

Lesson Plan: Defaulting To YOU - Not To The Environment

I have a client with a 7 month old Bernie Doodle. They are relatively first time owners with Dad having some childhood experience with dogs but no more. Mom and the rest of the family have no experience at all.

They started off great with some basic group foundation training, problems arose when Roxy growing up was unintentionally allowed to have the environment reinforce her behaviors making everyone else irrelevant.

Two major issues had developed into major behavior problems which have had the potential of rehoming the dog.

1. Counter Surfing and self rewarding by gaining desired item.
2. Refusing to relinquish an item from her mouth. Locked Mouth behavior

During Meet and Greet evaluation I determined Roxy has acquired the behaviors of sit,down, focus and Let's Go. Roxy can follow a Lure whether it is a food or toy item. Roxy could be redirected using the lure and known behaviors to deter Roxy from counter surfing. Roxy demonstrated she could relinquish an item within her mouth if traded for a high value food lure.

Class One: The "Lure" teaching and reinforcing following the lure, beginning guided into behaviors of sit down and focus. Acquiring the Cues "Let's Go" a cooperative cue to learn to walk with you from one place to another and the "off" cue to indicate to Roxy's paws are off the floor counter surfing and to place yourself in a Sit. Developing a rewardable behavior for Roxy to look and focus on you. Structure Play Games; Focus Game, Say My Name and Puppy Push Ups will be used to teach and reinforce behaviors.

Class Two: Adding the verbal cue. Sit,Down,Focus, Let'sGo, Off, Back and a Figure Six Pattern Back cue and figure six pattern is the middle section of a redirect exercise to teach and reinforce recollecting close to you. Structured Play games; Backing up exercise, Figure Six Games, simple puppy push up and puppy push ups will teach and reinforce behaviors and develop engagement and interaction with you.

Note: Class Three is where I will start a more in depth teaching to aid in the two issues of Counter Surfing and Locked Mouth behavior. This is where I will develop the premises of "The Dog defaulting to You not the Environment." I found this in the stated book below and my notes after doing some research. Please note all black text are direct quotes and citations of the author and only used for educational purposes only.

Aggression In Dogs; Practical Management, Prevention & Behavior Modification. Brenda Aloff
Copyright 2002, Pub: Fundcraft Inc. Collierville Tn.
Section VIII The Fix-Protocols; Cease & Desist pgs 263-266,Acquisition; Keep In Mind.

Note: Two Issues: Counter surfing and Lock mouth behavior. Seven months now Roxy has had success in taking things off the counters. The chase is a foot then a behavior has developed where Roxy, having no other choices, refuses to relinquish whatever item had been taken. This behavior was displayed during lesson two. The only way I could get Roxy to relinquish the item in her mouth was to calmly lick her face. I do not recommend this. In this situation I could clearly see Roxy was not fearful, she just did not want to receive a punishment if she let go. No correction or punishment was given. When she released the item, I praised her and gave her all the love and affection I had to give her so she can recognize that no matter what situation you are in you can trust that I will only have your best interest in my heart. From this displayed behavior from Roxy is what brought me to this Book and premises of The Dog defaulting to the Handler and why it is so important.

Acquired Behaviors to teach and reinforce for counter surfing to this point

1. Off cue to indicate paws off the floor.
2. Redirect to Sit to form pattern Off, Sit
3. Back cue to establish a recollecting method to put distance from desired item and Roxy.
4. The pattern sit, down, focus for five seconds to demonstrate calm and to develop self control.
5. Figure six pattern to recollect Roxy to canine position next to you to have more direct control
6. To have Roxy tethered / dragging a leash to establish better direct control when needed

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[Level I Prerequisite: Foundation Behaviors]

CEASE & DESIST: LEAVE-IT, RELINQUISH-IT & QUIT THINKING ABOUT IT.

(Stop) (leave-it) (Drop-it) (Out) (Leave-It)

GOAL: walk away, cease approach, relinquish ANY article/distraction/environment that you deem unavailable to the dog at that time and or in that particular context.

TEACHES: The dog to display self control, to relinquish the environment and impulsive actions of their instinctual behavior; where the dog defaults to handler instead of environment.

REINFORCES: Rewardable behaviors for dog defaulting to handler. Rewardable behaviors for walking away, ceasing approach, relinquishing any article, environmental distraction and natural instinctual behavior.

→ **Note:** Environment will always be in “direct competition” with You, for your dog’s attention.

The ISSUE is “Competing Reinforcers.”

“IF” ? the dog learns to help itself to the Environment, the dog will learn to enforce and reinforce itself, leaving you irrelevant.

