

## ~ Free-Shaping & Positive Communication ~

Free-shaping is a dog training method that focuses on encouraging and rewarding desirable behaviours rather than merely correcting or marking unwanted ones. Here's how this approach, combined with the use of positive markers, can be highly effective:

### 1. **\*\*Encourages Creativity and Problem-Solving\*\***

**\*\*Free-shaping\*\*** encourages dogs to think and figure out what behaviors will earn them rewards. By giving them the freedom to explore and try different actions, you stimulate their problem-solving skills. This method taps into their natural curiosity and intelligence, allowing them to discover what you want them to do through trial and error.

### 2. **Builds Stronger Communication\*\***

When you use positive markers (like a clicker or a specific verbal cue) in free-shaping, you provide immediate feedback on what the dog is doing right. This clear communication helps the dog understand precisely which actions are desired. Over time, this builds a strong bond between you and your dog as they learn to read your cues and understand what you expect.

### 3. **Promotes Motivation and Engagement\*\***

Positive markers and rewards make the training process enjoyable and rewarding for the dog. Instead of focusing on what they shouldn't do (which can be discouraging), they learn to focus on what they should do to earn rewards. This increases their motivation to participate and engage in training sessions.

### 4. **Reduces Stress and Fear\*\***

Training that relies heavily on corrections can sometimes lead to stress and fear, making the dog anxious or unwilling to participate. Free-shaping, with its emphasis on rewarding positive behaviours, creates a more positive and stress-free learning environment. Dogs are more likely to be relaxed and open to learning when they are rewarded for their efforts rather than punished for mistakes.

### 5. **Fosters a Positive Learning Experience\*\***

By focusing on rewarding the behaviours you want to see, you create a positive learning experience. Dogs learn faster and retain information better when they are motivated by rewards rather than deterred by corrections. This positive reinforcement approach builds confidence and makes the learning process more enjoyable for both the dog and the trainer.

### 6. **Encourages Incremental Progress\*\***

Free-shaping allows for incremental progress. You can start with simple behaviors and gradually increase the complexity as the dog succeeds. Positive markers help you pinpoint each small step in the right direction, reinforcing progress and ensuring the dog stays on the right track.

#### 7. Enhances Flexibility in Training\*\*

With free-shaping, you can adapt and modify training to suit the dog's individual learning style and pace. This flexibility helps you tailor the training process to what works best for your dog, enhancing their overall learning experience and making it more effective.

In summary, free-shaping combined with positive markers creates a constructive and supportive training environment. It encourages dogs to actively participate in their learning process, builds strong communication and trust, and makes training a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

Have fun, and shout out if you have any questions,  
Aunty Jazz xx

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