

**AUTUMN 2010**

# Association of Pet Dog Trainers New Zealand Inc

## Newsletter

### President's comment

Hi Everyone,

Time flies when you are busy! I am sure it is the same for all of you. Thanks to the editor for another great newsletter.

The organisation is steadily growing as the word about the APDTNZ gets out there; we now have 45 members.

Your committee is busy crossing the t's and dotting the i's for the inaugural conference. Our AGM will be held on Saturday 6th June at 5.30pm and I encourage as many members as possible to attend.

One of the functions of the conference is the opportunity to network with likeminded people from New Zealand and Australia, to share ideas and find solutions.

We hope you can all be there and I personally look forward to meeting old friends and making new ones!

Looking further ahead, we would like to see some regional events happening. If you have any ideas let me know, otherwise watch this space!

That's all from me, enjoy the newsletter and enjoy your dog(s)!

*Susie Londer*

**APDT NZ Mission statement:** *To promote human-dog relationships of understanding and trust by offering education in canine behaviour and effective, up to date, dog friendly training methods and skills.*

**APDT NZ Vision statement:** *All dogs are effectively trained through dog friendly techniques and therefore are lifelong companions in a relationship based on mutual respect and trust.*

Association of Pet Dog Trainers - New Zealand Inc.  
“Smarter Trainers, Better Dogs”

Conference 2010

In association with Masterpet with support from Bayer New Zealand and Wellington City Council  
Queen’s Birthday weekend (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> June), Brentwood Hotel, Wellington

Great presentations by Prof Kevin Stafford of Massey University and our international guests Debra Millikan and Karin Bridge

Come listen and learn more about training dogs and people in more effective ways! Information, demos and some great bargains available at the trade show!

A unique chance to exchange ideas with fellow dog enthusiasts!

Come meet old friends and make new ones!

**Remember early bird registration closes on 31<sup>st</sup> March.**

Register now and don’t miss your chance to attend the premier dog trainer’s event of the year at the special value rate of \$145 members and \$180 non-members.

[www.apdt.org.nz](http://www.apdt.org.nz)

## Editorial

There has been a lot of negative press about dogs over the last few weeks and months. I often find myself 'blaming' the people involved. For example, it seems that often attacks happen to children who are inappropriately supervised.

At our club we train at an unfenced off lead dog park. The neighbourhood would be a very low decile if it was a school. We regularly have primary school age or younger children coming up to pat or attempt to tease dogs on foot, on bikes or on skateboards. There is never a responsible adult in sight. It falls to the club instructors and the handlers to protect the dogs from the children and to try and impart some degree of knowledge of and respect for four legged beings in these children.

However, very rarely do caregivers or parents come in for questions or criticism about their role or lack thereof when an attack occurs. The media seems to be afraid to ask questions which may in any way imply a lack of responsibility on the part of the victims or families as a contributing factor. The fault is always the dog's.

A recent 'Next' magazine article featured Carolina Anderson and her father asking for the current dog control laws to not be relaxed. This is probably just the start of lobbying for no change or more stringent laws as the proposed review of the dog control legislation starts towards to end of this year.

We need to be vigilant and to speak up on behalf of responsible dog owners and good dogs who are

penalised by the current legislation. The APDT NZ must have a political voice and be proactive in suggesting and responding to amendments. While the NZKC may represent a wide range of dog owners and activities we have a very specific role I believe to represent the majority of dog owners- those that have dogs as part of their families and as 'just' pets.

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## Notices

### Membership renewal

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the 2010-11 financial year are due for payment at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. Membership forms are downloadable from the APDT NZ website. Payment can be made by Cheque and posted with the form to the Membership Secretary, or direct deposited to the APDT NZ Westpac bank account number 03-1503-0398799-00 with your full name in the reference field for identification.

If we do not receive this information we will not know that you have paid your membership

## 2010 Conference

Please Note: Members must be current financial members to be eligible for the 2010 Conference early bird registration fee. Early bird registrations close on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. Mail must be postmarked on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and direct deposits must be noted on our bank statement on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. Any registrations postmarked / on bank statement after 31<sup>st</sup> March will not be valid and will be liable for late registration fee of \$180

## Change to Newsletter delivery.

APDT NZ will now post hard copies to members who wish to have them in the format at no extra cost. However email remains our preferred and default delivery method. You will need to indicate on the membership form or notify the editor if you wish to receive a hard copy.

## Logo competition

Watch the website for logo's to be voted on. Votes can be handed in at the conference or if you are not attending it can be sent to the membership co-ordinator Jo Thorne. The winning logo will be announced at the conference and one lucky person will be drawn out of the entries to win a prize.

