

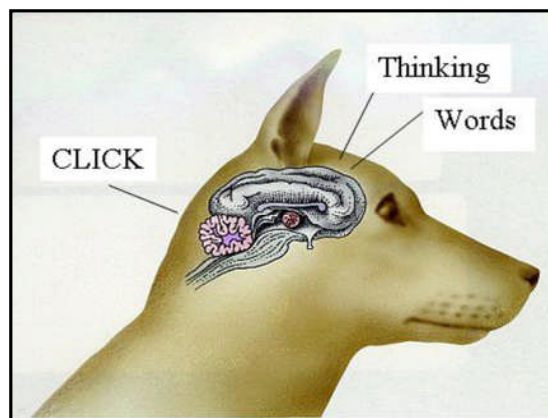
You CAN have the dog you want seminar PART 2:

Two common myths about clicker training are:

One:

- 1) That you always need to carry a clicker. NO, you don't! The clicker is ideal for teaching NEW skills quickly, but once the dog understands what you want, you don't need the actual clicker. You still use some sort of marker, but most people switch to a word like "Yes!" or "Good!" or a tongue click. It has been proven that the learning phase is faster with a sharp sound, like a clicker, than with a word.

In basic terms, this is because the sharp sound of the click is processed in the primitive part of the brain and learning takes place in the frontal lobe. When a word is used, it is processed in the slower frontal lobe and learning is very briefly interrupted while the word is processed for its meaning.



So the click doesn't interfere with the actual learning process when you are teaching a new behavior. But once the behavior is well-known, a word can then be used in place of the click for that behavior.

The marking signal, such as a click or certain word, always means a reward of some kind is going to be delivered. If you use your marker signal, then you need to deliver some sort of reward.

Myth #2:

Food always has to be used. NO. Food is often used because it is something most learners want and it can be easily delivered for multiple quick repetitions. This allows more practice of the behavior in a shorter amount of time.

But something is only a reward if the learner wants it! For some people, chocolate is a huge reward, for others it would be a punishment. So the DOG gets to decide what it wants as a reward.

Let's talk about rewards...

A term frequently used in clicker training is "high value reward". This does not refer to how much you spent on the reward. It refers to how much the learner, in our case a dog, wants the item. For my Malinois, a ball is a higher value reward than any food. For the rest of my dogs, it's the opposite- just about any food is higher value than a ball.

It is the reward that creates the motivation to learn or to do the behavior. And the “value” of the reward (which is set by the dog) needs to match the difficulty of the task.

Would you want to attend a 1 hour seminar on IRS laws and how they affect a city budget?

Would you attend if you knew you would be given \$100 at the end of the session just for sitting there? Would you be motivated to attend if you would be handed \$1000 at the end of the session? What if the seminar was the same date as another event you really wanted to attend? How much money would be required to get you to attend the 1 hour IRS session?

Do you see how the consequence or reward can drive the motivation to do the task? And how big the reward might need to be if the task is something the dog doesn't want to do? If there is something they would rather be doing or something else getting their attention, then the reward will need to be a higher value to them. Rewarding with their kibble may be fine for training in the house where distractions are minimal. But at the training center or on a walk, you are likely going to need to up the ante. Be sure your dog's “paycheck” is not below minimum wage for the work you're asking them to do.

I want to mention bribes vs. rewards. A bribe happens prior to the behavior and a reward happens after it. While the dogs often know what you have in your treat pouch, just knowing you have chicken in your pouch is not the same as holding out the chicken to bribe them to do something. If you repeatedly get the behavior by luring or bribing, then that can become part of the cue. The dog won't do it till they see what you have to offer first.

Instead... you want to build a history of rewarding well and the dog will learn to trust that you pay well. But you have to hold up your end of the bargain to keep that trust.

Assuming you have a paying job...

Would you prefer to only get a paycheck once a yr., once a month or once a week?

Most people prefer the steady income even though it's a lower amount on the check. Your dog will appreciate frequent payouts too! If you withhold the paycheck too long, your dog may go looking for a new employer! And the environment around the dog can be very rewarding.

Rewarding TOO frequently is rarely the issue!

When you first start working with the dog, or when you are in a high distraction environment, the faster you are paying out, the more attention you get from the dog. So start with easy behaviors! And if the dog's attention is wandering, either raise the value of the paycheck or decrease the time between payouts. They will learn, with practice, to need less frequent payouts as they master the behaviors and learn that paying attention to you is more rewarding, but don't cut the paycheck too fast.

