



CONGRATULATIONS

On your New Addition!

When bringing home a new family member our first instinct is to smother them with love, which is what they need! But... dogs and puppies who are newly adopted or taken home NEED confident leaders! By taking the first step and choosing training not only for your dog but for yourself, you are more likely to succeed as a team. This packet contains some basic situations and guidance after adopting a dog or a training session with me. It is a keepsake to refer back to whenever needed!

Coming from backgrounds that are not always known, some animals may have had traumatic experiences in their past. Big or small it's our job to truly introduce them to the fun and exciting world we all live in!

This starts from the moment you bring them home.



DEFINITIONS:

Cue [kyoo]

Noun

D: anything that excites to action; stimulus

Cues are learned behaviors based on consistency, repetition, and patterns. This is a great example as to why it is just as easy to teach a dog German as it is English as it is sign language, because to them it is all sounds and motions that when paired with their action, is routinely rewarded and encouraged. With practice you can create a cue out of just about anything!

In dog training cues can range from, hand signals, physical stimuli, and verbalizations to indicate or exert a learned action.

Language [lang-gwij]

Noun

communication by voice in the distinctively human manner, using arbitrary sounds in conventional ways with conventional meanings; speech

Verbal

Adjective

of or relating to words:

verbal ability

Body Language

Noun

nonverbal, usually unconscious, communication through the use of postures, gestures, facial expressions, and the like.

Nonverbal

Adjective

not spoken: the nonverbal signals of body movement

We use body language and nonverbal cues 24/7. Harnessing the power of nonverbal cues and body language is dependent entirely on how consistent you as the human of the equation are with them. Due to the fact that dogs do not speak verbal language naturally they are inclined to pick up on context clues of the environment in order to respond accordingly themselves. A few daily examples of nonverbal and body language cues include:

- Picking up their bowl, leash, treat bag, etc.

- Usually ignites excitement or intrigue as to what your next move may be based on past experiences of you reaching for these objects
- Your reaction when your dog jumps up
 - If your reaction to this includes yelling, physically pushing them away, giving eye contact or addressing them directly you are unknowingly giving your dog everything they are asking for at that moment. Although you may feel you are being very clear their action is unwanted, if your dog has not been taught or does not fully understand what to do instead, they are receiving what they intended to. Attention of any kind.
- Motioning a flat open hand towards the ground
 - If your dog has practiced this nonverbal cue they are likely to lay down following this hand movement
 - If your dog has not learned this verbal cue they are still likely to roughly follow your movement with intrigue which can then be shaped into a specific learned cue like "down" with consistent practice

When to Introduce Verbal Language: When you are 100% certain your pup comprehends what you are asking them verbally, in the environment they are currently in. Then and only then, may you begin to use and expect comprehension of a verbal cue.

We practice cues extensively before commanding and expecting the dog in front of us to comply in a variety of environments, distraction levels, and situations. In class we will discuss how to slowly and smoothly transition your dog from understanding physical to verbal cues.

Reward [ri-wawrd]

Noun

D: something given or received in return or recompense for service, merit, hardship, etc.

When we are talking about dogs, and what a reward means to them a few things quickly come to mind. Food, toys, and praise are all incredible forms of payment to a dog for a job well done.

Many owner's first question: "When do we stop giving them treats?"

My answer: I appreciate being paid for the work that I do, and I assume that you do too!

It is very easy to forget that our pets are animals being expected to perform what is considered "socially acceptable" in unnatural environments. Even when a dog is considered "trained" or "well behaved" they should still be compensated for their work according to their ability.

Young dogs learning cues for the first time are continuously reinforced for completing cues in order to develop a substantial initial pattern. As they progress in their ability we can begin to expect a bit more, decreasing from continuous to intermittent rewards and the time in between again, varies on ability and execution. If you attempt to assume comprehension of a cue too early and prematurely

decrease incentive, you can set yourself and your dog up for failure and frustration faster than you realize. If and when this happens simply take that step back until they are ready or you are confident enough to try again.

