

## Choices in Dog Training



You have just got your new puppy - how minute, they are so innocent, loving and them. You have heard that they need to be socialized, and trained. What is socializing? What kind of training? When to start? As you investigate all of the options, if you are like most, you will become confused. There is so much information available. Not all of it is correct or true. How do you know what to believe??

exciting!! You watch them every very special. You want what is best for

Start by deciding what your guiding principles are regarding your puppy or dog. What are you comfortable doing to and with your dog? There are so many choices out there now for dog training. You can train using methods like Lure & Reward or Clickers Training, Dominance Training. You can use regular collars, prong collars, choke chains and even shock collars. The choice is yours to make. Dog training is a very unregulated industry. Anyone can say they are a dog trainer and do almost anything to a dog in the name of training. It is not illegal in this Country to use shock collars on dogs or any other animal. It is illegal in most European Countries and now in Quebec.

You have to make choices when it comes to training your dog just as you make choices in most other areas of your life. Research various trainers and training methods. Choose methods that make sense to you and you feel comfortable using.

I have chosen to use Clicker Training because it works in a way that makes sense to me and that does not need aversive techniques. Clicker Training is based in the Sciences of How Dogs /Animals Learn. These theories have been proven over and over, researched, and tested. That appeals to me. Training that is based in Pack Behaviour and Dominance Maneuvers doesn't work for me and as time goes on more and more information is available that proves the old Pack Behaviour has little truth to it. See [Alpha Wolf Article](#)

Dogs are not necessarily the Pack Animals we once thought they were. Dingo dogs who are being studied now don't form packs!! Other wild dogs who are in research also don't form packs. The wolves that were studied didn't really do the behaviours I was taught early on in my dog training career. I'm not sure where all that data/fiction came from, but what I am sure of is many dogs suffered abuse because of it. If your physical corrections weren't working, you are told to do it faster and harder. That just doesn't wash for me. When I use a clicker and treats to train my dogs the look on their face says I love this, I love being with you, and I want to work!! That for me is what having a dog is all about.

Back to choices. You need to make choices that you are comfortable with. I made mine over 30 years ago and I'm so glad I did.

What I'd look for:

An Instructor who:

- ) Provides training that is fun !!
- ) Provides a clear explanation of each lesson.
- ) Demonstrate the behaviour(s) that students will be teaching
- ) Provide clear instructions and written handouts
- ) Give students ample time to practice.
- ) Assist students with proper implementation of techniques.
- ) A skilled and professional trainer will be courteous
- ) Choose training tools & methods comfortable for you
- ) Look for humane training methods which are not harmful to your dog.

- )] Choose a trainer who keeps up to date about innovations in dog training, behaviour tools and technique and pursues ongoing education
- )] Choose a trainer who belongs to educational organizations such as CAPPDT or APDT
- )] Observing a group class gives you the opportunity to ask clients how they feel about their experience
- )] Allows Family members and others who interact with the dog to participate

#### What I'd Avoid:

- )] Trainers who guarantee the results of his/her training or make statements that dogs can be trained quickly using their methods or tools
- )] Trainers who won't let you observe a class.
- )] Avoid techniques that work by causing your dog to be afraid (Shaker Cans and /or Spray Bottles).
- )] Avoid training devices that could cause the dog pain, or distress, certain collars (choke or Pinch) or shock collars. These collars work by causing pain to your dog. I do not think there is any need for these devices in basic obedience classes. Or anywhere else for that matter.
- )] Avoid trainers who refuse to train using treats

\* CAAPDT Canadian Association of Professional Pet Dog Trainers

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## **Choose the Right Format**

### **Private Classes**

- )] Can accommodate special needs of the clients.
- )] Can be arranged to suit your schedule.
- )] Can start your puppy as soon as you bring it home before bad habits are formed
- )] Can focus on your specific problems.
- )] Reactive or very shy dogs may benefit from Private Instruction first before integration into a regular class.
- )] Is really best for dogs with aggression issues, anxiety issues or any behaviour problem that is excessive

## **Board & Train**

In this type of training the owner and family are excluded from the initial training with their dog. Since dog training is about forming a relationship, dogs often work for their trainer and don't easily transfer the lessons learned, falling right back into old habits as soon as they are home. If this is the method you choose check it out very very carefully and be sure you trust the trainer not to do anything harmful to your dog. You will also need some session with your dog and this facility to be sure you are consistent

## **Group Classes**

- J Provide socialization for your dog with other people and dogs.
- J Let you meet and learn from other dog owners.
- J Provides needed distractions to help you train your dog to pay attention to you.
- J Are less expensive than Private Training
- J Provide a great learning environment for a dog who has had private in-home instruction

## **Choosing Your Facility/Club**

Find a facility that is dedicated to dog training as its main service. Look for a facility with enough training space to allow you and your dog room to practice the skills being taught.

This can provide you with:

- J Experienced professional trainers whose primary goal is to assist you and your dog. There is no hidden agenda to sell you other products such as food and training tools.
- J Professional trainers who work with dogs in a variety of sports and endeavors can offer you many more techniques that they learn in other venues.
- J Personal consultation to deal with questions or problems outside of your training sessions is usually available.
- J Don't let cost be your only criteria. Professional dog trainers will cost more but may save you in the long run. Professional trainers can assess and help you prevent future problems before they become a crisis.
- J Choose a facility that can offer training in a variety of classes - you never know what path you may want to take with your new best friend.

It is all about Choices!

NOTE

\* 75 % of dogs surrendered to Animal Shelters are there due to Behaviour Problems -

you owe it to your dog to become an informed consumer