So your first goal is to find at least three things that your dog will knock you down to get.

101 Rewards:

TREATS:

Hot dogs,	Rabbit pellets (the food, not the end result),	Cooked pasta (many forms),
Cheerios,	Cheetos,	Peanut Butter,
Breakfast cereals,	Cheese Whiz,	Baby food,
Freeze-dried liver,	Popcorn (this is a grain),	Lunchmeat,
Cooked ground beef,	French fries,	Most leftovers,
Pounce cat treats,	Ice cubes,	Unsalted crackers,
Bil-Jack dog food	Carrots, beans and	Dog treats found in
Natural Balance roll,	other veggies,	pet stores (what a
Kibbled dog food,	Pineapple, raspberries	novel idea)
String cheese,	and other fruit,	
Cheese slices,	Bread crust,	
Leftover meats	Croutons,	
Hard-boiled eggs	Rice cakes,	
(may cause gas),	Pureed liver (use a	
Sardines (will cause	spoon or finger tip),	
fish breath),	Canned cat food (use a	
Fish food pellets,	spoon or finger tip),	



This page has just a FEW of the foods you can use as rewards for a food motivated dog. And some dogs that aren't food motivated are actually just very picky about what they will eat. I have a grand total of 4 things Dazzle will eat in a relatively distracting environment. But even those things can't always get his attention, so in those situations I need to use toys instead.

Experiment with your picky eaters, you just might find food they will work for. It also helps if they have feeding times instead of always having food available in their bowl. They aren't dumb! Why should they work for food if they can just go get it out of a bowl for free? If you have a morning feeding and an evening feeding, you can better predict when the dog will be hungry too.

Of course all the things listed would be in moderation. You don't want to give your dog a bunch of high sugar cereal or cheese puffs, but if you mix several of these things, most dogs love the variety and the surprise of not knowing what treat will be next.

Most treats sold in pet stores have junk in them and are about the equivalent of human junk food. So using human grade junk food might actually be healthier than some of the garbage sold as pet treats.

You also use very tiny treats! Even a dog the size of a Rottweiler will work for treats the size of a pea. Remember the Rhino that worked for grapes? Another thing to consider is that rewards can change their value depending on the circumstance. With food and some dogs if the dog is full, then food of any kind could be greatly reduced in value as a motivator. I did say "some" dogs :-). I know 4 of my dogs would eat until they exploded! But especially with tiny dogs, keep the treats really tiny and train before meals so the food has as much value as possible. You can also remove an equivalent amount of his meal to account for the calories in the treats so the dog doesn't get fat.

If the dog is tired, it might not want to do certain activities that are normally rewarding. So the reward is only a reward if the DOG thinks it's rewarding at that moment!

Toys:

Objects/toys:

Tennis balls,
Kongs,
Rope tugs,
Frisbees,
Sticks,
Firewood,
Boat bumpers,
Buoys,
Bicycle tires,
Car tires,
Burlap sacks,
Puppy tugs,
Protective sleeves,
Sweatshirt or Jacket sleeves
(not my 1st choice),
Ring suits



Leashes,
Tracking harnesses (an
expensive tug toy!)
Fire hose tugs,
Street hockey balls,
Hockey pucks,
Soccer balls,
Basketballs,
Boomer/Jolly balls,
Ultra balls,
Piece of garden hose,
Five-gallon buckets,
Carpet rolls/squares,
Plastic bag on a rope,
fishing rod or lunge
whip operated by
you

This page has several toys your dog might find appealing. Car tires are on the list because these were my Rottweiler's obsession. Thankfully he didn't try to get ones that were attached to a vehicle, but he LOVED dragging around old tires, especially if they were still on a rim and heavy.

Giving your dog access to play with a toy he is obsessed about can be a very powerful reward and motivator. Most of these things are interactive- and play with you helps strengthen the bond between you and your dog. Sure, the dog can play with most of these on his own, but if he knows you make the toy come to life and make it fun to play with, he will be seeking you out for a play session.

Some dogs do better if you have 2 identical toys, so the one you have is always the fun active one. Once they get the toy, it goes dead and the other one you have then comes to life. Or they have to drop theirs before you will throw or tug with the toy you have.

