

Dog Training 101

The Book That Puts You In Control



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PREFACE

Most people who decide to add a new dog to their lives picture a perfect scenario. This usually entails visions of sunny afternoons spent with the dog playing with the children, long comfortable walks in

the owners read or watch television in peace. While these more sublime visions might emerge after time and hard work, they will not happen automatically; much like when a couple decides to have a child, they usually don't focus on the diaper changing and sleepless nights. Dogs are not born with remote controls, but they certainly are born with minds of their own. Getting a dog to this imagined point of perfection takes time, consistency, training, and patience.

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The dream dog and the untarnished furniture that comes with it will require a plan. By the time you've strategy should include easy-to-follow instructions along the way, which allows you to periodically judge how you are doing and how far you have to go to arrive.

Your dog can be one of the biggest joys in your life, or he can be the cause of heartache. Some people look at this fact as the luck of the draw, but the truth is that a great deal can be done to affect the outcome.

There has been much argument over the years with regard to whether nature or nurture is more important in shaping your dog's personality. While both are certainly important, the experiences of nearly three decades of training dogs lead us to conclude that the breakdown is roughly 60 percent nature and 40 percent nurture.

Thus, while a well-bred puppy may be put in a less than desirable environment, he may well be rehabilitated successfully because of his genetic propensity for stability. A genetically instable temperament, by contrast, would not be able to be rehabilitated past the level predetermined by his

genetics. A prime example this principle is a poor nervous system, the best indication of which is how quickly and dramatically a dog responds to stimulus. These traits will not change, regardless of environment.

We have all heard stories about great dogs that have positively affected the lives of the people who love them. But while we have seen the television movie heroes such as Lassie and Rin Tin Tin, we have also seen Pit Bull attacks on the evening news. We know of people whose dogs have lived long and healthy lives, and we also know of people who have had devastating veterinary bills and lost their dogs early to illnesses.

The question then becomes what you can do to stack the odds in favor of your success? Although there is no way to have a 100 percent guarantee, there are some guidelines that you can follow in order to steer toward success. The purpose of this book is to allow you to create such a plan. It is written based upon a system that has been tested on literally thousands of households and dogs for over a quarter of a century.

Last but not least, a word about the tactics we use to with owners and their dogs, we have seen one theme throw up their hands in frustration and declare that the dog must be trained or he has to go. That theme is one of spoiling and lack of supervision. The effects of spoiling and lack of supervision build up over months and often explode in an event that is the catalyst for seeking a training course. This catalyst may be the destruction of a valuable possession or aggression toward a family member.

Much like human children (who's education this book parallels), dogs need structure, boundaries on their behavior, and supervision in order to thrive and to keep them from being hurt or hurting others. In this way some of the underlying themes in this book could be applied to raising children by giving them the aforementioned boundaries for their behavior and teaching them to earn their freedoms by establishing proper behavior patterns. Although the way that parents go about this

process is different with children than with dogs, it is our hope that the reader will also grasp the underlying methods and psychology in this work. We wish you the best training experience you can have with your canine companion!

When you make the decision to bring a new dog into your home, it is important that you fully understand all with this decision. The new dog is probably going to be with you, day in and day out, for the next decade. This is a decision that must not be entered into lightly. A puppy is not a toy that can be discarded easily when it is no longer cute or convenient. Often times children's emotional attachments are involved and careful thought should be given to this fact before a puppy or dog is purchased on a whim. Adult emotions, however, are equally important. Many problems have been caused to marriages by one party who welcomes the new dog and the spouse who cannot be bothered with the responsibility. Choosing an older dog from a shelter or a rescue can also present challenges. Previously owned dogs can come with baggage that you will not be aware of until you live with the dog for a while. Destructive habits, running away, shyness or aggression due to abuse, and housebreaking issues are just a few of the things someone else didn't bother to train the dog properly.