Food Rewards - in dog training there is a hierarchy that is entirely up to your individual dog and their likings. Some lower value rewards for others could make your pup go nuts and vice versa, make sure you design the hierarchy that is right for your dog!

- **High Value Rewards** consist of irresistible foods, common examples include; steak, freeze dried treats, wet or raw foods. High value foods are used as top tier encouragement when a dog has a breakthrough, during an emergency, or even when overcoming a new obstacle as peak encouragement.
- **Low Value Rewards** consist mainly of kibble, commonly offered treats, etc. This kind of reward is typically most engaging in lower level distraction environments but gives you the ability to experiment with jackpot feeding and games when attempting to re-engage your dog.
- **Medium Value Rewards** serve as the bridge between low and high, common examples include, peanut butter, cheese, and soft chewy rewards. These can be incredible motivators for rewarding a dog for engaging with your redirection, encouraging them to face new challenges, and bridging the transition in rewards between low and high value.

It is easy to forget the fact that we feed our dogs bowls full of rewards, usually multiple times per day at meals. Whenever possible, use it to your own advantage! Many dogs are driven to work for their food and you can practice harnessing this ability on a daily basis at typical mealtimes.

Luring - Luring references the act of pinching a treat between your thumb and palm with enough space for your pup to lick and nibble at, but not quite receive it. This builds slight frustration from your dog who knows if they try hard enough they can get it. From here you are able to use their magnetization on your hand, guiding them into a variety of positions.

Luring can be used to teach new cues, clearly communicate desired body movement, and increase drive while training. In class you will learn how to build this ability and utilize it throughout your dog's entire life!

Toy Rewards - Similar to food rewards, this all up to your specific dog. Experiment with different toys and games while training your dog or simply begin asking them for simple, learned commands during play. If your dog deems the toy or game valuable enough they are likely to complete cues and tasks in order to continue playing or receive the toy. The more often you do this, your dog begins to associate specific games and toys with the same value as treats! Some dogs prefer the fun and movement of play as a reward over food so remember to listen to your dog!

A few toys and games to keep in mind:

- Ball/fetch
- Rope toy/tug
- Frisbee
- Flirt pole/chase
- Scatter feeding/sniffing
- Squeaky toys
- & so many more!

Praise - When actively engaging with your dog, training, playing, exercising, and everything in between it is natural for us to verbalize to them. This usually consists of praise words like “good dog!”, “yes!”, “good job!” but it is much less about the words we use than the tone we say it in. Whether your dog is completing a lengthy loose leash walk, holding a distance stay, or watching a squirrel run by without chasing it, consistent tone and verbal praise lets your dog know they are doing a good job and to keep up the fantastic work!

Marker [mahr-ker]

Noun

D: something used as a mark or indication

A marker refers to the signal given to your dog directly in between completing a cue or performing a desirable behavior and before receiving some kind of reward. For most this is either “Good!” or “Yes!” which is immediately followed by presenting said reward. The key to ensuring your dog understands the meaning of the marker, you must stay extremely consistent in both word choice and tone. Dogs being masters of pattern, we are looking to create a habitual response in our favor so too much variation can cause confusion over time.

If timing, tone, word choice in the moment, and paying attention to your dog’s actions all at once may be or is proving difficult for you, there's a tool for that!

Clickers are used for this very reason, they provide a clean, crisp, identical sound every single time. The click of a clicker is used in place of a verbal marker to build clear and fast communication with your dog. Like a verbal marker, each time the clicker is clicked your dog is presented with their reward!

When first beginning to use a marker, or starting the use of a new marker, it must be CHARGED!

Whether you are using a verbal marker or clicker, you must charge said marker by simply marking and rewarding your dog several times. For nothing! After catching their attention you can then begin asking them simple commands and luring them into position, marking and rewarding when done correctly.

The 3 D's of Dog Training

1. **Duration** - how long they can remain in a specific cue
2. **Distance** - how far the space is between you and your dog while in cue or completing a cue is
3. **Distraction** - distractions vary from wind, to squirrels, to people and other dogs. Some distractions prove to be of greater value for some dogs over others so be sure

to socialize and expose them appropriately, taking note of how your dog responds to the different stimuli around them

Never start building any of the 3 D's at the same time. We always want to set our dogs up for success, building each of these individually and in increments proves to solidify a much stronger understanding of the cue concept at hand.