Activities:

Activities:		
Fetch, Get in the crate (especially if it's in the car and takes the dog fun places!), Get out of the crate, Go into the house, Go out of the house, Get in the car, Go out of the car, Eat dinner, Fight the water hose, Belly rub, Back scratch, Wrestle, Play with other dogs, Chase the cats, Play with the kids,	Down, Heeling, Jumping, Chase the laser spot, Tracking, Find-it games, Building searching, Target stick, Swimming, Dope searching, Chasing Squirrels Agility Lure Coursing Going for a walk, Barking, Digging, Marking territory, Dock Diving, Getting dollar bills and dropping them in a bucket,	Holding a basket for people to put donations in, Greeting people, Therapy Visits, Carting, Weight pull, Sledding, Skijoring, Flyball, Herding, Biking, Cuddling, and Praise



These are activities that many dogs love. Being given permission to engage in these activities can be highly rewarding! And the reward is sometimes delivered at an inopportune time. How many people have seen dogs that associate Agility with barking? Odds are good either the dog is frustrated or has been rewarded for barking by being given access to his favorite activity while barking (or the dog just likes the sound of his own voice).

I'll share a story a bit later about how a person with a herding dog changed her dog's maniacal behavior at the sight of sheep in just a few visits to the herding fielding by using the sheep as the powerful motivator.

Once the dog learns the rules of the game, the more a dog wants something, the more motivated they will be to do as you ask to get it. Notice that for some dogs, some of these activities would be punishers. You **HAVE** to know what **YOUR** dog wants. Because only what your dog wants will be rewarding for him or her.

So now that you have a better idea of what could be used as a reward, hopefully you can see that you don't always need to have food or a toy on you. On the contrary, once my dog has learned the behavior, I find it helpful to keep the food or toy OFF my body. After the click or mark, we can go get the reward. At first, that might be just a step or two away, but you can build up to having the reward across the ring and get it after a whole routine. Just please don't rush through the foundation training to get to that point or the dog may be looking for an employer with more than just a yearly paycheck.

You can also utilize “life rewards”. Do you have dogs that get excited...

When you are about to open the door?

Or when you mention a ride or a walk?

Or when it's feeding time?

If your dog likes these things, you can USE them as a reward.

Anytime you do these things, you are rewarding SOMETHING. Just be more conscious of that and only reward if the dog is doing something you like.

If you ask for behaviors the dog knows BEFORE you provide these rewards, you can use them to polish those behaviors. It also helps the dog learn self-control which I'll talk about in a moment. The door only opens if the dog is sitting. The leash only goes on if the dog is in heel position. They can get to the car if they don't tighten the leash on the way to the car. If the dog does some behaviors that you ask for, you put the food bowl down. Better yet, separate the dog's meal and use half (or more) for a short training session!

Do you have a dog that has trained them to throw a toy? Open a door? Feed them when they want to be fed? What behavior is the dog doing that gets you to act? Are they behaviors you like? If not, think about what behavior you would prefer the dog use to get you to act. You can change the dog's “request behavior” if the new behavior provides the same reward. If sitting and staring at you is reliably more effective in getting you to act than pawing your body or barking, they will choose staring.

#1 Rule of dog training is that **DOG'S DO WHAT WORKS FOR THEM!**

Our job is to make them think they are training us to click!

Some dogs learn quickly that it is THEIR behavior that causes you to click. Once that happens, training is much easier because they know they can make you click (which means you reward them). Help them learn that a sit will make you provide a click/reward, that a perfect go out will make you provide a click/reward, that coming to you when you call will make you provide a click and a really great reward.

If the dog is doing as you ask, when you ask and is happy to do it, does it really matter what the motivator is? It may be a hard thing to accept that your dog doesn't do as you ask simply to please you. Sorry. The dog is doing it because he's getting something out of the deal. For some dogs, it may be that they don't get a correction if they comply. Avoiding a negative consequence is an effective motivator. But it's not fun and can often be stressful to some extent.

It's like having to go to work and do your job ONLY because you know there will be severe consequences if you don't. No paycheck, just looming punishment. Ok, maybe your boss tells you that you're doing a good job from time to time. Would that be enough for you?

By punishment, I am referring to what most people call a correction. I don't expect this seminar to immediately cause people that use punishment to change their ways (though I can hope!) So I want to share Steve White's rules for the use of punishment.

