

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

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

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International Association of Canine Professionals

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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How to Join IACP:

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

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

Annual Fees:

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

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The IACP is proud to announce that Member

Wendy Lien

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

We know how much work goes into this
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Well done!

The Board of the IACP



Want to be published? Here's your chance!

The Canine Professional Journal editor is looking for submissions relating to all aspects of professional canine care. Articles should be of interest to a diverse membership of canine pros and should range from 800 to 1,500 words. Articles are subject to editing.

PHOTO submissions are welcome, too!

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

President's Letter

by Melanie Benware

It feels a bit surreal to be sitting here writing my first President's Letter for the IACP. When deciding what I would write, I realized that there is a great deal of the membership that has no idea who I am; that starting with an introduction would be helpful.

My journey in training dogs started roughly 18 years ago when my sassy young Husky was turned down by 3 trainers in my area and my vet suggested "puppy Prozac." I finally found an agility trainer that helped us, and she saw something in me and suggested I attend The Tom Rose School for Professional Dog Trainers (TRS). Upon our move to St. Louis and enrolling in the school, I mentored under a trainer at a Labrador rescue in St. Louis. After graduating from TRS, I was offered a position to start up the training program for one of the nation's oldest and largest kennels in Richmond, Virginia. The program was very successful, but after 10 years, my husband was transferred to Ireland, so we gathered up our pack and moved across the pond. We spent three years living in Dublin, where I hosted workshops for trainers from all over the world promoting IACP members and the IACP mission. I also volunteered at the Dublin SPCA, and worked with clients around Ireland. In April of this year, we moved back to Richmond and I started up my own business, Kindred K9 Solutions, where I offer a unique "Homeschool" experience for my customers while also maintaining a good work/life balance.

In my personal life, I enjoy traveling, hiking and scuba diving with my husband, and various activities

with our four dogs: Mongo, a German Shepherd; Zhenga, a South African Boerboel; Bogart, a Bull Mastiff; and Autumn, a Lurcher who wormed her way into our family during our stint in Ireland.

I joined the IACP in 2006 and started attending the IACP Conference in 2011. In 2013, I volunteered at the Conference and was also honored to receive the Ambassador award that year. In 2014, I started volunteering on the IACP Conference Committee. I was elected to start serving on the IACP Board of Directors in 2015, and voted in as Vice President in 2017. 2018 marked my last year as a Director for the IACP, as I have always believed that bringing in new Directors is essential to continuing to grow the organization.

We are welcoming in 3 New Directors this year: Rick Alto, Monica Davis and Jeff Scarpino, and we have a new Board Secretary in Bonnie Boger. All are imminently qualified to keep the organization running smoothly and efficiently, and I look forward to serving as the IACP President and working with this Board. We have a big year ahead of us with many new and exciting changes in the works--all of which I believe our membership will be proud of.

During my time on the Board I have seen this organization grow tremendously! The growth we have enjoyed has been in a wide variety of people from all over the world, multiple generations and modalities. This diversity is what I believe makes us strong. We truly are the organization that supports and welcomes trainers from all corners of the training world. When trainers work together, dogs win!

Respectfully,



Melanie Benware, President.

melanie.benware@canineprofessionals.com



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The 3 Fatal Mistakes Business Owners Make...

by Sherry Boyer

...and How to Stop the Overwhelm They Create

At a small business seminar, a woman who owns a very successful olive oil store raised her hand. She said, "If you can help me teach my employees to stop coming to work barefoot, I'd consider you a miracle worker." I asked her, "Do you have a dress code that details the type of footwear they have to wear?" She laughed and said, "Oh come on, it's common sense to wear shoes to work!" I looked at her quizzically and asked: "If it were common sense, then don't you think they'd show up wearing some sort of shoe?" She waved the question off: "If I have to tell them everything, then I might as well not even have employees."

I took a chance and got direct: "Well, you said it, not me. If you think you don't have to tell them, or teach them everything you need them to do, then you're right. You might as well not even have employees."

That's mistake Number 1. Business owners do this with clients, employees, vendors. As dog professionals, I dare say that if we acted this way with the dogs we work with, we wouldn't get very far.

This is about EXPECTATIONS. You often hear "she/he who expects nothing shall never be disappointed." While there's more than a grain of truth in this, when it comes to doing business with other humans, we have to be able to explain what we expect and at the very least stand a chance of that expectation being met.

Instead of living in a place of hope that other people will suddenly know exactly how we want things to be done without having to explain them, we can be in this wonderful space where they do know what we expect. And then guess what? They do the things!

It's actually very simple:

Step 1: Know your expectations.

Step 2: Communicate your expectations.

Step 3: Gain agreement about each expectation.

Step 4: Confirm the agreement parameters.

Step 5: Test and confirm that your expectations are understood.

That's it. I can 100%, without a doubt, guarantee that all unmet expectations missed Step 3, 4 and 5--sometimes even Step 1 and 2. Many of us don't realize that we even have an expectation until it's not met, and then when it's not, watch out! That's when our internal chitter chatter really gets going and when dog professionals say things like, "see, it's easier to work with dogs than people!"

Well, sure. Because they've usually let the dog know what the expectations are up front.

The 2nd big mistake that business owners make is TOLERATING certain things with tasks, and with people. I call them "tolerations," and they drain our power, focus and energy; they often start small and add up over time; and are the main cause of overwhelm for business owners.

Tolerations can be things we are avoiding facing, such as accounting tasks, marketing, taxes, creating systems and processes, delegating, and dealing with jerky clients and employees.

Tolerations are also the things we dislike doing, yet we do them anyway and find ourselves saying/thinking things like this, without doing anything to change them:

- "I hate doing this!"
- "I wish I wasn't the only one who could do this correctly."

- “This is the worst part of my business.”
- “I’m always reminding them about x, y, and z and no one listens.”

Tolerations can be anything that brings us to a state of frustration, causes us to feel friction, eats up our energy, and/or holds us back from being able to work in our strengths. Once you learn how to identify these things you are tolerating in your business, you can learn how to create systems and processes that will free you from them across all parts of your life. You’ll learn how to delegate (and not relegate), and be free of the things that drain you.

