posts for the week, and then I would be sure to engage with people commenting on my content. Slowly, but surely, my following and engagement grew. Then I was able to post 2 times a day, and at the height of my busiest years, I was posting 3 times a day to get all of my training dogs on our pages at least once before they graduated. Times have changed though, for many apps. Somewhere around 2016, there was a drastic shift in what users wanted. Now, 3 times a week on FaceBook is considered the perfect number of posts, and sharing at the right time of day, when your target audience is most active, increases your visibility even more. Instagram used to only require about a post a week, but in today’s market, a post a day is optimal, and going silent for more than 3 days can really mess with your algorithm. There are some fascinating blogs that cover breakdowns for each application you could be using. Take some time to educate yourself on the types of content that excels on each platform, the time of day your target audience is most active, and the frequency that you should post content, if you can create enough high quality pieces.

Consistency in Sharing

Have you ever just asked your clients if they saw their dog on your FaceBook page? I couldn’t begin to count the number of times I have said, “Did you see that hilarious video of Jax I posted last week?”, and my client was shocked to learn that their dog was famous! That’s an immediate follow, definite “like,” potential share, and sure-fire way to increase your post reaches. Share on

your own page when you are offering deals, advice, or doing something interesting in the industry. Taking a class? Talk about it. Got a certification? Congrats, take a moment to brag! Bringing home a new puppy? You bet that little smooch is going to get some heart reactions! Become your friendly neighborhood dog professional, so the people in your network remember that you work with dogs.

Consistency is the glue that will hold your company together. If you haven’t created a solid brand image that is easy to stay consistent in sharing, it’s time to create one. Don’t forget to have fun doing it!

Tori Tilley owns Pawlished Dog Training in Mentor, KY (Greater Cincinnati, OH). Her company focuses on pet dog training from puppy pre-school to behavior modification. Tori is in the process of co-founding a Service Dog non-profit, which has been her dream for 20 years. Tori prioritizes education inside and outside of the dog training world, always taking courses, reading books, and consuming as much information through as many mediums as possible. She is a Certified Professional Trainer through National K9. Tori earned a BBA in Marketing, a BBA in Entrepreneurship, and a Certificate in Deaf Studies from the University of Cincinnati. She currently serves on the IACP's Legislative Committee and the Board of Directors.

iACP

References:

<https://research.google/pubs/pub38315/>
<https://cxl.com/blog/first-impressions-matter-the-importance-of-great-visual-design/>
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01449290500330448>
<https://louisem.com/144557/often-post-social-media>

THINK, PLAY, LEARN

Starmark's treat dispensing toys give dogs challenging and tough outlets to combat boredom and spark mental stimulation.









STARMARK®
TRAINING & BEHAVIOR SOLUTIONS

See our full product range and free behavior solutions, guides, and videos online at starmarkacademy.com.

What's in a Name?

by Michael Shikashio

The Conundrum When Labeling Aggression

Have you ever heard a client apply the ubiquitous name of “Cujo” to their pet as a euphemism for their dog’s aggressive behavior? Or perhaps you’ve heard other monikers used to describe a dog displaying aggression, such as “red zone” or “dominant?” What about classifications that may be used more readily in the dog training community, such as “territorial aggression” or “resource guarding”?

Our culture likes to categorize aggression in dogs and people.¹ After all, it can feel helpful for clients to have a tangible reason to focus on when it comes to their dog’s aggression. “Oh, he’s a resource guarder” or “she is a dominant dog” can provide a focus point that “needs to be fixed or corrected.”

However, categorizing aggression can present complications when we are choosing appropriate behavior change strategies in our cases. And in some instances, putting a label on a dog’s behavior might lead us down the wrong path, away from truly addressing the underlying cause for the presenting issues.

Let’s explore an example of when labeling a set of aggressive behaviors into a category can be problematic.

You receive an email from a potential client that exclaims “My dog, Cujo, growls at us and has bitten us when we try to move him off his dog bed or our couch! Our last trainer said he is being dominant, and we must be stronger leaders, and we also think he is just being stubborn. Can you help?!”

Upon further assessment, you unravel a history of the client attempting to forcibly move their dog off certain resting spots to “reclaim their dominance,”

as per the advice of their previous trainer. After all, they have a “dominant and stubborn dog” --- a categorization that “checks a box on the list of things that need to be corrected.”

Though, upon further digging into Cujo’s history, you discover information about previous visits to the veterinarian for limping on occasion, after visits to dog daycare. Then, you determine that the aggressive behavior is more likely to occur on days when limping is prevalent. And then of course it makes sense! Cujo was displaying aggression, likely due to pain and discomfort, and simply wanted to rest and recuperate on the comfy dog bed or couch after a hard day at daycare.