They apply to the use of any means used to STOP an unwanted behavior.

Steve White is an accomplished Police K-9 trainer that uses Operant Conditioning to teach K-9's in departments around the country to do their various jobs from tracking to substance detection to criminal apprehensions.

He developed these rules primarily to show how hard it is to correctly administer punishments that quickly and effectively change the dog's behavior the way the trainer desires.



1- The punishment must be something the animal dislikes and something the animal does not expect.

If the dog could care less about the correction, it's not effective. If the dog anticipates the punishment, it causes high levels of stress and you'll get a dog concentrating on avoidance instead of what you want him to do.

How many people here are perfectly comfortable if a police car pulls in behind you and follows you? That "potential for punishment" causes some stress, even if you don't think you did anything wrong. So using a "threat" of punishment does not follow this rule.



2 - The punishment must suppress behavior.

(From Webster's on-line dictionary).

Definition of suppress:

1. To put an end to forcibly; subdue.
2. To curtail or prohibit the activities of.
3. To deliberately exclude (unacceptable desires or thoughts) from the mind.
4. To inhibit the expression of (an impulse, for example); *suppress a smile*.
5. To reduce the incidence or severity of.

I added the definition so we are all on the same page about what is meant by the word "suppress".

If something is being used for punishment, but it does not immediately suppress or stop behavior, it's ineffective and either nagging or may even be abuse depending on the severity. If you have resorted to using a strong correction and it's not changing the behavior, perhaps it's time to try a new approach.

3 The punishment must be of the perfect intensity.

Too much and there could be negative fallout. If it's too severe, you might cause physical damage to the dog, such as spinal alignment or tender spots making aggression more likely because the dog is in pain or sore. The dog might try to fight back and redirect aggression to you or others nearby

It might suppress warning signals, like growling, that give you valuable insight into how the dog is likely to react to an approaching stressor or in a situation that stresses the dog.

You'll end up reducing the level of trust the dog has in your ability to keep him safe. And you may suppress more than just the behavior you were trying to stop.

If the intensity of the punishment is too light it will only serve to desensitize the animal and build resistance, meaning you'll need stronger punishments to get the same result.

There are SO many variables, the odds of getting this one right are low.

4 The punishment must happen during the behavior it is to be associated with.

Otherwise, a clear enough association between the wrong behavior and the punishment will not be made.

Punishment delivery is its own sort of "marker signal". If the punishment is done AFTER the behavior, you will be punishing the dog for STOPPING the bad behavior! Exactly opposite of what you intended.

Some behaviors WE think are clear, are not so clear to the dog. In this case, even proper timing can cause the dog to associate the punishment with other things in the environment, like the presence of another dog or with other parts of the behavior that you DO want.



For example: you may think you are punishing the dog for staring at or growling at another dog. But the dog might think it's the sight of or proximity of other dogs that caused the correction.

"Every time I see other dogs, I get a pain in my neck" or "my owner gets upset". This can cause the dog to be aggressive to or fearful of other dogs in an effort to prevent the punishment.

Is there any way to know for sure what the dog to the left would associate with a correction at this moment? Would it be the other dog? Crowds? Someone sitting and talking on a phone?

The odds of the punishment being associated with the abstract act of staring are low. The dog isn't likely thinking "I'm staring right now". And even growling might not be a "behavior" the dog recognizes as the cause of the punishment. Even if he does, just because the dog is not growling doesn't mean the feelings that caused the need to

growl have changed, the dog has only learned that growling is dangerous, not that other dogs are safe.

So another component of this one is that the dog needs to understand what behavior is being punished. Can we really know that? Or are we guessing?

5 The punishment must be associated with the behavior, but not with the trainer or the leash.

Otherwise, the trainer and/or the leash become part of the punishment and the animal starts fearing or disliking the trainer or the leash. Or the dog learns that if the trainer or the leash is not present he's free to do as he wishes. And the trainer calls the dog sneaky.

Dogs aren't stupid, they know the punishers don't happen unless the trainer is present. This is why people start using E-collars, thinking that will solve this issue. But if punishment happens "out of the blue", with no apparent source, it could cause the dog to fear the environment or make weird associations between the shock and the cause.

