

THE INNER DOG



POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS

POSITION STATEMENT

Force-Free, Fear Free, Pain Free Trust Building, Science Based Training

I firmly believe and practice that dog training built on a positive partnership is the most kind – and repeatedly proven the most effective – method of training and behavior modification. When you have a positive partnership with your dog, you have your dog's trust, and your dog wants to spend time with you and work with you. Training based on physical punishment or aversive discipline negates any sort of positive partnership you might develop with your dog. **Force Free, Fear Free, Pain Free, Science Based techniques deliver the most effective and reliable training results.**

By reinforcing behaviors that you like and want to continue seeing, you set the dog up for success. Force Free, Fear Free, Pain Free, Science Based training is effective for teaching new behaviors or changing current behaviors for any dog. Regardless of your dog's age and past experiences, Force Free, Fear Free, Pain Free, Science Based training methods have been scientifically proven give your dog the best chance for success at living safely, happily and comfortably in our crazy human world.

What is Force Free, Fear Free, Pain Free, Science Based training? It is a method of training that uses science proven, non-aversive, trust building methods and protocols to create a positive partnership between the trainer, you and your dog to achieve results that equally benefit all involved, while at the same time enhancing and strengthening the partnership. Here are some of the basic principles:

- ***Your dogs' immediate needs come first.*** Is your dog injured, ill, fearful, frustrated, hungry, thirsty, needing to eliminate? Put off training until your dog's needs have been met and your dog can concentrate on the training exercise. ALWAYS medical before behavioral.
- ***Your dog speaks if you know how to listen.*** There are telltale signs that let you know how your dog is feeling – whether it's joy, anger, fear, frustration or some other emotion. Understanding body language improves communication between people and animals, builds the partnership and helps keep both animals and people safe.
- ***Find out what motivates your dog (affection, treats, play, toys) and use it to your advantage.*** Ask yourself, "What 5 things does my dog look forward to each day?" (food is NOT one of the 5)
- ***Use positive reinforcement to encourage behavior you like.*** You can elicit and reinforce desired behavior through the techniques of luring, capturing, shaping and targeting. "Capturing" appropriate behavior means using praise and other rewards to encourage recurrence of the behavior. "Shaping" involves rewarding each tiny bit of progress that the dog makes toward behavior you want. "Targeting" is a technique that helps to shape a dog's behavior by getting him to focus on a "target" and then perform a certain behavior.

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- ***Punishment is not necessary for eliminating undesirable behaviors.*** Instead, ignore the behavior and/or teach incompatible behaviors. For example, teach your dog to sit for a greeting rather than jumping up – it's impossible to do both. To reinforce the desired behavior, reward with praise, games or treats. In contrast to punishment-based training, this approach supports the positive partnership between you and your dog.
- ***Prevent your dog's ability to continue practicing unwanted behaviors by managing and supervising the environment and your dog's exposure to it.*** For example, distract your dog or limit access to a window, door or fence line if there are inappropriate behaviors happening there. Supervise your dog carefully to set her up for success. You can avoid or prevent unwanted behaviors by simply being aware of what your dog is doing. For example, if a new dog or puppy is not house-trained, don't allow her the full run of the house until she has been house-trained. Giving a dog too much freedom can set her up for failure.
- ***Practice, practice, practice!*** Don't wait for the occasional chance to work on modifying your dog's behavior. Every moment you spend with your dog is a teaching moment, whether teaching or changing behavior or just having fun. Incorporate what you're teaching your dog into your everyday life.
- ***Use distance AND distraction to take your dog's attention off an anxiety-provoking situation.*** For example, if your dog is afraid of children and you see a child walking toward your dog, you can walk your dog further away from the child while using focus cues to re-direct your dog's attention while also teaching your dog that children become a predictor of great rewards. If you use this technique routinely, meeting children will become less and less stressful for the dog. In some cases, it may even become enjoyable.

Force Free, Fear Free, Pain Free, Science Based trainers also have realistic expectations. When training dogs, we use patience – we understand that animals are not born knowing how to fit into our human lives. Most adult dogs have not been properly taught how to be part of a loving human family. Even if they have been in a loving home, they may still lack the social skills to be comfortable around strangers and in new situations. Expecting your dog to know everything is unrealistic and punishing your dog for not knowing something is unfair. In partnership-based training, every dog is seen as an individual and the trainer works with your dog on that basis.

There are training methods that I will ***not*** use after seeing their detrimental effects on dogs and these methods have been scientifically proven to be harmful to a dog's mental and physical well-being, no matter how well intentioned their use. These methods will cause confusion in a dog, lack of trust, create or exacerbate fears, breakdown the partnership, lead to physical injury, and result in so-called "unpredictable" behavior. Examples include:

- Dominance and physical force:
 - Pushing a dog into a sit or down position
 - Alpha rolls
 - Physical punishment (hitting, kicking, slapping, hanging, leash pops, finger jabs)
- Leash corrections
- Harsh tones, verbal reprimands

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- Methods that rely on inflicting pain, such as pinch/prong collars, choke chains and electric collars
- Squirt bottles, bark collars, shaker cans, etc.

Besides the negative effect on the dogs, and the fact that these techniques don't work over the long-term, these methods have resulted in injury to people and death to dogs. What? Numerous studies of companion dogs trained using aversive methods have shown that the family dog is 2.5 times MORE likely to bite a family member than a stranger. How? People who use these techniques are injured when the dog fights back by biting. It's not uncommon for these people to euthanize their dogs after deciding they could no longer trust them.

Finally, the success rate for force free, fear free, pain free, science based training greatly exceeds that of punishment- or discipline-based training. Many, many research studies – dating back to Pavlov's famous experiments with dogs – have confirmed that **these techniques deliver the most effective, safe and reliable training results.**

Build TRUST, TEACH Skills, CHANGE Behavior, ENJOY Your Dog

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