- **Note:** Dogs do not change behavior to accommodate for a human's morals of what we view as right or wrong or good or bad. A dog's instinctual behavior is SAFE or DANGEROUS.

Safe: dog gets what it wants from the environmental situation.

Dangerous: dog was frightened from a threat perceived, or was curtailed, avoided due to threat perceived; dog does not get what it desired.

- ❖ When Your Dog Is.....DEFAULTING to Environment, the dog is allowed to interact in the environment and learns to reinforce itself "at will" leaving you irrelevant.

Roxy counter surfs, Roxy reinforces herself by gaining item, Chase is a foot; more self rewarding behavior till....oh no what do I do.

YOUR GOAL: to Teach, Enforce and Reinforce

- Dog to default to you. We teach and reinforce this with When we say Roxy's name she will always look at you.
- You are the way to interact with the environment. We develop a recollecting pattern to teach, enforce and reinforce that if I deem any behavior inappropriate I will recollect you close to me.
- Dog should look to you before any engagement or interaction with the environment. We teach, enforce and reinforce Roxy, to hold any behavior till I release you. This teaches self control and you are the provider of reinforcement.
- You must be more aware of the environment your dog will be engaging and interacting in to give Roxy the ability to succeed while learning .

- **NOTE!!!** If just a punishment is implemented when teaching the dog to default to you.....

Negative Punishment: removing reinforcer to avoid/ cease inappropriate behavior

Positive Punishment: adding something to decrease or stop inappropriate behavior

The dog will learn to discriminate and to associate any one of a number of environmental factors associated with the "punishment" in the context of that environment when determining Safe or Dangerous instinctual behaviors. The dog will learn through trial and error which behavior works, Safe; which behaviors doesn't work, Dangerous.

Humans often unintentionally reinforce this instinctual behavior by just implementing a punishment, lack of management of the environment and not teaching correct behavior.

- **NOTE!!!!** A "Correction" informs and teaches the dog the behavior they are offering is incorrect and to offer correct behavior or alternative behavior and I will assist you. Roxy needs to understand behaviors have consequences and if Roxy offers or displays an incorrect or inappropriate behavior, You will identify the behaviors and either show Roxy the correct behaviors or redirect Roxy to a preferred behavior.

Goal: is for the dog to default to you.....

The dog needs to believe you when "Competing Reinforcers" are in "direct competition" with You, for your Dog's attention. All is irrelevant but YOU.

Important: Do Not Lie to your dog by allowing them to not; relinquish, walk away, cease and desist to any item or environment you deem unavailable.

KEEP IN MIND The Dog needs

- To understand that any presence of any item or environment is not automatically available to them.
- To understand consequences are based on behavior and must offer specific behaviors on cue to obtain reinforcement.
- To understand You are the sole provider of reinforcement

KEEP IN MIND You Need

- To develop a strong bond where the dog learns to look to you for direction and permission to engage and interact with environment
- To develop a Cooperative System based on Trust.

Class Three Teaching and Reinforcing Acquisition of skills.

Lesson Three: Stop and At-Ease Cues SPG: Figure Six Game 2

Lesson Five A: Leave-It and Drop-It Cues SPG: Fetch and Tug

➤ *Note: Two Issues counter surfing and lock mouth behavior*

GOAL: To develop a strong bond with your dog by implementing a cooperative and reciprocal teaching and reinforcing method where the dog learns to look for you for direction and permission to interact in any environment.

- ❖ *Note: One method of teaching and reinforcing verbal cues is forming an understanding of a “Direct” cue and a “Cooperative” cue. A cue asks the dog to offer a behavior. I classify a one syllable behavior cue; sit, down, focus as a “Direct” cue. The dog moves on its own and offers the behavior asked. A “Cooperative” cue asks the dog to offer a behavior and I will work with you. Let’s Go, a cooperative cue where you and the dog are moving from one place to another. At-Ease cue is where you and the dog recollect close to each other to calm oneself. I teach the “cooperative” cues to assist the humans and dog form a relationship. You are working with the dog as much as you are asking the dog to work with you.*

Class Three Teaching and Reinforcing Acquisition of skills. We start outside with Roxy dragging a long line. Roxy is self contained within an electric fence surrounding her home. Dad, Mom, and Daughter present plus myself.