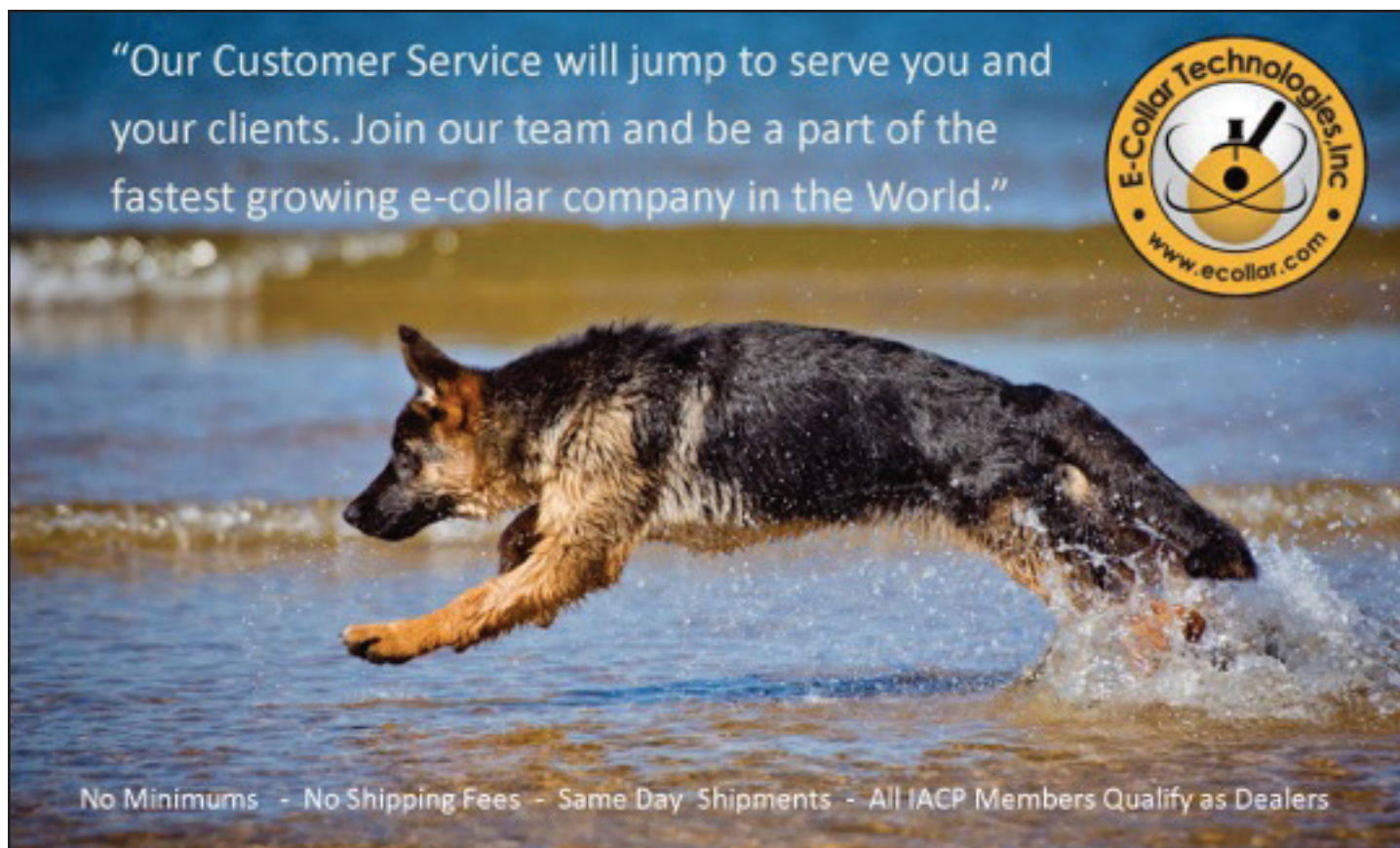
The 3rd major mistake that business owners make ALL the time is not knowing how to SET and UPHOLD a boundary. Dog professionals are usually amazing at doing this with the dogs we work with, but when it comes to the humans...good golly! There’s more frustration and overwhelm around this one issue than is necessary, but since most of us didn’t grow up learning how to even set a boundary, much less uphold one with another human being, it’s no wonder.

A boundary is simply a limit that defines. The problem most often comes in how to uphold that limit. There are many reasons that people have trouble with this with other humans. A lot of it stems from not knowing how to be direct and also mistaking being direct with being confrontational.

There are some common themes I often observe after a boundary has been broken, including this one: “I set a boundary with them, but they walked right through it.” The issue here is not the person disrespecting the boundary, it is with the person not upholding the boundary. Doesn’t all of this look familiar? It’s what dog professionals teach their clients, all day long!

So really, it’s the same thing with humans as it is with dogs, and it requires certain steps.

There are some rules to follow before we ever set a boundary, and when we do it in this way we will be far more successful: smile, stay calm (do not be angry), be direct, stand in your power with confidence, remind yourself and the other person that you love them or care for them, or if at work, remind them they are an important member of



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your team and you care about their success at work.

Are you ready? There are 4 steps in setting and upholding boundaries:

1. Figure out exactly what you need to set a boundary on.
2. Calmly, and with love, speak this boundary to the person/people who need(s) to hear it.
3. Explain clearly **exactly** (make it something you will/can do) what the consequence or result of any variance will be.
4. Do that! Enact the consequence.

And then there are 4 more important pieces to this:

1. Number 4 above is the upholding piece. You are the person who holds your boundaries, no matter what others choose.
2. Expect that some will test you. Some of those who choose/need to test you will be those who respect and appreciate the boundaries the most. Think of dogs...and children....
3. Congratulate yourself on following through and for not being upset that the boundary was tested--or being cranky at the person who tested it. Well done!
4. Did it not go perfectly? That's ok. Go back to step 1. Practice makes perfect!

I promise you, figure these 3 fatal mistakes out for your business, practice them until you become unconsciously competent at them, and then one day, you will wake up and think "wow, I'm not as frustrated and overwhelmed as I used to be." And maybe, just maybe, your business and life will get easier, and the need to have a space to vent will go down. And we all know we need happier dog professionals out there. Because the need for help is not ever going to go away, and in my experience, all of the dogs my business ever worked with came with people!

Sherry Boyer owned a thriving dog training, boarding and daycare business in California from 2005-2018 and learned how to be much less frustrated and overwhelmed out of

necessity. In 2009, her first husband's suicide caused her to quickly have to streamline her business and be able to run it as an absentee owner and then in 2013 she was diagnosed with autoimmune issues (which is since in remission and she is healthier than ever). Everything she teaches she learned and implemented in her business, and all of it has led to a thriving life and business free of overwhelm and frustration. Sherry now consults with and mentors other business owners who know there is something better on the other side of the overwhelm. She can be found reliably on Facebook and now lives in Sparks, NV with her hilarious husband and their two old, much loved dogs.

