

TEST ☺

1. If you teach with treats, you will have to use treats forever. T F
2. Behaviours trained through positive reinforcement are not reliable (ie, you can never be sure the animal will do the behaviour). T F
3. If you train with treats, your dog will only do the behaviour if you have a treat nearby. T F
4. Training with treats and positive reinforcement is only good for teaching tricks. It's not good for training for the 'real world'. T F
5. Your dog should perform behaviours for you because he loves you. T F
6. Aggression and behaviour problems are best solved by showing the animal who is boss. T F
7. Dogs understand and value praise, thereby making praise a valuable reinforcer right from the beginning. T F
8. The dog must listen to you because you are the pack alpha. T F
9. You have to use punishment to get reliable behaviour. T F
10. Dogs are different from other animals and the science of animal behaviour does not apply to them. T F
11. The more treats you use in the beginning, the faster you can get rid of them. T F

From David Mech who did the original research on wolves:

Outmoded notion of the alpha wolf

The concept of the alpha wolf is well ingrained in the popular wolf literature at least partly because of my book "The Wolf: Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species," written in 1968, published in 1970, republished in paperback in 1981, and currently still in print, **despite my numerous pleas to the publisher to stop publishing it.... One of the outdated pieces of information is the concept of the alpha wolf.** "Alpha" implies competing with others and becoming top dog by winning a contest or battle. However, most wolves who lead packs achieved their position simply by mating and producing pups, which then became their pack. **In other words they are merely breeders, or parents, and that's all we call them today,** the "breeding male," "breeding female," or "male parent," "female parent," or the "adult male" or "adult female." In the rare packs that include more than one breeding animal, the "dominant breeder" can be called that, and any breeding daughter can be called a "subordinate breeder." <http://www.davemech.org/news.html>

Victoria Stillwell (Animal Planet's It's Me or the Dog--she takes aggressive dogs and rehabilitates them using ONLY positive reinforcement):

"Dogs are sensitive, emotional, vulnerable beings and they need us to help to teach them and to care for them...They're not out for world domination. Your dog doesn't necessarily want to be top dog. Your dog just wants to understand what is expected. It's ridiculous to think you need to be dominant so your dog can be submissive. If you turn a dog over and hold a dog down, and the dog gives up, this is not a dog that is showing submission; it is a dog who didn't have a choice and shut down. Dominance training methods are dangerous and rarely teach dogs. Positive reinforcement methods allow dogs space to think and they are effective.

Love 2 Play Dog Training Orientation: Communicating with a Marker Signal (Clicker Training)

All Training is:

.....the teaching of learned behaviours....and the way WE use it is: ‘teaching of behaviours appropriate to living with humans’

How to get the behaviours we like?

- 🐾 Science shows behaviours increase because they are positively reinforced

How do we get rid of behaviours we don't like?

- 🐾 Science shows behaviours decrease because of extinction
- 🐾 Science shows behaviours MAY decrease because of punishment (BUT there may be fallout as well and the result is not reliable)

Please note that throughout this orientation I am NOT using the word ‘punishment’ in the SCIENTIFIC sense but in the way commonly used in our culture.

How do we do that?

Science shows:

- 🐾 behaviour is a result of its consequence NOT what happened before (‘why does an Olympic sprinter run so fast?’)
- 🐾 AND the ANIMAL decides if the ‘consequence’ is good or bad (reading program story)

“What happened before” (antecedent)	Behaviour	“What happens after” (consequence)	End result
“sit”	Dog sits	Good things happen (Positive reinforcement)	Dog sits more often
See dog	Barking	Feels good to dog (positive reinforcement)	Dog barks more often 😊
See child	Child hugs dog	Doesn't feel good to dog (‘punishment’)	Dog avoids child
Desire for attention	Dog jumps on owner	Owner yells at dog (positive reinforcement)	Dog jumps more 😊 (got attention for jumping)
Desire for attention	Dog jumps on owner	Owner ignores dog (extinction)	Dog jumps less often 😞

We often think that a dog's behaviour is driven by our ‘commands’ but this is not true. Scientific principal of animal learning: ALL behaviour in ALL animals is a result of the consequences of that behaviour.

