

The man was astonished that it worked so well and it worked so quickly. The bad behavior was eliminated without punishment (which strains your relationship).

I told you this was going to be easy...

2. Coming to you (checking in with you) for any reason (not just when you call, but any time). Giving this behavior favorable consequences will result in a dog that watches you, checks in with you often, and does not wish to run away when you call.

3. Walking on a loose leash. Doesn't it make sense to show a dog what he's supposed to do by rewarding the behavior, rather than trying to issue a jerk on the leash for all of the possible thousands of incorrect choices that don't constitute heeling?

It's no wonder that dogs historically haven't thrilled to the thought of obedience training, while those same dogs will perform tricks with great gusto. The reason for this is that traditionally, trainers did not use treats to teach obedience skills like heeling and coming when called.

The dog looks forward to performing his tricks because he gets TREATS for doing his tricks.

**FACT #3:** The dog doesn't know which are life-saving obedience skills and which are cute parlor tricks. He will perform his obedience skills with great enthusiasm if you use food to teach those "tricks," too.

Now that you've got an idea WHAT to reward to encourage good behaviors, let's think about HOW to provide those favorable consequences.

The most motivating reward for dogs is usually food. There's nothing like a treat to tell the dog that what he's doing is a good thing...

If you see a behavior that you like, TREAT IT. You will then see that behavior much more often, instead of any bad behaviors that might have taken its place. I repeat: Food is one of the best rewards, because it's #1 on your dog's list of favorable consequences.

Remember, though, that anything can be perceived as a reward by the dog. Attention is a reward (even attention with yelling).

**FACT #4:** Your dog decides what constitutes a reward or favorable consequence.

Suppose your Labrador is barking in the back yard. You go and throw a bucket of water at him. He barks more. Was this a good consequence or a bad consequence for him? If the behavior increased, then it was a reward rather than a punishment. Being a Lab, he probably loves water and your attention. You have just rewarded him with both.

I hope this pamphlet has helped unlock some of the mysteries of dog training. It's as simple as rewarding the behaviors you want to see more of. If you consistently do this, then what pleases you and what pleases your dog will be one in the same.

I wish you a lifetime of happiness with your dog. For more in-depth training, enroll in a reward-based training class. Please visit our web site for additional information on positive reinforcement training, clicker training and other useful tools.

This pamphlet, written by Lonnie Olson, is provided as a public service of Dog Scouts of America.

It is the goal of Dog Scouts of America to eliminate the **number one** reason why dogs are surrendered to shelters: the owner's inability to cope with problem behaviors. Most of these "problem dogs" are not able to find new homes, and must be killed to make room for more unwanted dogs. The majority of these behavior problems could be prevented with knowledge of training and management practices. DSA is committed to providing people with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent their pet from becoming a tragic statistic.

Dog Scouts of America  
5068 Nestel Rd  
St. Helen, MI 48656  
[www.dogscouts.org](http://www.dogscouts.org)



## Does your dog need BETTER MANNERS?

Everyone can have a well-behaved family pet, without the use of any obedience commands.

Dog training is so simple that anyone can do it. Without professional help, you can switch your dog's "default" behaviors from naughty to nice.

When I tell people I'm a dog trainer, I always get the same response. "Gee, I wish you could do something about MY dog!" It seems like every dog owner has a canine family member at home that is making life a little less than blissful happiness for the owners.

People always seem to make the assumption that they need ME to help their situation. They feel helpless to solve the problem at hand. They don't want to spend a lot of money on classes or professional trainers, so they just don't do anything.

What everyone needs to realize is that ALL dogs need training. Left to their own devices, dogs will develop what we call "problem behaviors." These behaviors aren't a problem for the dog--the dog is just doing exactly what pleases himself. The problem is that, without training, what pleases the dog and what pleases the owner are totally different things. Our goal is to make the dog learn to happily choose those behaviors that please us.

Once an owner allows his dog to develop behavior problems, the dog's life will surely suffer. He may be kept chained in the back yard, or he may get uprooted altogether from the family that he thought loved him and adopted him forever. This may involve ending up in a new home, or going on a one-way trip to the shelter. I say one-way because only a very small percentage of the dogs left at shelters ever get adopted. Don't fool yourself. You're dreaming if you think that by turning your dog over to the shelter, he's going to find a loving home and live happily ever after. With the behavior problems he has, he won't likely find a home at all.