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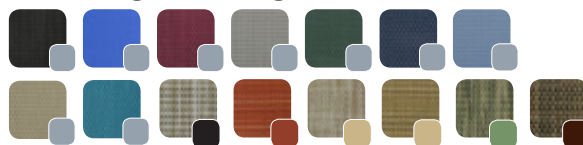
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What Training Horses Taught Me About Dogs

by Gavin Ehringer

Before becoming a dog trainer, I earned my keep training horses. Here are five lessons I learned from equines that serve me well with dogs, too.

1). Animals Prefer to Choose.

A wise horse clinician once told me, “You train a horse by making the right thing easy and the wrong thing hard.”

When training, I like to give animals choices. Making decisions involves active learning, the kind that tends to stick best in the mind. Plus, choice tricks the animal into thinking it was his or her idea in the first place!

Let me give you just one example. One of my clients was a petite woman named Wendy. I’d guesstimate Wendy weighed barely a hundred pounds. Every day, she carried her standard poodle up and down the stairs to her bedroom. He feared stairs, especially the kind with spaces between the treads.

To overcome his fear, I could have dragged the poodle up and down the stairs in a method called flooding. But I wanted him to make his own choice. So, I sat at the base of the steps with the dog on a leash. If the dog pulled away, I rhythmically tugged on the leash to make that choice uncomfortable. But if he took a step forward, he got a food reward. With this method, we worked our way up the staircase, literally one step at a time.

By making the wrong thing easy and the right thing hard, I helped the poodle choose confidence over fear and let him think going up stairs was his idea.

2). Actions speak louder than words.

Horses don’t absorb words like dogs do. Therefore, beyond saying “Whoa!,” and comforting words like “Easy!,” horsemen communicate using body language and physical cues.

Using only physical cues requires consistency. Something as subtle as shifting weight in the saddle or applying calf pressure to the horse’s side can cue a motion. For this reason, horsemen work hard at consistency and body control.

Dog owners, by-and-large, are inconsistent with cues and rely too heavily on spoken words. A dog doesn’t know “Come!” or “Heel!” just because his master says the words, yet people seem to think he should.

When practical, I first show clients how to teach a behavior without saying a word. I might tell them to dangle a treat just above the dog’s nose then slam the treat to the floor. Only after hundreds of successful repetitions, I’ll instruct the client to start saying “Down!” just before the physical cue.

The new cue/old cue approach ensures the dog can perform a command correctly and consistently before we give it a name.

On the subject of words, I ask clients to write down the verbal obedience commands. During training sessions, I insist the list be the sole vocabulary used with their dogs. A typical list would be: sit, down, stay, let’s go (or heel), come, go to bed, free and a marker like “Good dog!” or “Yes!” Limiting words while training reduces uncertainty in both dogs and masters.

3). Patience Is A Virtue.

Compared to dogs, horse training requires more time, work and persistence. Likewise, a horse’s mental and physical development takes place more slowly too. Horses taught me infinite patience.

People are goal-oriented, but dogs and horses are not. They don’t know you want them to help rope a calf or catch a frisbee mid-air and return it to you. In order to see the full picture, you have to

be patient and methodically put each piece of the puzzle in place.

Lack of patience leads to poor results. For years, I competed in agility. At competition after competition, I saw dogs blow their start line stays and begin running ahead of their handlers.

That told me the trainer lacked patience. In their hurry to get their dog into competition, they failed to build a dependable, unshakeable stay.

Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Adopt the pace of nature; her secret is patience." It's good life advice and good animal training.

4). Aim For The Light.

Great equestrians strive to achieve lightness. Light hands, a light seat, and light cues. Watch as Olympic-level dressage competitors put their horses through a dozen exacting maneuvers. It's likely you won't see a single rider's cues at all. That's lightness.

I try to help clients achieve lightness, too. Too often, pet owners are heavy-handed. They bark commands, they tug on leashes, they shout corrections. That's no fun for themselves or for their dogs.

Now granted, you sometimes have to begin training with firmness. But as the dog and owner gain mastery, I steer the human toward softer hands, quieter commands, and subtler cues.

Commands need not be harsh. I often use this example to demonstrate why: "Your boss hollers at you to report to his office. You'll go, but reluctantly. Well, the same holds for your dog." Quiet, encouraging commands give the dog reason to comply willingly and enthusiastically.

5). Be A Student, As Well As A Master.

On his TV show, a celebrated and highly-esteemed horseman said, "I'm not a trainer; I'm a student of the horse."

I took that to heart. Dogs spend a lot of their time watching us and learning from us. They need to figure out how to get along in the world and get the things we want. We can learn just as much by observing dogs. I've been studying them for 30 years, trying all kinds of different sports and events to try and learn more.

I think a trainer needs to always be a student. Once you learn a training method, go learn it another way. A balanced trainer should not dismiss a positive-reinforcement trainer, but try to see how she deals with problems differently. Don't be so arrogant you won't attend another trainer's classes. Go to seminars and conventions.

I've competed in half-a-dozen dog sports. Learning agility truly helped me understand off-leash distance training. Herding taught me a great deal about natural instinct and ability. Dog shows taught me about breeding and conformation.

My advice to dog trainers is this: never think for a moment that you know it all. Never stop learning. Never stop being a student of the dog.

*Gavin Ehringer has written about and trained horses for 30 years. He is a graduate of the Starmark Dog Trainer Academy and he owns and operates Ohana Canine Training (ohanacanine.com) of Denver, Colorado. His most recent book is **Leaving the Wild: The Unnatural History of Dogs, Cats, Cows, and Horses**, available on Amazon*

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The Ethics of Punishment

By Chad Mackin

While I was teaching a lesson on stay today, the dog got up, and I calmly grabbed the leash and led the dog back to where he had been staying. The dog's owner remarked her previous trainer would have said the dog had an attitude problem and that he needed to be taught some respect. That's a paraphrase, but it's as close to verbatim as I can get. The gist is intact even if the exact words aren't.

This line of reasoning shouldn't be unfamiliar to anyone who has participated for long in the dog training world.