Dogs do what works for dogs..... (ie, what is reinforcing for them)

Walt Disney dogs are just that—Walt Disney creations.....NOT the way real dogs behave or think...and yet the myth permeates our culture

EVERY animal can be and are being trained with this method—lobsters, fish, elephants, cats, bears, whales, spiders, snakes, chickens, husbands, children, etc BECAUSE it follows the scientific principles of HOW ANIMALS LEARN

The Science of Animal Learning / Training in a NUTSHELL

Behaviour is built through reinforcement

Behaviour is maintained through reinforcement

(Better to reward Fido 20 times for an easy behaviour than to try 20 times to get a bigger behaviour and only reinforce 1 time)

Behaviour that is not reinforced will go away (or change)

(If you don't pay me, I may well stop working or at least be less enthusiastic about it.)

(If the pop machine stops delivering pop, I might try a few more times, then kick it a few times to see if that makes it deliver, then bang it a few times but eventually I will walk away and not try again)

The ANIMAL chooses WHAT is reinforcing and what is NOT reinforcing.

(YOU may like steak, but I much prefer chicken; please don't give me milk chocolate but I LOVE dark chocolate, especially if it's orange flavoured. The first time I get potato chips, I may love them but eating them 3 days in a row I find is a bit much.)

All animals have a hierarchy of their preferred reinforcements *(simplistically: preference for ball over Frisbee; preference for play over any food; preference for chocolate over hard candy; and same as above—although I like MOST chocolate, I prefer orange flavoured dark chocolate and milk chocolate is ok, but it means little to me—except if I'm tired, then I'll eat even milk chocolate)*

The animal will always perform the behaviour that is the most reinforcing at the time.

(I need to get home fast so I will speed even though it might cost me \$140; but if I have a baby in the car, I will just get home later. I know I should do my homework, but my friend is playing a computer game so I'm going to do that with her.)

People / trainers can become valuable to the animal by controlling access to things the animal finds reinforcing (food/play/habitat/freedom/other animals). *(If you controlled my access to all the dark chocolate in my life and all the computer games, I would keep trying to make sure we stayed on good terms)*

Some behaviours feel good to an animal and are therefore self reinforcing. *(you would need to pay me \$100 get me to jog but some people do it just because it feels good)*

A behaviour can become self-reinforcing through a long history of constant reinforcement. *(Give me \$10,000 for bungee jumping and after 25 jumps I might find that I LOVE the adrenaline rush of bungee jumping and now I'll do it for free)*

Clicker Training:

✿ Relies on **positive reinforcement**

✿ Uses a marker signal, often a clicker, to tell the animal when he does what you want. The clicker is like a camera “taking a picture” of the behavior you are training.

Key Points you need to know:

- ✳ The clicker is ONLY needed when teaching new behaviours
 - Once a cue is added, the clicker can be faded
- ✳ The clicker is not magic; it is just a means of **communication**
- ✳ The dog is an active participant in the training—**joint participation**: we think we are training the dog, the dog thinks he is training us to click—clicker training becomes reinforcing and pleasurable for both the animal and the trainer
 - The light bulb moment for the dog is amazing
- ✳ Clicker training promotes cooperation between the animal and the human
- ✳ One click = one treat
 - The click is a promise, so reinforce even if you accidentally clicked
- ✳ Keep the treat hand still until after the click
 - The physical movement of your hand will block the dog's ability to 'hear' the click; it dilutes the message
- ✳ Science confirms that marking a behaviour with the clicker is the most efficient way of training (faster and produces longer lasting results)
 - The click is 'salient', it stands out; your voice goes 'bla bla bla' all day)
 - The click has only one meaning to the dog—whatever I just did made her click...hurrah!!!!
 - You CAN use your voice ('yes') but it is less accurate AND carries a history of use and emotion