For example, the dog gets shocked for putting his paws on the counter even though the human is not around, some dogs might simply avoid that counter. Others might avoid all raised surfaces, which can include agility tables, grooming tables, getting into a car, etc. Others might decide the entire kitchen is dangerous, and just to be safe, won't enter any rooms that connect to the kitchen! It's hard to say what a dog might associate with the punishment. The dog could develop a fear of toasters because that is what the dog was looking at when he felt the shock.

Don't think they don't know what the electronic collar is for! And the stress about that cop following them at all times can manifest itself in many different ways.

6 The punishment must happen every time the behavior occurs.

If punishment does not happen every time the behavior occurs, the behavior gets put on a variable schedule of reinforcement. This is a scientific term for the principle employed by gambling casinos. Usually there is no reward, but sometimes you do get a reward and sometimes you get a really BIG reward! This has been proven to create VERY strong behaviors and even obsessions.

So when your dog does something you don't like, if sometimes there's a punishment and sometimes there's a reward (meaning either no punishment or something the dog wants), the dog is actually MORE likely to do the unwanted behavior!

Depending on how much the dog wants to do the bad behavior and how often the punishment fails to be delivered, the animal could decide that performing the behavior is worth the risk of maybe getting punished.

7 There must be an alternative known to the animal.

He has to know what he is expected to do instead. Some trainers only focus on what they want to stop. But they don't put any training into what they WANT the dog to DO instead. If that alternative behavior is more rewarding for the dog than the bad behavior, the dog will CHOOSE to do the good behavior! No punishment needed.

8 Punishment must never be used to the extent that the use of punishment outweighs the use of positive reinforcement (from the dog's perspective, not yours!)

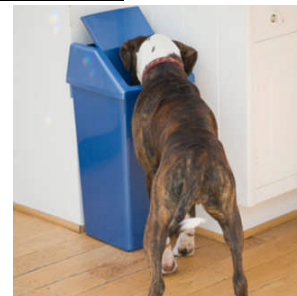
The dog needs to feel he is getting way more rewards than punishments. How fun is it to work with someone who only notices what you do wrong? How many good things do they need to notice before the occasional correction doesn't feel like a slam or a put down? If you feel like you can never please someone, or all they do is demand things of you, how pleasant is it to be around that person?

Also be aware that a punishment cannot remove a reward. A punishment that occurs after the dog has gotten a reward doesn't change the fact that the behavior was reinforced.

Behavior that is rewarded will be repeated, even if followed by a punishment.

Take trash stealing- If the dog GETS yummy things from the trash, punishing the dog after that happens doesn't reduce the effects that finding a tasty butter wrapper has.

For punishment to be effective, it has to happen prior to the reward, in this case, when the nose goes toward the trashcan for it to be effective.



How many of these 8 rules do beginner trainers get wrong? Or even experienced trainers? You don't get to pick and choose which ones you want to follow. All these rules need to apply to each use of punishment or you greatly increase the risk of mental fall out or the dog not doing as intended and then more punishment is needed- a bad cycle to get into, especially for the dog!

A 2002 study on rats showed that the "fall out" can be quick and permanent.

The experimenters introduced rats to a sound accompanied near the end by a low-intensity foot shock. According to them, "the shock wasn't painful, but it got the rats' attention". They were visibly startled.

The day after being trained this way, the animals heard the sound but didn't receive any shocks. Nevertheless, the sound frightened them. In fact, they appeared more alarmed than during their training. And this was no temporary effect. The association lasted for the rest of their lives.

So if punishment is applied incorrectly, there can be a lot of long-term "fall out" and negatives that go with those mistakes; from minor stress, to the dog losing trust in the handler, to outright fear and major behavioral issues.

Some dogs can take more punishment than others before these develop, but not everyone has a dog with high tolerance levels.

Yes, punishment can work in training. I'm not saying it doesn't. But how many dogs "can't cut it" in competition because they are too soft or develop fears or aggressive behavior? Did the methods work for them? And how many trainers REALLY know how to use punishments correctly?

Dogs are amazingly resilient and often learn in spite of our inept communication of what we expect them to do, regardless of the method used. But what I'm saying is that there is a way, especially for new handlers, to teach their dogs behaviors without the stress issues for the dog; and without the risk of psychological issues.

All training methods require good timing, and if your timing with corrections is excellent, then once you learn to recognize the GOOD behaviors, your timing with a marker signal is also going to be excellent and you won't NEED punishment. You just need to see HOW to apply the marker to get the behavior you want. And if your timing isn't very good, it's better to give the dog an extra treat than to create a negative association that will affect the dog long-term and break down the trust the dog has in you.