The labels that the clients were stuck on likely exacerbated the issue, as they escalated their own behavior to quell the “dominance.” Constructs can sometimes create a mindset that eschews addressing the actual, observable behaviors. They can lead clients down a path of concentrating on changing and fixing the dog’s “personality” or “temperament” rather than focusing on the true reason for the dog’s aggression.

There are a variety of models to classify aggression.² And this is where it can become muddy when unpacking labels. Territorial aggression? Resource guarding? Dog directed aggression? All these labels give us a general picture of what a dog may be doing, though they do not tell us what the dog is actually doing. In the example above, the dog was labeled “dominant” (or perhaps even “dominant aggressive”), though this does not tell us what the dog is doing. The information that will be most relevant to our behavior change strategy would be the objectively measured, observable behaviors --- “the dog growls or bites people when they approach or touch the dog when he is on his dog bed or a couch.” There are no labels or constructs given in that statement, but rather

information that will help us craft the most appropriate training plan --- the antecedent(s) (people approaching or touching), the presenting behavior(s) (growling/biting), the environment (dog bed or couch), and the maintaining consequences (the person goes away!).³

We can continue to move further away from labels and closer to clear understanding of a dog's aggressive behavior(s) by assessing for context, motivation, and emotion, as well as the antecedents, behaviors, and consequences.⁴

- Context describes the circumstances in which the aggressive behavior is likely to happen. In our example above, the context is when Cujo is lying on a couch or dog bed. Knowing the context allows us to incorporate effective behavior change, by setting the dog up for success in those same contexts during our training sessions.
- For most cases of aggressive behavior, the core motivation is to increase distance from a provocative stimulus. It serves a biological function and guides the dog's behavior. In our case of Cujo, labeled the "dominant and stubborn dog bed guarder," the motivation is to avoid pain. When you address the motivation in aggression cases, you address the behavior.
- And last but certainly not least, when we assess for underlying emotions, it will provide a more robust understanding of the aggressive behavior. Dependent on the lens we are looking through to assess emotions (ex: affective neuroscience)⁵, we can surmise in our example that the Cujo's pain or fear systems were activated. Similar to motivations, when you address emotions, you address emotional responses.

Putting this all together provides a more accurate assessment of **why** a dog is behaving aggressively. Going back to our example with Cujo, we can provide recommendations that do not require labeling the dog into any "neat

category of aggression." A sample behavior plan might include:

- Referring to a veterinary specialist or Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist to assess for and address underlying pain issues (the motivation)
- Teaching the clients how to recognize when Cujo is in pain or fearful of their approach (the emotions)
- Recommending the clients avoid touching or approaching Cujo while he is on the couch or dog bed unless they are **actively training** and/or teaching him to come off the couch or bed when called, using positive reinforcement to build positive associations in that particular scenario (the context)
- Systematic desensitization and counter-conditioning to change the association with the provocative stimuli and/or reinforcing desirable alternative behaviors

EZYDOG®

50% OFF
TRAINING PRODUCTS
USE CODE: IACP50

REDEEM AT:
STORE.EZYDOG.COM
EXCLUSIVE IACP MEMBER DEAL US ONLY

command
CLICKER

- HANDS FREE
ergonomic design
- EFFECTIVE
training tool
- POSITIVE
reinforcement

208.263.3181 | info@ezydog.com

EZY

when the provocative stimuli are presented (the antecedents)

“What’s in a name?” It’s an excellent question to ask ourselves when we are describing a dog’s behavior...especially in aggression cases. After all, it’s been almost 40 years since the *Cujo* movie was in the theater, and that name still “rings a bell” for many in our culture. Labels and constructs tend to “stick” in aggression cases, and we can bypass the wrong path of behavior change by avoiding the trend to categorize aggressive behavior in dogs.

Michael Shikashio, CDBC, is the founder of AggressiveDog.com and focuses on teaching other professionals from around the world on how to successfully work aggression cases. He is a five-term president of the

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) and is a full member of the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT).

Michael is sought after for his expert opinion by numerous media outlets, including the New York Times, New York Post, Fox News, The List TV, Baltimore Sun, WebMD, Women’s Health Magazine, Real Simple Magazine, SiriusXM Radio, The Chronicle of the Dog, and Steve Dale’s Pet World. He also hosts the popular podcast show “The Bitey End of the Dog” where he chats with the foremost experts on dog aggression.