Because of the commitment you are making when purchasing a new dog or puppy, you should always look at the various costs to your family (both in time and money) that this commitment would demand and determine whether or not you are willing to take on this additional responsibility. Keep in mind that the costs of a dog will be the same whether you choose to start out with a purebred from a breeder or an adopted dog from the shelter. The only difference in actual cost will be the purchase price. After this initial investment, the costs in both time and money will essentially be the same other than any illnesses or genetic maladies that might be present at your purchase.

COSTS: Veterinary Care

A veterinarian that you can trust is essential to owning a dog.

You will immediately want to schedule a veterinary appointment for your new dog or puppy. You will want him to have a physical examination to make sure that your new pet is in good health and is free of parasites. You will also want to get on a shot program with your and parasite control. It is highly recommended that you of your dog's neck so that he could be tracked back to your address and phone number if he were to get lost. This simple step will prevent your pet from ending up in a shelter or even being euthanized if he gets lost. You and your veterinarian will also need to discuss the proper nutritional needs for the age and breed of your dog and make sure that his diet stays consistent, both in regard to content and feeding times. You should be aware that feeding a dog properly may often cost more than the price of simple grocery store dog food, but it can pay off in both the health of your dog and in less visits to the veterinarian. There are also several supplements on the market for skin and coat care that might be necessary or helpful depending on the breed of dog and coat type. If you are going to own a dog, you should always plan to have enough discretionary money in your budget to react to a medical emergency. Remember that dogs issue that scares you, you might consider purchasing health care insurance for your dog.

Grooming

Grooming a dog can be simple or complicated, depending on the type of dog that you purchase. Long-coated breeds will require regular brushing and professional grooming on an average of once per month. Grooming can get expensive, in addition to eating up the time taken to transport the dog back and forth. If you try to groom a long coated breed yourself, you must consult a professional groomer for advice. Many owners make the mistake of trying to groom their own dogs and then end up brushing only the outer coat of the dog. This causes mats in the dog's coat that can be very painful and even tear

the skin open. Groomers can tell you horror stories about what they have seen when novice owners attempt to groom their own dogs. At the very least, the dog may have to be shaved down in order to let the hair grow out again. At worst, it will cost you vet- urinary bills because of infected ears, impacted anal glands, mats that have torn the skin, and infections. If you purchase a “wash and wear” dog with a short coat such as a Boxer or Labrador, grooming will be much easier for you to do on your own, but it is still wise to have a professional groomer care for your dog on a quarterly basis between the baths that you provide. This allows for cleaning of the ears and anal glands, which you may have missed, as well as toenail trimming. It also enables you to ask any questions related to the dog's skin and coat condition.

Everybody knows that if you get a bird you will need a stall, etc. So why is it that people think that a dog home without getting in trouble?

Properly training your dog to live in your house takes time and effort. Until the day that he earns his freedom, you will need containment areas in the form of a dog run (or a puppy pen if you own a young dog) and a crate, as well as proper feeding pans and water bowl and toys. For your dog's waste, a pooper-scooper is recommended, along with a sealed, lined trashcan with an airtight lid. If used correctly, this can be sealed and put out with your trash for pick up.

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TRAINING

Locating a professional trainer to help you through your dog's formative years will go a long way to easing your stress and adding to your enjoyment of the dog.

One thing you should never overlook is the importance of training for creating a positive atmosphere for you and your new dog. There are many questions that arise as to how to best housebreak, stop behave- iron problems, and teach obedience, often leading to heated arguments about the most appropriate way to train a new dog. The easiest solution is

to hire a professional trainer, who will guide you through the few months where the problems can be most easily dealt with. There are many different training options and styles to choose from, though they will vary depending on where you live. Among your foremost considerations in choosing a trainer should be avoiding abusive programs. Physical abuse in the form of kicking, hitting, hanging or shocking a dog is always unacceptable. The only valid reason for a trainer to hold a dog off the ground is in defense of themselves when the dog is trying to bite them or someone else. Except for cases of self-defense, you should never see anything but encouragement, reward, and corrections that are mild enough to be clear to the dog without squelching his spirit. This is the delicate line that a good trainer walks. It is similar to parenting skills insofar as you need to let the dog know that you are serious, while at the same time letting him know that as soon as he accomplishes the task that you have asked of him he will receive the praise and reward that he seeks. In this way the dog learns how to acquire the behaviors that avoid correction or a lack of reward. This is basic trainer.