Socializing

Keep in mind, every new place to a dog is SMELLY, BRIGHT, and LOUD, just because it is normal to you does not mean it is for them. Forcing dogs is never the answer but allowing them the time needed to settle into new environments is required for them to build trust in their new family.

DO NOT RUN from problems.

Dogs feed off of our emotions due to the fact that we cannot communicate with language. When an anticipated negative stimulus is approaching, distract your pup by calling their name and then giving their favorite reward before moving on. This creates a positive connection between the stimulus, owner, and environment over time.

With that being said, not every dog will be as easily deterred from a distraction. If your dog is easily distracted or has a tendency to react towards distractions, try positioning yourself in between your dog and the stimulus while rewarding them on the move acting as a physical barrier. While keeping yourself as calm as possible in the moment, focus on rewarding your dog for continuing the past and any time they switch their attention to you. For reactive dogs, this will not be an immediate fix but rather one that builds trust in typical social environments. The longer you practice this method, your dog will be able to begin new habits when faced with previously triggering stimuli.

***If you are struggling with a reactive dog, always consult a professional! A single lesson can increase both you and your dog's ability to understand each other as well as be more prepared to work as a team in stressful situations.

What happens when you run?

When the owner or handler panics, that energy is immediately transferred to your dog. In most situations you are the most familiar thing in the environment for your dog and they will seek your approval of new situations, to help gauge their own reactions. Just because you are calm may not immediately put them at ease without practice but when a nervous dog is in a new place, sensing danger means a reaction of some kind. Reactions can vary from vocalizing to hiding. Words of affirmation and encouraging tones of voice can also assist your pup in these new experiences yet we must always keep in mind they will not solve the issue on their own. Remember to use any positive reinforcement your dog is *willing to accept* in the moment when they are exploring or observing a new place, this can be food, toys, praise, and more.

willing to accept

This is something that can vary between dogs based on what they typically like and their current state of mind. If your normally food and toy driven dog is not taking any reinforcements, hiding, acting overly submissive, etc. then these may be signs they are overwhelmed and in that case, there is no learning occurring.

Positive and Negative Social Experiences

We assume that all experiences with friendly dogs and people will be positive, unfortunately this is not always true. Sometimes overly friendly people and dogs can negatively impact a dog's behavior. Showing your pup that you will stand up for them so that they do not have to is a major key in their development of environment neutrality.

When allowing your pup to greet new people and dogs, do not allow either party to run up to one another. This establishes boundaries for your dog so they feel less inclined to react themselves (jumping, rushing, barking, etc.). There is a **SPLIT SECOND** in between your dog noticing a stimulus approaching and their reaction to it. Attempting to catch this moment if possible and reward your dog for switching their attention back to you can really help in the long run. Teaching dogs and puppies to remain calm and focused on you in a plethora of environments, will prove to greatly impact their sociability throughout their life.

However, not all dogs are this easy. If your dog tends to react vocally or hide, the best option before leaving the situation is to stand directly in front of your dog and attempt to receive some kind of recognition, breaking that initial focus. Once done, reward and move on.

If they are resistant to approaching someone who comes to the home often, have them ignore the dog and drop passing rewards. This should be occasional but AMAZING food such as cheese, hot dogs, steak, something you do not usually get in order to create great association. Having your dog on a leash is always a good idea when new people come to the home, giving you more ability to direct your dog towards a positive choice in the moment.

Try not to let your pup approach another dog or person unless they are in a relatively calm state.

If they are not, this can cause tension of some kind between both the dogs and people. Nervous dogs may become more nervous when forced to interact with others. Young or overly excited dogs can be corrected by older dogs or even reinforced with more excitement, increasing the likeliness that they will be as exuberant if not more in their next greeting.

Dog Parks

Dog parks unfortunately do the opposite we expect them too.