Later, I saw a video of a dog being over-pressured with a remote collar. The dog looked confused and was vocalizing. The handler was calm and methodical. At one time the handler reached to pet the dog who immediately shied away and when the leash prevented escape, laid down on his side. Commenters said the dog was a "drama queen" and—you guessed it—had an "attitude problem."

This sort of thing is a growing concern to me, and I think it should be to others who love this profession as well.

The trainers who are quick to label dogs as drama queens and having attitude problems are often the first ones to chastise people who see the dog as fearful, confused, or needing support as giving the dog "human emotions." It seems dogs can be disrespectful and drama queens, but can't actually be afraid or confused. It's a strange paradigm.

But this is all understandable given the nature of the human species.

We like stories.

We especially like stories that make us the good guy. And all of our dog training stories make us the good guy. This is true whether you call yourself balanced, use prong collars exclusively, or if you

use nothing but love, clickers, bits of food, or games. In your story, you're the good guy. That's why you do what you do.

When I read Jean Donaldson's *The Culture Clash*, I realized there was a vast difference between how I see a dog, and how she sees the dog. To her, it seemed, dogs were little more than the product of their reinforcement histories. If she believed they have any agency of their own, very little of it came through in her writing. It's been years since I read the book, but the lasting impression I had was this: if a dog did something wrong, it was our fault for not creating the right reinforcement history to ensure he made the right choice. In other words, it wasn't fair to punish them because for all intents and purposes, they don't "choose" so much as repeat behaviors that have been successful in the past. In her model, a dog could no more be disrespectful as he could be a CPA. Moreover, disobedience is never the dog's fault, it's the trainer's fault. This last sentiment is one I generally agree with.

There's a certain symmetry to such a view of things. A trainer who assumes disobedience is the result of inadequate training rather than the poor attitude of the dog will ultimately be a better trainer because he has to try harder.

But in a larger sense, Ms. Donaldson is no more true to the dog in her description than those who chalk disobedience up to attitude problems are.

However, in her story, she also gets to be the good guy.

Whatever choice you make about when and where to use punishment, you're going to have to confront the concept of free will eventually. Donaldson suggests that since the dog doesn't get to choose what to do, it's unfair to hold them accountable for what they do. However, as we will see, lack of free will doesn't make punishment less

palatable--it may be the best starting assumption when approaching the question of punishment.

On the other hand, those who believe that a dog has free will and can choose to use it to take petty revenge on the dog trainer he doesn't respect are certain that, by virtue of that bad attitude, the dog deserves to be punished.

Both views on punishment are wrapped up in the idea of justice. When viewed this way, punishment is either just or unjust based on the dog's culpability for the act (or attitude) in question. In our minds, punishment carries with it the stink of retribution. We don't see it merely as a tool to make a behavior less palatable to the dog, but it's also a way to make the dog pay for transgressions. Under such circumstances, it's no wonder we have concocted such elaborate stories about our dogs to define our position on the subject of punishment.

Dr. Robert Sapolsky is one of my favorite neuroscientists (yes, I'm nerdy enough to have favorite neuroscientists,) and he does not believe

in free will at all. However, he hasn't used the absence of free will to suggest we should not be punishing people for crimes. The lack of free will makes punishment make more sense perhaps than the assumption of free will does—and what it also does is remove the idea of retribution. Punishment becomes exclusively about the behavior that precedes it, and nothing more. One well-known trainer is fond of using cactus to illustrate the value of punishment. The plant exacts no revenge upon a creature who foolishly runs into it, yet it will most definitely will teach most animals not to repeat that behavior. We aren't offended, partly because the cactus isn't doing anything to the dog. The cactus just is, and by its very nature, produces an effective punishment. But I think the part about not getting revenge is more critical to our sense of comfort.

The truth is that dogs (and humans) learn a lot from inanimate objects, and while we may feel bad for those who learn such lessons, we don't have the same sort of emotional response. If a

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trainer were to swat a dog with a cactus branch as punishment we would not shrug it off the same way we would if the dog ran into the cactus on his own, even if the dog suffered fewer injuries from the trainer. The moment we make the punishment *a deliberate action*, we create a story about it. Invariably, that story seems to center not around the practical effects of punishment, but of the undertones of retribution.

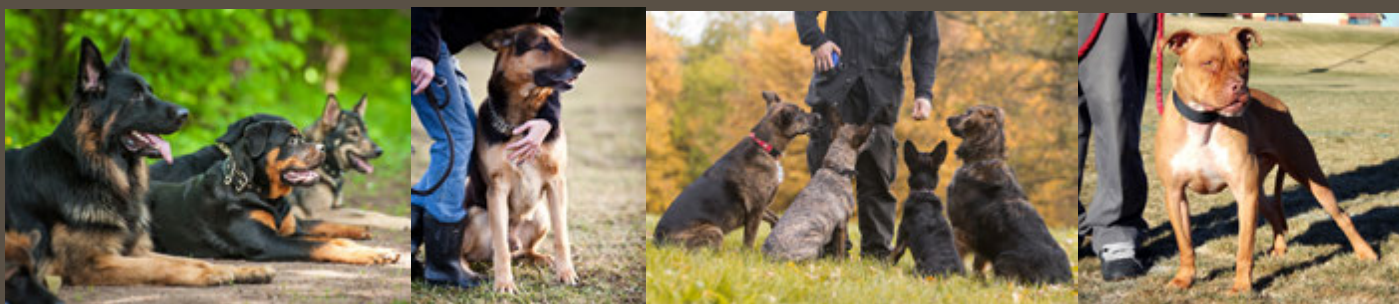
In his book *Behave*, Dr. Sapolsky argues for the justice system to remove all aspects of paying debt and focus entirely on making correct behavior more likely than incorrect behavior. He advocates for results-based punishment strategies as opposed to the current tendency to punish based on what makes us feel as if justice has been served. Did you know there is no data accessible to judges or prosecutors that tracks the success of different types of sentences? We literally don't have any way of knowing if stiffer penalties reduce recidivism or if more lenient penalties do. Our

justice system isn't concerned with reducing crime as much as it's concerned with making sure the criminal's "debt to society" is paid.

The human being seems to have to work very hard to separate the clinical application of an unpleasant stimulus to reduce the likelihood of a particular behavior and the need to seek retribution for perceived slights.

A trainer working with a dog who doesn't respond to his approach quickly enough can take that as a failing on the dog's part. The primate brain will want to respond in kind to the insult. It takes an effort to recognize the dog isn't being a shit, and we have no right to expect any being to comply with a directive that makes no sense to them. We can condition them to comply. We can teach them to comply. And we can coerce compliance under threat of consequence. But we cannot expect it by virtue of our perceived position of authority.