Professional training takes: time (consistency and repetition), skill (knowledge of how to apply train- in to a variety of temperaments), and physical ability (in the beginning stages many dogs will jump on you, pull, bump your knees, etc). Types of train- in vary from location to location; however, offered:

Group Classes: This is the least expensive way to do training, but it has many fundamental problems. Many owners have a hard time showing up consistently each week at the same time. Life happens and people get sick, they have commitments with their children, they go on vacation, etc. In a group class, you can't catch up once you fall behind. You are also expected to practice each week for 30–40 minutes per night. If a person falls behind on this responsibility, he or she is often embarrassed and may choose neither of you may learn the lesson.

If your dog has enough time to deal with all of your dog's issues properly as an aggressive dog or excessively unruly dog generally demands more of the instructor's time as opposed to a more passive and pliable dog.

One of the problems with group training is that there just isn't enough time for one instructor to deal with all of the owners' and dogs' personalities. Thus, these classes tend to heavily favor the dogs that are the easiest to work with from the get-go. The class environment may also work well for someone who has been through training before and just wants a structured environment in which to touch up their abilities. All of this will depend, of course, on the people that are in the class and the knowledge of the instructor. If you do choose to go this route, make sure that the instructor is a professional trainer or an obedience director for a dog club, etc. Do not make the mistake of going to a store where a cashier is christened as a dog trainer overnight and is running a class in order to sell merchandise. The price might be right, but the old adage that you get what you pay for will most likely be true.

Private On-Field Lessons: These are generally lessons that are given on a private basis at the trainer's location. This is different from group class training, as the trainer is exclusively yours for the hour. Private On-Field lessons are generally conducted at the trainer's facility. The advantage of this new location to your dog is the distractions that are provided since he is away from home. In some cases, other trainers may be present working with dogs, and this provides another distraction that most trainers will allow you to reschedule the lessons if you are sick or can't show up for some reason. The obedience is accomplished, problem solving that revolves around the home (such as housebreaking, chewing, stealing things, etc.) can be discussed but not worked on, due to the fact that the trainer is never in the home. These lessons are generally two to four times more expensive than group classes but are also typically two to four times more effective in teaching the owner and dog together as a team. The owner is still expected to do homework

30–40 minutes per day, but normally the lessons can be postponed to a reasonable degree if the owner is out of town or cannot practice for another reason.

Private In-Home Training

This training goes one step further for the convenience of the owner. In this type of training, it is the trainer's responsibility to drive to the owner's home each week and give the lesson. Of course, the owner is going to pay more for this service. On average, the cost will be two to four times more expensive than the private on- money will be used for the trainer's time and traveling expenses. On the upside, the trainer is going to see your home and be able to help you make decisions as to what to do about your dog's behavior problems.

Home manners such as stopping at doors and gates can be taught on location. Teaching the dog to go with the trainer there. Behavior problems, such as excessive barking when company arrives or chewing and stealing items, can all be worked on where they happen. Stopping at boundaries and not going in the street can be worked on at the scene of the crime rather than in an unrealistically sterile training environment. Having a private in-home trainer is akin to having a private trainer come to your house to get you into shape; it is a major convenience for the owner, and the dog is never out of its comfort zone. There- in lays the rub. The downside to this style of training for many is precisely that it is so convenient. Some dogs need to work around the distractions, or they will be perfectly behaved at home and then act like monsters when they go out in public. In addition, some dogs are so territorial and spoiled in their own homes that the trainer cannot get enough control over the dog in each session to get anything accomplished. The own- errs also can be a problem. People who desire the con- lenience of the in-home lessons are often too busy to follow up with the training regime for 30–40 minutes per day. Since dogs learn by consistency and reputation, owners are essentially wasting their money by not following through. The follow up is out of the trainer's