Why dogs don't do as asked

Before you use punishment, you want to assess WHY the dog didn't do as you asked. If the dog has sufficient motivation AND the dog knows what you are asking of him, why would the dog not respond?

Just as if someone asked you to do an easy task for them and you knew you would be well paid or compensated, why would you not do it?

They don't know why they should do it

If your dog doesn't know why, then you don't have control of the right motivator (reward). Is it a high enough "paycheck" to get the dog's attention? Or is it like getting a cheap pen for attending a boring IRS lecture? Or maybe they don't know (or trust) that you have a reward for them. That doesn't mean you have to show them the reward as a bribe, the dog will develop the trust from past experience that doing as you ask will be rewarded. By practicing frequent rewards for obedience, the motivation to do as you ask will be increased.

They don't know how to do it

It's not fair to punish a dog for failing to do something he hasn't been taught to do in that location with the current level of distraction.

Where is it easier for you to concentrate on a tedious/detailed task you don't really want to do, (like taxes or studying) or a new task you don't fully understand yet?



What about for your dog...



Your dog might know that “sit” means to put his tail on the ground when you are at home, but without practice, your dog probably won’t know that “sit” still means you want him to put his tail on the ground when there are multiple other dogs and people around.

Add distractions gradually or go back to the beginning training steps and work through the training steps at the speed the dog can handle **in that location**. Most people are social enough to learn to think and concentrate in a distracting environment because they get exposed to distracting environments on a regular basis. But many dogs only see their own home/yard and maybe a route around the neighborhood or maybe one training center. But dog’s can learn to concentrate if taught how by training in many different locations and recognizing when the dog needs to go back to baby steps to be successful and build on that success.

They don’t know what they are supposed to do

Be sure they are clear about what you are asking. Dogs are masters at reading our body language, so changing the position of your body can make it a whole new cue. If you are sitting on the floor with your back to your dog, will your dog still respond quickly and correctly to your cues? This is an extreme example of a change in body position, but much more subtle changes can have the same effect.

Also be sure you aren’t giving conflicting signals. If your boss or spouse yelled “get over here NOW!” you know they want you to go to them, but are you going to be excited to comply? Even if all you say is “Fido come” but your tone and/or body language are saying “get over here now!” don’t expect a fast recall!

They don’t think your way will work

They don’t trust you to pay out or give them what they want. It might also be that the dog hasn’t learned the concept of indirect access. I’ll talk more about this concept in just a bit.

They think their way is correct

Sometimes they are right (especially if their nose is involved) but if you don’t agree, you’ll need to break up the behavior into easier to achieve steps.

They think something else is more important

I'm going to be talking about getting the dog's attention in detail. By helping him or her learn to focus and understand that listening to you will get them what they want, the dog will be willing to comply. Their senses are keen and they are thinking beings with their own desires.

You likely know how to read a book, but how effective will that reading be if you're trying to do it while your favourite show is on a TV in front of you? Are you asking the dog to do something while HIS favorite show is going on in the next ring or the next yard? CAN he learn to concentrate on the task you are asking him to do? Sure! But have you practiced it enough? How long would it take you to learn to concentrate on only the book and ignore your favorite show without turning off the sound? Don't ask your dog for College level behaviors if you haven't taught him the Grade School stuff first.

The dog might also have personal safety concerns. It would be hard for you to lie down on the floor if you truly believed someone might attack and hurt you.

Little or no positive consequences for doing it

Show them it pays well to do as you ask. Don't be stingy with rewards! The harder their work, the higher their "pay" should be.

They think they are doing it

This means your training wasn't clear. Help them understand exactly what you want by going back to previous training steps.

Rewarded for not doing it

If the rewards are higher for NOT doing the behavior, you can't expect them to WANT to do as you ask!

If watching TV is really satisfying for you, how motivated are you to leave the TV and do the dishes? If you know someone else will do the dishes if you don't... Why would you bother? Being threatened with punishment doesn't make that task any more desirable. You would simply try to avoid punishment till the other person got the task done! You have to remove or lessen the reward for not doing as you ask and increase the reward for compliance.

Punished for doing it

Sometimes things that are not intended as a punishment can interfere. I'm going to be talking about body language in a bit so that you can learn to read your dog and see what they feel is a punishment.