1. Say my name game is played to continue to teach and reinforce looking at you when you say Roxy’s name. A reinforced behavior. Environment will always be in “*direct competition*” with You, for your dog’s attention. Dog should look to you before any engagement or interaction with the environment.
2. Adding the verbal cue was practiced with the backing up exercise. Here we developed a cue to indicate to Roxy we are backing up”back” , take three steps backwards and lure her to the front of us to a sit,focus or a sit, down, focus. We added the figure six pattern

to bring Roxy from the front of us into canine position. Dog to default to you. You are the way to interact with the environment. Dog should look to you before any engagement or interaction with the environment.

3. "At-Ease" cue teaches and reinforces behaviors to walk next to you in canine position with the ability to survey the environment. The at-ease cue is a cooperative cue where you and the dog learn to walk with each other. This cue also develops a way to redirect the dog's desires so you are not in direct competition with the environment. The At-Ease cue identifies an over joyful and or fearful behavior and asks the dog to calm down, recollect to handler, and keep surveying the environment. Environment will always be in "direct competition" with You, for your dog's attention. The ISSUE is "Competing Reinforcers."
4. Development of At-Ease cue. To teach and reinforce the behavior of walking next to you in a calm manner with the ability to survey the environment is a rewardable behavior. A start with say my name, food lure and lets go; walk roxy into the at-ease behavior by keeping the lure attached to Roxy's nose while walking from the driveway to the front door and back. Next repeat the same progression but add the verbal cue At-Ease five steps after let's go cue. Start walking Roxy around the house by "Hugging the Coast" ; walking in a complete circle around the house but staying as close to the structure as possible. This cue is also a cooperative cue; you are walking with Roxy as much as you are asking Roxy to walk with you. To understand that any presence of any item or environment is not automatically available to them. Dog should look to you before any engagement or interaction with the environment.
5. "STOP" cue to cease and Desist. "Stop" cue teaches and reinforces behaviors to cease and desist and wait for next cued behavior. The stop, back figure six pattern cues the dog to cease behavior and recollect to canine position. We use structured play games to teach and reinforce the pattern walking into let's go, a cooperative cue, you and the dog are moving from one place to another. Give "Stop" cue and follow immediately with "back" cue and figure six pattern while you assist in the recollection pattern into canine position. To relinquish the environment and impulsive actions
6. We teach and reinforce "STOP" cue by enjoining it into our redirect/recollect pattern. STOP, back, figure six into a canine position to sit, down, focus. We play the figure six game to master the pattern by walking into let's go, give at-ease cue walk a bit the give stop, back and perform the figure six patter to canine position the walk into at-ease behavior. Dog to default to you. You are the way to interact with the environment. To understand consequences are based on behavior and must offer specific behaviors on cue to obtain reinforcement.
7. "Drop-It" "Drop-It" cue teaches and reinforces relinquishing any item that may be in the dog's possession. Drop-it is a cooperative cue where the dog learns to exchange an item in their possession for a higher valued item, thus decreasing the relevance of the item in the dog's possession. Increasing your value and you are the giver of reinforcement. Structured play games; fetch and tug are used to continue teaching and reinforcing behaviors. To understand You are the sole provider of reinforcement.

Note: Once the “Drop-It” cue has developed a higher response of relinquishing an item for a lower value item the “Out” cue will be taught so Roxy understands to directly relinquish any item in her possession without a need for trade.

8. We teach and reinforce “Drop-It”; relinquishing an item from the dog's mouth, by developing a cooperative relationship where you and the dog are working together. We use fetch and tug to create a rewardable behavior of dropping an item in exchange for a higher value item. We start the game with several medium value items outside on a long line to play the game. Starting with a food exchange, then a toy exchange, finally our love and affection. Dog to default to you. You are the way to interact with the environment. To understand You are the sole provider of reinforcement
9. “Leave-it” cue. “Leave-It” cue teaches and reinforces the behaviors of backing away, ceasing approach. Leave-it is a cooperative cue. As the dog learns to back away, you learn to enforce the backing away by using the redirect pattern in conjunction with the cue Leave-it. You are aware of the environment your dog is interacting in. You decide what the dog may interact with. To understand that any presence of any item or environment is not automatically available to them.
10. Teaching and reinforcing “Leave-it” cue started inside the kitchen to practice. Roxy was placed in a front lead harness with a leash attached and also a collar and leash. Start, mark “leave it” cue when Roxy moves head away from the baited hand. Enjoin the figure six pattern with the leave it cue to physically move Roxy away from the item. Practice walking through the home with leash in hand to develop the leave it figure six pattern. Progression; to sit, down, at-ease behaviors to reinforce rewardable behaviors of self control while interacting in a given environment. Dog to default to you. You are the way to interact with the environment. ***Do Not Lie to your dog by allowing them to not; relinquish, walk away, cease and desist to any item or environment you deem unavailable.***