A trainer wants to teach his dog to sit. When the dog sits, the trainer clicks and gives the dog a treat. The click means "That behavior right there -- that's what I want!" and "A reward is coming." If the trainer clicks and treats every time the dog sits, the dog will soon figure out that sitting earns a treat and begin offering the sit more often. The trainer then adds a cue, "Sit," to the behavior. (video of Focus)

Can't you lure? You can but neuroscience shows that luring confuses food and thinking. Clicker training is a subset of all animal training and is based in the sciences of behaviourism (behaviour analysis), ethology (animal behaviour), and neuroscience. Can you punish? Yes, but the animal may 'learn' something different than what you think you are teaching.

How can we get behaviour?

Capturing – wait for it to happen – good for behaviors that dogs do automatically

Example: captured sit, yawn

Targeting – use the target to 'get' the dog into position

Example: targeted down, roll over

Shaping – rewarding ever-closer approximations of a desired behavior - this is the most powerful way to use a clicker....it's like playing the hot/cold game that we played as children

- Example: shaped down, heel, back up

Equipment:

Clickers--examples

Targets--examples

Treats--examples

Clicker training requires new muscle mechanics from you AND a new way of thinking

Practicing Clicker Mechanics

✦ Clicking and reinforcing are physical skills (you cannot take mechanical skills for granted....they require practice—hitting a baseball, playing a wii game)

✦ We have to practice them to:

- ✓ Treat delivery
- ✓ Get comfortable with the clicker
- ✓ Keep the treat hand still until after the click
- ✓ Practice observation skills
- ✓ Practice timing of the click

A word about Reinforcement

Had we used REAL reinforcement in our practice sessions, the partner would have been able to choose the reinforcement....what we think may be reinforcing to the dog, may not be.

- Make sure it is something your dog loves
- Make sure they are small and uniform in size

In class you WILL need something HUGELY smelly and lovely until your dog gets into the game with you, even in class.....YOU have to be more reinforcing that everything else out there!

So, when do I get to TELL the dog what to do?

We think in terms of 'cues' not commands.....we make sure that the behaviours we want have such a fabulous positive reinforcement history that the dog hears the 'cue' and thinks 'ha, maybe this is an opportunity to get what I want!!!'

A command implies: "do what I want, or else...."

Dogs don't come into our lives knowing English (or any other spoken language)

We need to 'get the behaviour' and then teach them the word for the behaviour they are doing....initially that word is totally irrelevant

- ✦ Do not add cues until the behavior is exactly what you want (example) and you can bet \$100 that the dog will perform the behavior
- ✦ Adding a cue to a behavior the dog is not predictably offering will desensitize the dog to the cue

There is NO PLACE for CORRECTION in the learning process....if the history of reinforcement is high enough, the dog WILL do what you ask, IF it can (we don't always 'go' at a green light...why not?)

BE CAREFUL:

Once a behavior is on cue, do not reinforce it when NOT requested (eg. You are working on backing up and you have started to put it on cue.....you have said nothing but you have taken a breathe and the dog offers to back up—DO NOT REINFORCE IT—you now ONLY reinforce WHEN you have asked for it)

Getting ready to work with your dog

- ✳ **HUNGRY DOG**
- ✳ **HAVE EVERYTHING READY—clicker/treats/plan**
- ✳ Quiet Space
- ✳ Treats—small/palatable/equally shaped
- ✳ Choose your criteria—define your goal and what's the first step
- ✳ Work for only 2-3 minutes at one time
- ✳ NEVER stop in the middle of training and talk to someone and ignore the dog (this is negative punishment to the dog—removing something the dog likes—and will DECREASE the behaviour—not what you want; AND, it's just plain RUDE to the dog.