A trainer working with a dog on a short timeline can



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feel like he has to increase the consequences of a mistake to accelerate learning. This isn't necessarily a bad thing if the punishment is delivered in a clinical frame of mind. But once the trainer has upped the ante, his personal narrative can kick in. If he would typically have been more patient, it's likely he will feel some discomfort about resorting to force so early. To keep his own mental peace, his perceptions of the dog and the dog's behavior will slowly but inexorably drift. His need to believe he didn't shortchange the dog or violate his own beliefs about fairness, his need to be the good guy, will cause him to review the moments leading up to the choice and find all sorts of clues the dog wasn't confused or doing his best, but instead the dog was toying with him. After all, the trainer is a good trainer and a good person. He wouldn't mistreat a dog. Therefore, the dog must have deserved it. Once more, we have moved from the behavioral definition of punishment and into the social meaning of punishment.

But the story is not better for the trainers who eschew all forms of punishment. They, too, have to justify their choice, and I think it's the harder justification. Imagine you've decided not to use any form of punishment at all. You work your tail off on a dog, but despite all your best efforts, the dog remains unchanged, or at least not changed enough. The frustrated client goes to a "balanced" trainer who applies punishment liberally, and the dog seems to get better. The potential for cognitive dissonance is enormous. You are certain punishment doesn't work. Yet here is a dog who seems to be better after punishment. Your choice can no longer be merely practical.

Sure, you will remind yourself of the gurus who teach that science says punishment doesn't work. And you will tell yourself that the other trainer is just kicking the can down the road so to speak. The problem isn't solved, it's merely in remission, and it will come back worse. But you are also likely to conclude the trainer who did this has a character defect. He's

lazy, or a narcissist on a power trip. There's no way he can be a decent human being. Because at the end of the day we are often dealing with life-and-death decisions. If you have ever recommended euthanasia because a dog didn't respond to your methods, the possibility that the application of punishment might have saved that dog's life is an unbearable weight. Allowing for such a reality makes it hard to be the good guy.

Over my career I have been very vocal about my criticism of the misuse, or over-reliance on, punishment. In fact, I have been so vocal that I have given many people the impression that I am against punishment. But I'm not. I believe in the value of punishment from a behavioral point of view. I am not in favor of punishment from the more natural primate view of it. We should not be "holding dogs accountable" with punishment. We should not be "demanding respect" with pun-

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ishment. We should not be using punishment to make up for our shortcomings as trainers or as human beings. We should never feel insulted or disrespected by dogs. They are dogs. They do what makes sense to them. If it makes sense to comply they will.

Sure, we can use the application of punishment to make certain choices seem less sensible. In fact, that point will come with most dogs. But none of that has anything to do with the dog's evaluation of us as being respectable or not. If I make sense, the dog will respect me, or at least comply as if he does. If I don't make sense, I'm going to have to use a lot more coercion. I find very few tough dogs to train. What I find is a lot of dogs don't think "Because I said so," is a good enough reason to comply. The more effort compliance requires, the less effective that approach becomes. This is the entire reason we bred dogs who love to do the things we want them to do.

I oppose punishment when it's done in any way to make the dog "pay" for noncompliance. I oppose

punishment when it is an effort to increase the effectiveness of an ineffective strategy. I oppose punishment when the trainer is trying to elevate his own standing in the dog's eyes. I oppose punishment that is done more out of frustration than out of a sincere desire to see the dog succeed. In fact, that's probably the only reason I believe punishment should be used: to enable the dog to succeed. Any other motives or pressures contaminate the act. They may not make it wrong, but they add an element of wrongness, and that element of wrongness will lead us down the wrong road.

It's easier to just be a good guy in the first place than it is to try to convince ourselves we're the good guy after the fact.

Chad Mackin is a trainer, teacher, seminar presenter, podcaster, mentor, and muse to many. Founder of Pack to Basics, he is always seeking ways to provide clarity to dogs and people. He is also past President of IACP and knows a choke hold. It is possible that he is 7 feet tall, though no one has ever asked. Look for him on Facebook.

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Five Tips for Improving Canine Performance

by Erica C. Boling, PhD

Recently I lost my 11-year-old Doberman Risa to Wobbler's Disease. She was diagnosed more than three years ago, and she amazed everybody by living to be nearly 11 ½ years old. If you're familiar with the breed, you know Dobermans are riddled with genetic diseases. You also know how unusual it is for a Doberman to reach 10 years old. It's so unusual they even have a special registry to honor those Dobermans that reach the decade mark. Not only did Risa live beyond 10 years old, she did that having a disease that frequently kills within a year after diagnosis.

We were lucky that Risa wasn't living in pain. Happy and smart as a whip right up to her final days, her loss of mobility was what finally took her from us. She got to the point where she couldn't stand up or walk on her own. Even with support, she'd knuckle over onto her toes and drag her feet. Unfortunately, even for many dogs who don't have Wobbler's Disease, we often lose them because of deterioration of their body but not their mind. I think it makes it so much harder for us to let them go when their minds are so bright and alert, but their bodies are withering away.

There are a lot of factors that played a role in Risa living to be more than 11 years old with Wobbler's Disease. I can't pinpoint any one thing that was more effective than another, but I can promise you that keeping her fit and active the majority of her life definitely played a role in keeping her mobile and moving independently right up until the end. Keeping our dogs fit does more than just improve the quality of their lives. It can extend their lives.



Challenges Surrounding Canine Fitness

A friend of mine recently retired after working for more than 30 years as a K9 handler for the government. When chatting about canine fitness in an email message, he wrote something that really struck me. He stated that there's nothing sadder than the day when a handler has to put his partner down, and unfortunately that partner could have had a few more years if only the handler had done his part in maintaining his K9 in peak physical condition... if only he had applied all aspects of canine fitness into his daily routine.

Canine fitness is so very important for our dogs' lives, so why aren't more people focusing on it? Yes, keeping our dogs fit takes time and commitment. Yes, our clients don't want to hear us telling them how unfit and fat their dogs are.... but isn't it worth it? Isn't it worth all the effort, time and trouble if it means our canine partners can spend more time on earth with us? Isn't it worth it if it means less physical suffering, fewer behavioral problems and a dog that is more stable physically, mentally and emotionally? Even with a resounding YES, why aren't more people emphasizing canine fitness in their dogs' lives? It's a complex issue, but here are some reasons that stop many people.