They are very helpful places for socializing however only from the outside. When allowing young or impressionable dogs to enter an uncontrolled environment with strange dogs is a recipe for disaster. Keep in mind the following, you are typically unaware of their vaccination statuses and behaviors before entering and releasing your own dog. Keeping your dog outside the fences and rewarding them for ignoring the commotion can improve their ability to ignore such stimuli in the future rather than assume it is always time to play with any and everyone. Try circling the dog park with your dog on leash, rewarding them for checking in with you. As they become more comfortable,

move inward towards the fence continuing to look for acknowledgement from your dog. You can play games, fetch, use a long line for more room, scatter rewards, and more! Following this, leave! This initiates the understanding that other dogs are able to be present without need for initiation especially when you are present because you are SUPER FUN!

Body Language

A wagging tail is a happy tail! ...Right?

Unfortunately no, the tails, ears, eyes, and bodies of our dogs are communicating with us constantly. Many of us just are not aware of what to look for. Something as simple as yawning and the licking of chops in unusual circumstances are signs of stress. Only dogs with soft, inviting features and an even wagging tail are ready to be approached by anything.

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



Training

IF THEY ARE NOT ACKNOWLEDGING YOU, THEY ARE NOT LISTENING.

And no, repeating 50 times unfortunately does not help either, this instead makes that verbal command meaningless.

If you want your commands and cues to mean something then that has to be proven during the training process. No this does not mean forcing them to do tricks but instead a test of our own patience. When training is done correctly it can be extremely rewarding for you and your dog!

My favorite tip to remember:

You MUST be 5 minutes more stubborn than your dog.

(5 minutes feels a lot longer when you are waiting)

When asking something of your dog, follow through. If your dog seems confused, guide them in the right direction to complete the task before moving on. By giving up we only teach them that they do not actually have to follow through all the time if they push hard enough.

SAY IT ONCE!! If they know a verbal command has meaning and it has been practiced with enough guidance, they will complete it. Stay consistent.

Obedience classes are **ALWAYS** a good idea for any dog that has been newly adopted. Classes allow designated bonding time for you and your dog as well as educates all involved!

Priority Commands

- Recall (*their name, here, come*)
- Sit
- Down
- Stay
- Leave-It
- Touch (nose to palm for redirective purposes)
- Loose leash walking

Rewards

Rewards can be any of the following:

- Food
 - Low, Medium, & High value rewards
- Toys
 - Tug toys
 - Ball

- Squeaky toy
- Etc.
- Praise
 - Petting
 - Words of affirmation
 - Etc.

Feedings

If you find your dog is not intensely food motivated a key factor may be their feeding schedule. Feeding at scheduled times can increase a dog's drive when it comes to training and obedience, allowing a full food bowl consistently only reveals that food is no longer a "rarity".

Feedings should be limited to 15 minutes each. Anything outside of that is unnecessary and can lead not only to over-eating and dietary issues but also similar behavioral issues.

The Crate.

I know we all dread the crate when we bring home a new pup because it seems like nothin' but puppy jail. But, I promise the crate becoming their crib or room can be one of the best things especially for a rescue dog.

When starting out in a new home the first two weeks at night should be spent in the crate. This is typically how long it takes for them to become accustomed. When beginning the first few nights are going to most likely be filled with whines and howls for attention if they have not been previously crate trained. You must ignore this. Covering the crate with a light blocking blanket, and placing the crate somewhere quiet at night but in the open during the day is key.

Bedtimes are very important to learning puppies, they need schedules to begin the trust and training processes. This includes feeding times as well, which can also be held within the crate to start positive association. If you choose to, feed in a back corner of the crate having them go completely inside in order to receive their meal with the door open. Having them wait for food is also a great option to practice self control with your pup.

Disaster

If the unfortunate event of a dog fight ever occurs in the course of your time as a dog owner, DO NOT get in between the animals.

You WILL get injured.