He is a featured keynote speaker at conferences, universities, and seminars around the world, and offers a variety of educational opportunities on the topic of canine aggression, including the Aggression in Dogs Master Course and the annual Aggression in Dogs Conference. Gendreau, Paul L. and Archer, John, Subtypes of Aggression in Humans and Animals, (2005)

iACP

Footnotes:

- 1 Gendreau, Paul L. and Archer, John, *Subtypes of Aggression in Humans and Animals*, (2005)
- 2 Daniel S. Mills et al., *Dog Bites*, 16-21
- 3 S.G. Friedman, *The ABCs of Behavior*, (2000)
- 4 Daniel S. Mills et al., *Dog Bites*, 26-29
- 5 Jaak Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundation of Human and Animal Emotions*, (2004)



Smart Design to fit better on Small dogs

dogtra®

iQ MINI

DESIGNED FOR SMALL DOGS

- ✓ **Compact size**
- ✓ **Ergonomically designed contact points**

BUILT WITH YOU IN MIND
Petite trainer for toy pets from a professionally trusted brand

400 yd
400-Yard Range

10"+
For Dogs with 10"+ Neck Circumference

1.3 Oz.
1.3 Oz. Petite Receiver

Expandable to 2-Dog System

www.dogtra.com

1-888-811-9111



IACP Insurance Administrator Offering Insurance For:

**DOG TRAINERS
BOARDING KENNELS
DOGGY DAYCARES
GROOMERS
WALKERS/SITTERS
PET PRODUCT MANUFACTURERS**

**GENERAL LIABILITY
COMMERCIAL AUTO
DISHONESTY BONDS
PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT
EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES
PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY
WORKERS COMPENSATION**



Call us at 1-800-962-4611 or visit us online at www.dogtrainerins.com

Critical Thinking

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

A Great Time to Gestate

I was 17 years old when I got my first dog. Our family had several dogs from the time I was 5, but Portia, a black-and-tan Doberman who was acquired for free from a friend's accidentally-bred bitch, was "my" dog. I had a job and I was told that her care and training would fall to me alone. I had been with my mom to a weekly training class with our other family dog when I was 7 or so, so I was familiar with the idea of training and had a very vague idea of what I needed to do. Off to the library (a favorite haunt to this day) I went for a few books, and I came home with a well-worn copy of *The Koehler Method of Dog Training*, a mustard-colored tome with Hollywood scenes on the cover. I had no idea at the time how that book would change my life and become a harbinger of my first career.

Portia and I slogged through the book. I had plenty of other preoccupations as a high school junior, but the way the book was written kept us on track. It was as if Bill Koehler was watching us train and somehow, he would know if we skipped steps. So we didn't. And we both changed, of course.

I remember encountering his instructions for the Week 1 longline work that included, "Restrict the dog's liberty for at least 2 hours before the training period...." and, after the session, "respect his right to privacy...let him alone...everyone ignores him....the essence of the training session will be more thoroughly assimilated and retained by the dog...."

I remember thinking later, after having gotten my hands on many more dogs, that those instructions, when you thought about it, made perfect sense. Giving the dog a perspective that most dogs did not get—the chance to anticipate being with their human after not being with them, plus the opportunity to "think" after a training session—took root inside me and held on. In all my reading about dogs and training since then, millions and millions of words, I don't think I ever encountered as many "smack my head" truths as that one—which I never remembered seeing anywhere else, from any other dog writer who wasn't cribbing Koehler.

The idea that temporary isolation just before and just after a meaningful training session could supercharge what the dog took in began to appear to me in plenty

of other ways outside of my dog work.

It's not in most of our natures to pause in our work or our lives to truly reflect and connect with our selves. In fact, we are surrounded by so much entertainment and distraction that we never have to be alone with our own thoughts if we don't want to be—and the vast majority of us decidedly do not want to be. (I remember reading a study once that concluded that most people would rather be subjected to painful electric shocks than be alone in a room with nothing but their own thoughts for 15 or 20 minutes. This extroverted introvert was gobsmacked.)

Dogs aren't the only ones who need a pause, who need to gestate. We need it even more than they do.

Eric Booth, in his book *The Everyday Work of Art*, defines gestation as a pause to "reflect, step back from action, to allow intuition and other wordless inner processes to perform their roles" and considers it a necessary part of decision-making and what he calls "world-making." It occurs mostly under the threshold of our attention, in our subconscious.

But it doesn't happen while we are doing multiple other tasks, like directly running a business, and caring for a spouse/family.

It seems odd to pause at the beginning of a year, but the stress of the holidays, especially in this business where other people's vacations are not typically our vacations, gives rise to a pause point just after. If not now, when?