Try to get rid of the punishment they might feel for doing as asked or increase the reward to overcome it. Rewards CAN overcome punishers. There are many dogs that will tolerate pain to get something they want. Lab rats have shown they will walk across an electrified floor to get a treat. If the reward is high enough, and used correctly, it can be used to help the dog overcome fears as well.

Anticipates unpleasant consequences for doing it

This is true especially if punishment methods have been used in the past or something negative has been associated with the behavior. Make the task easier by only expecting part of the behavior and reward heavily for compliance to gain trust and overcome fears. This is exactly what we did with my Rottie when teaching him to use his paws.

If you try free shaping with a punishment trained dog- meaning the type of training I showed in the first video of my Cattle dog with the stool- the dog is likely to stand there with a blank look on his face. He has learned that you will do the thinking for him by showing him what you expect and that being creative gets punished. So it will take time for the dog to trust that the rules have changed and that thinking and trying is safe. Start with very easy behaviors, even ones the dog already knows and build up a history of reward.

No negative consequences for not doing it

If the dog gets the same reward for doing the task as for not doing the task, increase rewards for doing it and decrease or eliminate rewards for not doing it.

An example of this would be loose leash walking. If the dog gets forward movement when he pulls on leash and he gets forward movement when he keeps the leash loose, where is the motivation to keep the leash loose? If instead he doesn't get to move forward if the leash is tight and he gets high value treats AND forward movement for keeping the leash loose, he will be much more motivated to keep it loose. If, in a non-distracting environment, you also teach the dog to move WITH collar pressure instead of against it, it will help him choose correctly when he feels collar pressure from the leash.

Dog didn't hear you

This can refer to the brain not being engaged or that the dog couldn't hear you due to other noise interference or even high stress. While dogs' hearing is often better than humans, things happen and noise can travel in odd ways.

Have you ever "zoned out" and then came back to reality to realize someone was trying to get your attention? I'm sure this also happens to dogs. If you have a million things to worry about at home, work and personal life, will a punishment for not paying attention make things better or just add stress? Point is that dogs are thinking beings and if you want a robot dog- then get a robot.

If the dog really can't hear you or didn't hear your cue because of distance or background noise (or maybe their hearing isn't what it used to be), then once again, punishment is not warranted. Simply try again and if you need to, reduce the difficulty a bit and work back up to the situation where the dog was having trouble.

Obstacles beyond their control

You may or may not be able to control this. It could be physical interference, the dog's physical limitations, or other physical reasons the dog CAN'T comply. Try to anticipate problems and obstacles and provide solutions.

Set the dog up for success, not failure.

One story that perfectly illustrates this is a friend in Texas who was training her Doberman for a long down stay. This dog was usually excellent at maintaining his down for a long time, but on this day, the dog just wouldn't stay put. Finally the owner realized that she had asked her dog to lie down over a small fire ant mound! The poor thing was trying to comply, but was covered with ants and getting painfully bitten for his efforts.



For those that don't know, fire ants swarm when their nest is disturbed and their bites are more painful than bee stings. They tend to swarm over the subject that disturbed them (sometimes unnoticed) and THEN all sting at the same time while clamping on with their pincers.



Personal limits prevent them from doing it

Be aware of physical and mental limitations. Learning is stressful, so provide "brain breaks" too. If the dog is young, they don't have the same attention span as an older dog. If the dog is older, he might tire more quickly. Don't ask for what the dog can't give. One person I know asks her dog for a high 4 because he can't give a high 5!

So there are many reasons to give your dog the benefit of the doubt and to not jump to punishment. If your dog is making mistakes, look to your training first.

Steve White (the police K-9 trainer I mentioned) says:

"Anything that makes you think about using aversives as punishment is a message to you that more training is needed."

Meaning- the dog doesn't understand what you want, so you need to help them understand, not punish them for ignorance.

If the dog has motivation to do as you ask and understands what you are asking, they are going to do as you ask. If they don't, odds are good there is not enough motivation or they don't understand it as well as you think they do.

I love this drawing from DrawTheDog.com
Is this dog plotting revenge or things to do to spite the owner? Or is he planning to do things he enjoys?



Dogs do things that benefit THEM.

When people new to training (and some that are not so new) enter a new training center with their dogs, what do they and the dog typically look like?



Or this? (Another DrawTheDog.com cartoon)



Do you have one of *these* dogs?