- Being Reactive Instead of Proactive - Usually people don't think about canine fitness until they end up with a sick or injured dog. We often take our dogs' health for granted until something suddenly happens. We must take a stance and be proactive if we want to make a difference. If we start paying attention to canine fitness right now, before our dogs are sick

or injured, we can minimize or even eliminate certain health conditions and injuries.

- **Lack of Education** - I see lack of education coming into play in two different ways. First, some people don't realize just how important canine fitness is at all life stages, and they don't have an awareness of what they need to do to keep their dogs in peak physical condition. Second, some people are hyper aware of its importance, but they incorrectly implement fitness programs and end up accidentally injuring their dogs. If we are going to keep our dogs fit and healthy, we must put in the time that's needed to educate ourselves about how to successfully design canine fitness programs.
- **Stuck in Old Behaviors** - Even when people are aware and educated, there's another important component that's frequently missing... taking action! Sometimes we're just not motivated to do the things that we know need to get done. We've all been there. It can be due to weather, a busy schedule, family inconveniences or a million other things. If we are going to make a change, however, we must acknowledge that improving canine fitness involves changing human behaviors too.

Although I can't teach everything about canine fitness and how to change human behavior in one article, I can give some useful tips for moving forward. These are tips that have proven to be very effective for both my canine fitness clients and me.

1) Schedule time to get more active. Whether it's finding time for exercising your own dog or building it into your clients' training routines, I find it's more likely to happen if you actually schedule it into your day. Your weekly

activities should provide your dog with a balanced fitness program. This means integrating activities for cardio, flexibility, body awareness and strength training. At the very minimum, you should aim for at least 20 minutes of continuous cardio exercise at least 3 days per week. Add balance activities to improve body awareness and things like crawling, digging, jumping or hill work for strengthening.

2) Set realistic goals. This is so important for staying motivated! If you're currently not doing any regular cardio exercise with your dog, start with small goals that allow you to quickly achieve success. Start with a goal of 10 minutes once or twice a week, and then gradually build upon this. It's also much safer to build your dog's fitness up gradually rather than jumping right into a full 3 or

A graphic with a blue background on the left and a photo of a black, white, and tan dog in grass on the right. The blue section contains the PetSafe logo (a gold seal with 'SAFE' and 'EFFECTIVE' around 'PetSafe'), the tagline 'protect. teach. love.', and the text 'PetSafe brand is proud to be an IACP Sponsor!' and 'PetSafe.net' at the bottom.An advertisement for K9 Lifeline, LLC. It features a dark red background. On the left is the K9 Lifeline logo, which includes a silhouette of a dog jumping and the text 'K9 LIFELINE'. To the right of the logo is the company name 'K9 Lifeline, LLC', phone number '801-272-1159', email 'K9lifelineinfo@gmail.com', and website 'www.k9lifeline.net'. Below this is a section titled 'Shadow Program Information' with a description of the program and a photo of a dog wearing a head halter. The text describes the Transitional Leash as a dual purpose, no pull training leash that transitions from a pulling dog to a calm companion. The Shadow Program section describes working with dogs and their owners as a rewarding career, focusing on teaching behavioral issues through daily activities and consultations.

4 days-per-week fitness routine. Give your dog's body a few weeks to adjust before increasing the workload.

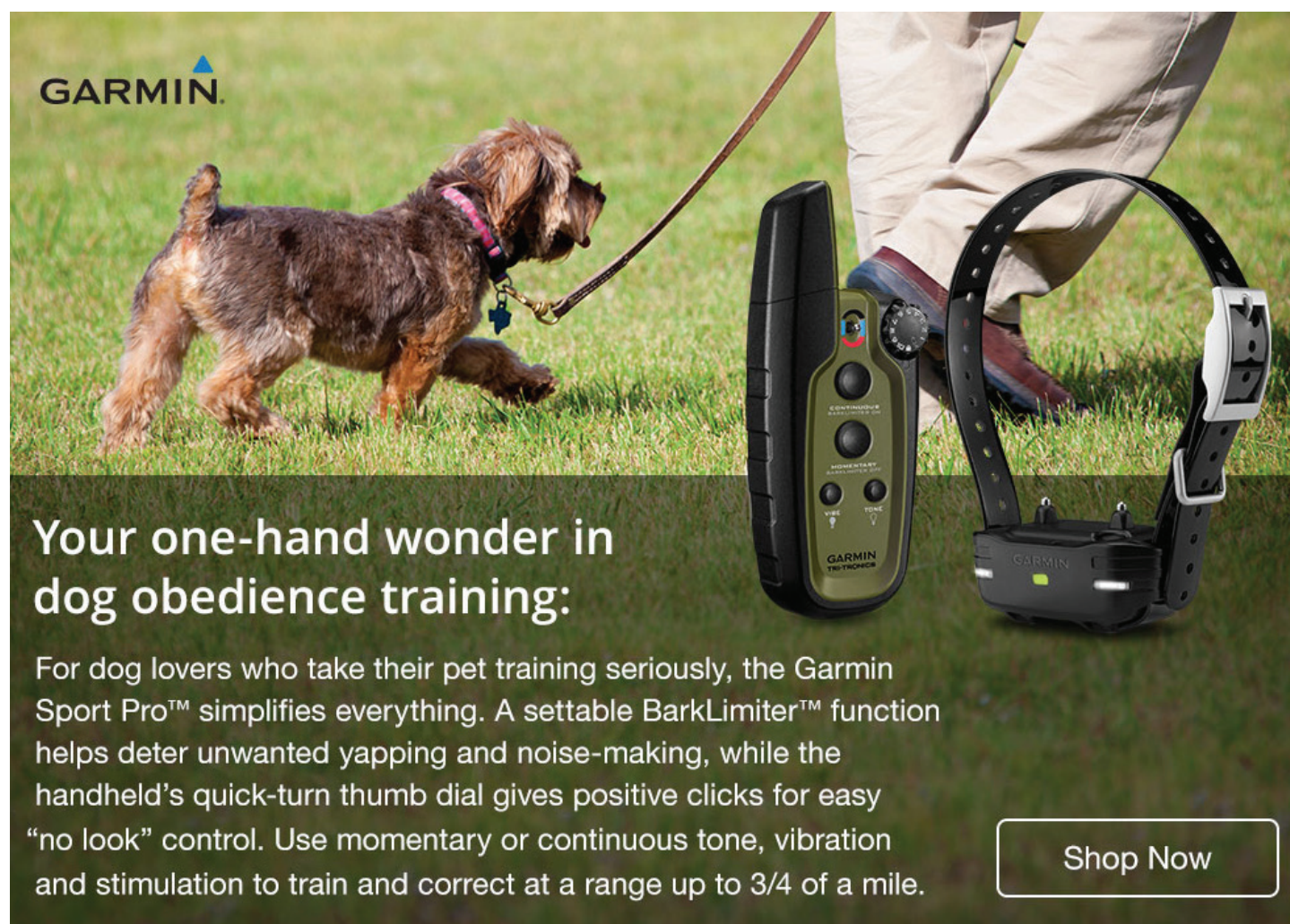
3) Set weekly measurable goals. Goals that you can measure might include days per week training, distance traveled, time spent exercising and number of repetitions. Find a way to document your dog's progress so that you can note improvements when they occur or use data to confirm when your program is not working. This is especially important when building up your dog's fitness level so that you don't end up doing too much too soon, which could result in injury.