When is the last time you paused to reflect on your work, or your personal life, just as it is now, without also incorporating into your thoughts a plan for the future? We humans love to plan and set goals, and in truth it often saves us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But I'm not talking about goal setting in this pause. I'm talking about rest. And I'm talking, after a period of rest, about *reassessment*.

The work we do with dogs and people demands sacrifice, and what typically falls under the sacrificial knife is our personal time. This is unfortunate because we all need time to reset, refresh, and recharge in order to serve our clients and their dogs in the fullest way possible. Treating the pause as unimportant and unrec-

essary robs us of the chance to grow and periodically redefine ourselves within this calling and within our lives as a whole.

You need not lock yourself into a crate, mind you. But locating a place where you can find some solitude away from the work is imperative to being able to see it with fresh eyes and then a critical intent. It's advisable to regularly perform a threshing of your work, self, and relationship "marriages" and how they serve your purposes.

Are the programs you offer serving your clientele, and/or the clientele you are trying to court? Are the tools and methods you are using helping the dogs and their humans learn the concepts? Are the concepts you are teaching furthering your message and your intent? Are you continuing to learn new approaches? Is your customer service truly setting you apart? Are you spending any quality time with those you love, unencumbered by distraction devices or worries of work? Could you be more present with your loved ones, and yourself? What would that look like for you?

It's easy to get locked into a routine that works and to be so busy that you don't think anything needs to change. Don't get me wrong: plugging along in a sort of stasis can be a perfectly fine way to earn a living, but is it creating the life you want? If the answer is yes, that's fabulous! Our culture beats it into our heads that continual progress is the only way to truly succeed, and this is simply not true. Constant striving for more of the culturally-appropriate trappings of success is not necessary to happiness and can, in fact, be a burden to finding it. So, coast if you need to coast.

But you won't know what path is best without pausing, stopping, resting and reassessing on the regular.

Maybe you aren't even able to coast right now. If you are feeling stuck, take heart. It's normal, even outside of a pandemic. As my dear friend Nicola Tannion writes in her blog, *Piercing the Veil*,

Creativity has fallow times. Times when a personal cry for water goes unanswered and the well of creativity pulls up nothing but empty buckets. If the expectation is to produce, then one moves away from the magic of flow and genius and into the world of solar burn... when the creative well is waterless, it is best to go do something else, like climb a mountain or walk in the woods. If your dry spell has hit during the winter months, look about, for all around, nature reminds you that drawing in energy is

an essential aspect of the cycle. The winter light is soft and sets early. The trees have shed their leaves, conserving vital energy in the colder days ahead. The land is hard and very little can push through right now. Retreat, it says. Lay low. Watch the sunset over the bare tree tops. Light a fire. Leave corn for the deer.

Yes, we are creatives. We regularly fuse science and art in our work, don't we?

So stop. Rest. Clear your mind. Take some time for yourself to relax, first. Then take more time to gestate and reassess where you are in work, self, and relationships.

Poet David Whyte tells us in his profound book *The Three Marriages*:

Each of the three marriages [work, relationship, self] is non-negotiable. They cannot be 'balanced' against one another—a little taken from this and added to that—except at their very peripheries. To 'balance' work with the self and with relationship means that we only work harder in each marriage, while actually weakening each by separating them from each other...each of them represents a core conversation that is necessary for human beings, and none can be weakened or given up without severe damage.

So use the new year to take a pause and stop striving for a bit. Breathe. Walk with your dogs, or alone. Fish. Hike. Indulge in forest bathing. Work on your book. Enjoy your own dogs. Draw or paint. Reassess.

And then move yourself forward in the way that makes the most sense for you, right now.

You might be amazed at the changes you make.

Happy New Year.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, has been Editor of The Canine Professional Journal since 2010. She joined IACP in 2003 and served on the Board of Directors from 2014 through 2020. She is a longtime member of the Education and Certification Committee and was in charge of originally creating the Dog Trainer Foundation Exam. An Atlanta, GA native, Mailey has worked professionally with dogs and their people for 39 years, holds a Masters in Education, is a CDTA and PDTI, and was Behavior and Training Manager for the Atlanta Humane Society for 21 years. Read more at www.poochprofessor.com, www.carpek9.blogspot.com and on Facebook at The Pooch Professor and An Optimist with Experience.

iACP



**PetSafe®
is a proud
sponsor of
IACP!**

petsafe.net



NATIONAL K-9 SCHOOL FOR DOG TRAINERS

WWW.NK9.COM