control. Even the best trainer is heavily dependent on the effort that the owner is willing to put into the train- in process. We have had many clients in our in-home lessons, who cannot focus long enough to take the lesson due to ringing cell phones, screaming children, and the arrival of guests or family members. This train- in usually works well for people who are devoted to training the dog themselves and has the time to do so. This is the best training for someone who absolutely does not want their dog to go to a kennel and whose dog is already well socialized and non-aggressive.

In-Kennel, In-Home Combination

This type of program is the Mercedes Benz of dog train- in. Because of this, it is also the most expensive, and you can plan to spend two to three times as much as you would for in-home lessons. This process involves The owner does not have to do the daily training in this case because it is being done for them. The owner simply returns in the time allotted (which in our facility is generally 3–4 weeks) and at that point the owner is given a demonstration of what the dog has learned. The trainer then works with the owner and dog prior to releasing the dog to go home. This is followed by a les- son at the client's home and another follow-up lesson, of stay and the number of lessons can be made from program to program, but the course is always basically the owner. The reason that this works so well is that the trainer does not have to rely on the owner to train the dog. The dog learns much faster because the trainer isn't making the mistakes that the owner would make in communicating key lessons to the dog. When the owner takes over, they are already very happy with the dog's progress and encouraged to try to get the dog to perform as well for them. When the trainer the training is to be followed in more locations than just the kennel. This also gives the trainer the opportunity to establish in-home manners such as not run- nine through open doors, staying within boundaries, and the place command, as well as problem solving. It is never recommended that you send a dog to a kennel for training and then take him home without

a demonstration and at least 3 lessons with the dog and the trainer. The addition of the in-home lesson is invaluable in this situation because of what it means to the dog and owner to complete their education in their living space.

Time

You should ask yourself the question: "Do I have enough time to properly raise a puppy or add a dog to my life?" The process of raising a puppy is not much different from having a new baby in the house. Luckily, than years. Early puppy raising involves getting up in the middle of the night to let the puppy out for a potty break and to stretch his little legs. There are fear (age of 8–12 weeks) and critical socialization periods (age of 6–16 weeks), where you need to give special and well socialized. The last thing you want to do is to leave the puppy home alone during this period to fend for itself. If you do leave him alone, the results will what you want from it as an adult. A puppy between 8-16 weeks old needs to be introduced to children and any other animals it is expected to live with. This has to be done in a way that does not scare or intimidate the puppy. If you purchase an adult dog or puppy over four months of age, you can go directly into a training program. This will require a few weeks where you must be dedicated to 30–40 minutes of daily home-work with the dog. The exception to this rule is if you take in-kennel training. Even with someone else doing the hardest part of the work for you, you must still practice for at least 20 minutes per day for 2–3 weeks afterwards. After this point, regardless of the training program, you will need to spend time to keep the training up. Your best results will come from weaving the training and rules you have set for your dog into your daily routine. It is a good idea to take your dog on a daily walk, where you practice all of your obedience commands, keeping up on the rules that you have established like stopping at doors and gates, and using the place command. The owner who spends the most time with the dog will have the best results. This is assuming that the time spent is balanced with all the aspects of praise, discipline, and

fun (which should not be confused with spoiling). Though these time commitments may seem daunting, you would be surprised how often people with hectic work and parenting schedules still work a dog into the mix successfully. These people usually do so by having a plan and sticking with it. This may mean the use of professional at times, delegating tasks between family members, or sometimes simply waiting for the appropriate time to add a new member to the family.

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