If you have never been shown how to separate a dog fight correctly please do not attempt. In an emergency situation the quickest and safest option for everyone involved is to retreat with their leashed dogs. Never risk your own dog's safety if they are not already involved. If you are handling a dog, remain at a safe distance from the commotion and remove them from the scene as quickly as possible (another room in a crate, car, house, etc.). If your dog is not on a leash, they should have a trained recall and be wearing a collar AT ALL TIMES for this very reason in order to remove them quickly and safely.

Dog fights are never a fun experience for anyone. If you know your dog has exhibited a tendency to fight other dogs, do not put them in situations in which they will be tested. Consult a professional to guide you through managing their behavior.

Puppies

Puppies typically go home between 9 and 12 weeks depending on their health standpoint. This time period up until 6 months is **CRUCIAL** to their behavioral and social development. Once puppy vaccines are complete, setting aside time for socialization is a must! Just like human toddlers, puppies are like sponges taking in both how we as people and other dogs respond to each other and any outside stimuli. Keeping this in mind when training and socializing your pup can be very helpful for their development of neutrality later on.

REMEMBER:

What you allow and think is cute now, will definitely not be as time goes on and they grow bigger. Keep the future in mind, **ALWAYS!**

Crate Training

DO:

- **Leave them in their crate when leaving the home**
- **Leave them in the crate at night for the first 3 weeks minimum (I promise it is much more rewarding for them to sleep on the bed following this)**
- **Use the crate as a safe place or “own room” for your dog**
- **Use the crate during training sessions**
- **Feed them in the crate, meals and enrichment!**
- **Cover the crate for added comfort and security**

DO NOT:

- Use the crate as punishment, this creates negative association
- Bang on the crate even if they are barking/whining
- Leave a new puppy alone in a crate full of stuff (similar to a baby in a crib, this can be a safety hazard)
- Let them out of the crate if vocalizing or acting in hopes of attention, even talking to them encourages these behaviors

Who is Alpha?

We have all heard the misconception about how we as humans should be ALPHA in the home with our dogs in order to assert dominance. This however is very counter productive, this instead teaches dogs to be fearful and or react to our presence negatively.

When our reaction to a puppy peeing inside the house is to rub their face in it and be put in the crate angrily, we only teach them to fear relieving themselves. Usually this can look like hiding accidents behind couches/in unusual rooms and places, cowering, and even hiding themselves.

- Instead, redirection is key! If you catch them in the act, immediately bring them outside to finish (you can even throw a paper towel over it in the meantime), reinforce the correct behavior, and put them on a leash or in their crate with something to do while you clean it up. The crate in this moment is all about your approach, it is not negative simply a safe place while you cannot pay attention to them out and about.

When meeting a new dog and they roll over immediately most take it as a good sign that they want to get a belly rub. However, this is not always the case and all other aspects of the dog's body language are still in effect. If their tail is tucked, ears are back, and/or eyes are very wide and non confrontational these are signs of distress and submission. What we see as an invitation for pets could actually be an extreme display of submission to people and other dogs.

What does an inviting “belly-up” look like?

When a dog is inviting pets especially to such a vulnerable place in a positive way it is usually very obvious. Some dogs will even throw themselves at you and roll over as they hit your feet with a wagging tail and initiate that kind of attention very obviously.

A good rule of thumb, if you feel like you have to soften your tone and treat them like a scared child they probably are **exactly that**.

The best way to handle a dog who is submitting in fear is to IGNORE these displays and instruct others to do the same. If someone approaches your dog and they roll in submission you should instruct the greeter to retract until your dog feels more comfortable while you reinforce their confident behaviors. If your dog is refusing praise or treats from you and others it may mean they do not wish to interact at this time or are overwhelmed, leaving the interaction appropriately is always an acceptable option.

YOU DO NOT OWE ANYONE THE ABILITY TO TOUCH YOUR DOG AT ANYTIME.

As long as strangers are respectful, just let them know you are advocating for your dog's personal space while they are in training and invite them to chat with you about your pup without physical interaction. This can be very comforting to nervous dogs and puppies who will begin to understand

that there is no need to defend, hide, or submit themselves to everything, their handler will always step in before they ever need to.