4) Stay committed with reminders. Improving fitness doesn't occur overnight. When your motivation is low, remind yourself of your goals and why it's so important to stay committed. You have to stay committed or else all the hard work that you did over previous weeks will be wasted if

you start to get lazy now. If you want to maintain or increase your dog's fitness level, schedule your exercise at least three days per week. If you skip weeks and are inconsistent in your training, your dog's fitness level will deteriorate. If this happens, back up in your training and start with the basics again.

5) Find a supportive community. Going solo can be challenging! Often our motivation is high when we start something new, but as the novelty wears off, we need ways to stay inspired. Having an "accountability partner" to share training plans, following a Facebook group where people participate in the same activities as you, hearing other people's successes and sharing your own progress are all ways to stay motivated.

Also, recognize that canine fitness is much more than simply running your dog off leash or on a treadmill every day. You need a balanced fitness



The advertisement features a photograph of a brown and black dog on a leash in a grassy field. In the foreground, the Garmin Sport Pro handheld remote and the black training collar are displayed. The handheld has a green face with a thumb dial and buttons for 'CONTINUOUS', 'MOMENTARY', 'VIB', and 'TONE'. The collar has a silver buckle and a small green light. The Garmin logo is in the top left corner of the image area.

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program that emphasizes all areas of fitness (e.g., cardio, strength, flexibility, body awareness). If you spend too much time on one component of fitness and not enough time on another, you can end up creating imbalances in your dog, and these imbalances can lead to injury. One of my favorite ways to create a balanced program is by cross training and doing different activities with my dog.

Finally, be sure to invest in your own ongoing education. Take the time to reflect upon your canine fitness knowledge, recognize your strengths and limitations, and seek out opportunities for ongoing learning. I've created a K9 Fitness Quiz to help you identify your own strengths while pinpointing possible areas that need improvement. You can access the quiz at <http://k9fitnessquiz.com>. Whatever action you decide to take, be sure to get started now and don't wait! It's time to get out and be more fit and active with your dog!

Do you have an interest in canine fitness and want to learn how to become a Certified Canine Athlete Specialist (CCAS)?

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/k9fit>

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

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The Communication & Connection Era

by Tracy Franken

This article was first presented to an Entrepreneurial Toastmaster gathering in 2016.

When I was in grade school, my French teacher, Monsieur De, being somewhat frustrated with my shy, mousy demeanour and lack of class participation, took me outside to the soccer field and made me yell French words to the rest of my class on the other side of the field. The class was told that no one was allowed to go in until everyone heard me speak loudly and clearly.

I am an innately shy, introverted, and quiet person.

Now, I am not going to say that Monsieur De cured me of my fear of public speaking. In fact, I am fairly certain he scarred me for life. What I can tell you is that if you have ever been uncomfortable speaking up, speaking out, or speaking in general, well, you are amongst the vast majority of the population. Public speaking is the number one fear of most individuals.

It's a common fear. It's real. It's a thing. However, it is a thing that you can work on and it CAN get better.

We are currently living in an amazing age of communication and connection (to a fault, some may argue). However, if you can embrace the technology and seize an opportunity, this new age of communication and connection can vastly improve the way you live, love, and work.

I am sure most of you have been impacted by social media -- Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. For me, social media started out as an easy way to stay connected to my family. We've all grown up and moved away, started our own families and yet, despite the miles between us, we can still see, talk, and share experiences via social media. I mean, honestly, how else would I remember my cousins' birthdays?

But social media has also allowed me to boost my business and opened up a whole new world of communication and connection.

Let's take dog training for example.

Back in the day (don't you love that phrase?), a dog trainer was (most likely) a part time job or even a

hobby. People weren't making substantial income in this field. Sure, there were a few "schools," but for the most part, dog trainers were doing this in the evenings and weekends at the local curling club (or was that just me?) as extra income. You had to rely on word-of-mouth advertising, maybe a small ad in the local paper, or handmade flyers at the grocery store. Back then, there was no such thing as a "celebrity" dog trainer.

Enter Cesar Millan, the "Dog Whisperer."

After Cesar, came others, and suddenly dog training and dog trainers were a big deal. And people loved (or hated) the celebrities, depending on who they were.

Whether or not you agreed or disagreed with their training techniques, it changed the dog training industry forever. Because back then, that was the only way one could influence the industry in such a big way: to be "discovered," to have a television series, and to gain celebrity status. A few years after the premiere of *The Dog Whisperer*, Facebook opened up its market to the general public, and the industry changed again.

Now, today, there are dog trainers making a LOT of money.

I know sometimes we don't like to focus on money as an indicator of success but the reality is, it is. (For those of you who are uncomfortable with that idea, stay with me, I will get to you, I promise.)

So there are dog trainers out there making huge money. I see it on my social media feeds. Dog trainers are posting updates of their successes. They are purchasing new homes and new facilities on amazing new properties, and driving some pretty nice cars.

Now on the flip side, on that same social media feed, I am also seeing dog trainers struggling to make ends meet. Why is there such a difference?

The answer may surprise you.

It is NOT necessarily because of dog training skill or talent. There are a lot of phenomenal dog trainers out there struggling. So why?