High energy dogs and ones that have no self-control or impulse control are not easy to live with. Been there, done that, still working on it! ☺

So I want to touch briefly on “tools” that can help these guys and then I will talk about simple training games that work wonders. I’m going to give you MY opinions on certain training equipment based on the facts I’ve learned and experience I currently have.

Regardless of what you call them- “**Choke Chains**” are just that. There are some links listed on the last page that show they can (and do) cause harm to the dog’s trachea, cervical vertebrae and that any constriction of blood flow to the head causes a pressure build-up in the eyes which has, in some cases, lead to burst blood vessels and blindness. I have seen bloody eyes from a choke collar 1st hand (not my dog)

This can happen with a dog straining on a flat collar too, so it’s not only when a chain is fully tight. In the hands of anyone, but especially beginner trainers, they can be very damaging to the dog both physically and mentally. Choking a dog into submission by cutting off oxygen and blood flow to the brain, as Cesar Milan has shown the general public how to do, is VERY dangerous to the dog’s health and mental state. Read the articles I gave you links for, to get additional details.

Prong Collars get mixed reviews. While they claim to be more humane, they still work by employing pressure on the dog’s neck which causes discomfort or pain. Any pain or discomfort can do harm to the mind of a dog, especially dogs that are acting out due to fear or stress. If you were afraid or unsure of something and every time you saw that thing you felt mild discomfort, would that ease your fears or add to them? Constriction and pressure around the dog’s neck adds to their adrenalin and/or stress levels regardless of the type of collar.

These should never be used on any dog that is still growing, because of the risk of hidden permanent damage. Just because you can’t see it doesn’t mean it’s not there.

Because I know some people love prongs and won't stop using them, I at least want you to be fitting and using them correctly. Properly fitted, the collar should be snug when there is no pressure from the leash. The collar should not slide around on the dog's neck. Because it is snug, it takes very little pressure to be effective, so you never want to do more of a correction than what you can do with just the movement of your wrist.



If you can open a link in the prong without the collar getting tight, it's too loose. The types shown above are easier to get on and off while maintaining the proper fit and not pinching the dog while putting on and taking off the collar. A web search for "Prong Collar snap" will help you find these types. A prong should NEVER be put over the dog's head. If it's properly fitted, it will be very hard to turn the collar prong side out.

The collar should NOT be put close to the ears at the top of the neck. It is much more likely to cause damage on that part of the neck. Instead, it should be snug around the mid-point on the dog's neck.



These should only be used with a short leash so the dog can't suddenly reach the end of a loose leash which would cause a hard correction and possible injury.

These work by employing discomfort or pain rather than physics, so don't ever use them harshly and never leave a collar that constricts around the dog's neck on the dog if he/she is unsupervised.

There are many different styles and brands of **head collars**.



SWAG



Gentle Leader



Canny Collar



Halti

They have been promoted as a humane alternative, but I don't feel they are the best option for most dogs. If the trainer has any recent habit of using leash corrections or tends to jerk on the leash, a head collar should not be used. Jerking on the dog's head or giving the dog enough leash to forcibly hit the end if the dog lunges, can do serious damage to the alignment of the dog's neck.

Most dogs need a good deal of training and pairing of the head collar with treats before it can be put on so that the dog can accept it without fighting like a fish. Too many people just slap it on the dog and force him to just "deal with it" or correct the dog for fighting it.

Properly fitted, the Gentle Leader neck strap is quite snug and the nose loop should only be able to reach the point of the dog's nose where the hair changes to the nose leather when the nose strap is pulled forward.

But different brands fit in different ways. Don't assume a store clerk or trainer knows how to properly fit the equipment. Go to the web page or read the directions that came with the product.

If a person needs "power steering" of an out of control leash puller until training can be installed, I feel the best option is a **properly fitted harness** with the leash attached at the front.



I personally don't care for the 2 strap type that constricts known as the Easy Walk.

I don't think the constriction of the dog's shoulders is really needed and it could potentially do harm. They tend to be hard to fit properly on some dogs and the straps tend to slide through the adjustment buckles. But if you get them fitted properly and then add a few stitches through the straps, they won't get looser with use.



A better option, in my opinion, is a Sense-ation harness which is basically the same thing without the constriction in the front. It has the same fitting and strap sliding issues though.

-- Seminar continued in PART 3 --