In Zoomility, Grey Stafford states:

“[When you train using only positive reinforcement], the richer life you and your animal will experience together far outweighs any initial investment in time, patience, energy used to modify your OWN behaviour”

HOME FUN!!!!

- ✳ Capture Eye contact
- ✳ Shape your dog to target something (your hand, a wooden spoon, a paddle.....)

Want to Learn More?

Books/Videos/Websites that may interest you:

Clicker Training

- ✳ Karen Pryor: Reaching the Animal Mind
- ✳ Karen Pryor: Don't Shoot the Dog (revised edition)
- ✳ Karen Pryor: Getting Started: Clicker Training for Dogs
- ✳ Gail Fisher: The Thinking Dog
- ✳ Melissa Alexander: Click for Joy
- ✳ Pat Miller: Positive Perspectives 2
- ✳ Kay Laurence: Clicker Foundation Training Books (3)
- ✳ www.clickertraining.com (Karen Pryor's site)
- ✳ www.clickersolutions.com (Melissa Alexander's site)
- ✳ www.dragonflyllama.com (Sue Ailsby's site: has full obedience lesson plans called 'The Training Levels')

On Dogs and Dog Behaviour (must reads)

Jean Donaldson: The Culture Clash

Dr. Patricia McConnell: The Other End of the Leash

Love 2 Play Dog Training

www.love2play.ca

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CPDT-KA (certification of the council for professional dog trainers)

Karen Pryor Academy of Animal Training and Behaviour, Certified Training Partner

Things to remember (class):

- ✿ Please don't feed your dog before class
- ✿ Please allow your dog to relieve himself before class NOT on the building (and PICK UP!)
- ✿ Try not to exercise your dog excessively before it comes to class...it may be too tired to pay attention to you.
- ✿ If it is wet or snowy, please bring shoes and change at the door AND bring a towel to wipe your dog's feet as soon as you come into the building
- ✿ Bring LOTS of soft, yummy, smelly treats
- ✿ Think about what you WANT the dog to do (and be SPECIFIC), not what you DON'T want—ie, rather than “I want him to stop jumping up”, think “I want him to sit and stay seated when people approach” -- we can train behaviours; hard to train ‘not-behaviour’
- ✿ Keep sessions short, fun and positive—dogs can learn efficiently for about 5 minutes at a time—then let the dog have a play and a break in the crate
- ✿ Ask questions
- ✿ Be present with your dog the whole time you are with him/her—DON'T stop and talk to other while you have your dog out—it's just not fair!
- ✿ Make notes when you can, especially about where you are and what step is next, to make your practice time at home more efficient

Training at Home (practice)

- ✿ Work only for a short period of time—2 minutes 5-6 times a day is better than 15 minutes all at once (take the dog into another room during a commercial and train!)
- ✿ Remember...you don't gain muscles without exercising; you don't pass exams without studying—your dog will progress FASTER if you practice!
- ✿ Work when the dog is hungry-- work FOR meals
- ✿ IF you are worried about all the training making your dog fat, divide the food into 2 piles...use the first pile as training treats and anything left over give to the dog as part of his meal. OR if you are using high calorie treats, DON'T feed all of the dog's meal afterward (chicken breast is a low calorie treat but hard to use)
- ✿ Train when you are in a good mood—if you are in a bad mood, you may lack patience and do more harm than good
- ✿ ALWAYS reinforce (reward/treat) your dog at this point
- ✿ **ALWAYS use praise as well**...we want the dog to link the food and the praise, so that the praise is eventually highly valued like the food is now
- ✿ ALWAYS train with your dog on a leash, but step on it, don't hold it!
- ✿ Train in a QUIET place, away from other animals and children playing
- ✿ ALWAYS end your training sessions on a good note....the dog needs to remember how much fun it had
- ✿ Stop while the dog is wanting MORE
- ✿ Make sure you use your Release word—the dog should stay in a position until YOU release it. Release the dog from working time.