I believe it boils down to two main points. Successful trainers are:

1. **Social media savvy.** They may not be experts in the field, but they embrace the opportunities provided by all types of social media. They put effort into learning everything they need to know about it. They stay up-to-date with the ever-changing technology, and

2. **BRILLIANT COMMUNICATORS.**

That is it.

The dog trainers out there who are utilizing technology to create and share content in meaningful ways are connecting with their audience, and those who can communicate effectively will win. Every. Single. Time.

The times they are a changing. You no longer need to be discovered or have your own television series to make a greater impact. All you need today is a smart phone and a free social media account, and to practice and improve your communication skills.

That's it.

Now I realize some of you out there maybe saying: "But I don't want to be famous."

Hey I get that. Fame isn't for everyone. So let me add this. Since I started honing my communication skills and putting my work out there, I get messages all the time saying "Thank you!" "Your words touched me and changed my life," "That tip or that video really helped me and my dog!". Heck, I have been stopped in the grocery store to be told how I "saved" their dog!

Greater impact. Reaching more people. Who doesn't want that?

So even if you don't care about the money (although you should), sharing your story, your expertise or your advice has value.

Perhaps you have never dreamed of standing on a stage in front of thousands of people. But now, you don't have to. Today your message, your story, your skill, your gift can reach beyond what you ever imagined possible, if you have the communication skills to make it happen.

So if communication or public speaking is holding you back from a life creating, sharing and connecting, what are you waiting for? We want to hear you.

We are in a communication and connection era.

Create. Share, Communicate, and Connect.

The world is a stage. Master communication and you can own that stage. That sounds like a bold statement, but it is true. Communication is said to be a "super" skill--a skill that enhances other skills. Think about it. If you take a bit of time to learn the art and science of communication, how much better can your business get? Better customer service, more sales, engaging group classes, captivating videos, educational webinars, inspiring courses...the list goes on and on.

For me, my journey to improve communication started with a Toastmasters meeting.(www.toastmasters.org) You can start there too. But even if that doesn't fit for you, I strongly encourage you to find something that does. It can improve your business and your life! See you on the stage

Tracy Franken is an award-winning public speaker, utilizing humour and connection to create engagement with an audience. She has been studying and practicing the art of public speaking and speech craft for over 6 years. In her company Beyond Obedience, she has utilized this skill to inspire her clients to success through coaching, workshops, online webinars and courses. In recent years she has sought out to inspire dog training professionals to enhance their businesses and their lives through the art of public speaking and communication. Her belief: "You can't help the dog, until you can speak to the human." Find her at www.mylifeisahumorousspeech.com and contact her at tracyfranken@gmail.com

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Critical Thinking

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

"Lasting knowledge earns its keep by allowing itself to be persistently questioned."

~Jamie Holmes

I am a skeptic.

When I first joined Facebook in 2009, I clicked on everything, believed most of what I read, and shared a bunch of stuff that I now know was seriously questionable. Giddy with excitement about this new way of connecting with the world, I went a bit nuts, I guess. But the explosion of social media and the popularity of "fake news," alternative facts," movement away from scientific inquiry, and the viral spread of pure misinformation the last several years brought me back to my skepticism in a huge new way. I'm much more discerning in what I choose to spread, and even in what I take the time to read/watch. I get annoyed when I see discredited research stories, overly partisan opinion pieces disguised as news, largely incorrect memes, pure clickbait, and unnecessary hyperbole in my feed.

Skepticism is not pessimism. It's not just dismissing things out of hand, or "pooh-poohing" them. It's not elitist to be a skeptic, nor is it a sign of hubris. It just makes sense. It makes sense to question what you are told, and to be willing to reconsider it—whether it aligns with your worldview, or not. Most people have no problem questioning (or just outright dismissing) what they are told if it disagrees with their set beliefs. The human brain is wired to do this, and it can be very difficult to stop oneself from automatically leaping to oppose different views or concepts. But I believe it is necessary for us to try.

Being a critical thinker requires skepticism—not just when one is being exposed to new and conflicting information, but consistently *with the information we already believe!* I care that what I believe is true, and the only way I know that it is true is to repeatedly question it. If I force myself to wander an opposing path occasionally, I can see my beliefs with new eyes, and if I choose to return to them and continue to believe them, it's because they can weather scrutiny and will stand the test of time...unless new truths emerge (which may or may not happen).

For instance, I consider myself a "full toolbox" trainer, as most of you do, too. Over 3 decades of working with people and their dogs, I have tried pretty much everything—dozens of tools and methods, all designed to attain the same goal of a well-trained pet dog. I've seen fads come and go, and I have seen why time-honored truths continue to weather the storms of scrutiny. If I prescribe a certain method or tool to a student to help their dog learn better, I'm darn sure it is going to work if they use it as intended. How often have you heard the words "Wow! What you told me to do really did

work," or heard through consistent word-of-mouth business that you know your stuff?

But sometimes, the dog doesn't improve while the owner swears that he did everything just as you said. It's easy to automatically blame the owner and assume she is lying and that she didn't do the work or did it incorrectly. And that may be the reason, because it does happen. But I never want to assume. I have had to step back and re-evaluate my prescriptions before, and sometimes, when I do, I see clearly that I was wrong about that tool or that method on that dog/owner team. It may be a tool or method that I use consistently and with great results on most teams, and so I'm confused as to why it isn't working here. If I take the dog and demonstrate with that tool or method and it works perfectly for me, I might be inclined to believe the assumption about a lying, or lazy, owner. It seems pretty obvious, right?

But I know from half a lifetime of skepticism that there are rarely only 2 sides to everything. If a method works fine when I am holding the leash but it doesn't work when the owner is holding it, then it may not be the right tool or method for that team, because as my friend Sarah Wilson is fond of saying, "The best tool or method for the job is the one the owner will consistently use."

So I make other suggestions and we try a few other tools or methods. Sometimes they work better, and the client is happy and the dog gets trained. Sometimes, they don't work as well as the ones I first recommended, and through a trial-and-error process, we gradually return to the original option and they see it in a different way and it works. Some trainers might be peeved when this happens, because they were right all along, but the value in this situation is not about being right—it's about being forced to question something they knew as "truth." If this happens to you, embrace it as knowledge that your methods and tool choices are sound ones. There's no shame in deviating, trying, and ultimately returning to the tried-and-true. It allows you to try new things, at the very least.

It can be uncomfortable to question our foundational beliefs, but it is a brain-expanding exercise to ask yourself sometimes, "Is there any possibility that the opposite of what I think here could be true?" Try it.

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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