## Save the date!!

APDT Australia Annual Conference  
29-31 October  
Bankstown Sports Club, Sydney  
Featuring  
Ken Ramirez and Steve White  
Australian speakers to be announced

Association of Pet Dog Trainers NZ  
Inc. 2010 conference:

5 & 6th June  
Brentwood Hotel, 16 Kemp Street,  
Kilbirnie, Wellington

Susan Friedman and Ray Coppinger:  
7 - 11 July 2010

Dr Patricia McConnell :27 & 28 Nov.  
2010

Leslie McDevitt : March 2011

Contact: :  
<http://www.learningaboutdogs.co.nz>

## Learning Theory - Article 3 Nature vs. Nature & What is Learning

By Susan Smith

*Susan Smith's business ,Animal Ed, a Raising Canine Company, ([www.animal-ed.com](http://www.animal-ed.com) ), provides remote education opportunities for animal behavior consultants, as well as business and marketing products to help their*

*businesses, including an intensive course for beginning dog trainers. Sue is also the co-author of the book "Positive Gun Dogs: Clicker Training for Sporting Breeds." Sue is certified through CCPDT, IAABC and the San Francisco SPCA. She is an ex-Board member for the CCPDT, an active, professional member of the APDT, former Chair of the APDT Member Relations & Communications Committee, moderates the APDT list discussion group and was named APDT Member of the Year in 2004.*

Each time I sit down to write this column, I want to get right to the nitty gritty of learning concepts. But, each time this happens, something important to understanding learning holds me back! We've talked about science – what it is and what it isn't; and, we've talked about the usefulness of a common terminology. Today, it occurred to me that a brief discussion of nature and nurture is necessary before we can really get into the specifics of learning concepts.

We've all heard the arguments regarding nature and nurture. The pendulum of opinion keeps swinging back and forth, back and forth. The truth is, it's both! Always has been, always will be.

Different disciplines of science tend to focus on something specific – for instance behaviorists tend to focus on how the environment influences behavior while biologists tend to

focus on how genetics influence behavior. But all good behaviorists and biologists understand that environment and genetics are intertwined and you cannot separate one from the other. We are products of our genetics and our environment. We may be genetically disposed to behave in certain ways, but it's unlikely we'll do so without an environmental stimulus of some kind to elicit the behavior; and the likelihood of that behavior recurring will depend on the consequence of the behavior, which is often environmental. And, of course, there are certain behaviors that specific animals will never do because they are not biologically designed to do so – for instance, pigs will never fly!

In February I hosted a Ray Coppinger seminar and was privileged to have both Dr. Coppinger and Dr. Susan Friedman stay at my house. The discussions were fascinating and of course, they both love to debate their side of the issue (ethologist vs. behaviorist). However, when push came to shove, they both agreed that the animal's phenotype sets parameters for the behaviors the environment elicits. Of course Dr. Coppinger places more emphasis on biology, because that's his area of expertise; and, Dr. Friedman emphasizes the environment, because that's her area of expertise. But neither of them is so naïve that they do not understand the importance of the other person's knowledge and they both have a better-than-average understanding of the other's area of expertise!

According to Paul Chance (Learning & Behavior, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., pg 27) "Someone has said that asking, 'Which is more important in determining behavior, heredity or environment?' is like

asking, 'Which is more important in determining the area of a rectangle, width or length?'" The two are inextricably intertwined and trying to separate them will not serve any particular purpose.


In fact, when we try to pigeonhole or limit behavior, we are seriously underestimating the beauty and efficiency of nature and are doing ourselves a great disservice. The beauty of nature is that we are designed to adapt to changing circumstances. When the environment changes (and it does, all the time), our behavior changes.

One thing we must keep in mind, though, is that learned behavior is not heritable. For instance, if you live in the city and have a dog that is very street-wise, and that dog has a puppy that is raised in the country, that pup will not be more street-wise, nor become street-wise more quickly, than other pups. That is strictly learning based on experience and is not passed down to offspring.

This brings us to the definition of learning: "Learning is a change in behavior based on experience." This is the most common definition, however I actually prefer "learning is a change in behavior over time, based on experience." Those who study behavior know that when assessing whether or not learning has taken place, it is actually the rate of behavior that they are measuring. Because rate of behavior takes place over a given period of time,, for those of us who are not so entrenched in the science of learning, it can help to add in those words "over time" to distinguished a learned behavior from a one-time action.

To sum up, learning is a change in behavior based on experience, and it is a combination of genetics and environment that set the stage for learning. We cannot separate genetics and environment when assessing learning

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## Book and DVD reviews

The following reviews were provided by Maggie Marshall, K9 Puppy Kindergarten NZ

I was approached by two young mums-to-be, who both have Rottweiler dogs at home, asking for advice on preparing their dogs for their new babes. After looking on the net I found "Your Dog and Your Baby" by Sylvia Hartmann-Kent. I also found the Legacy Canine Behaviour and Training CD by Terry Ryan (see reviews below)

**Your Dog and Your Baby - A Practical Guide by Sylvia Hartmann-Kent**

(ISBN 1-888994-13-4) Third revised edition.

As John Fisher quotes in the foreword of Your Dog and Your Baby:

“The emphasis is on prevention. The guide encourages parents to anticipate problems, and suggest ways of guarding against them”.

Hartmann-Kent was born in Germany, moved to GB in 1979 and her first edition of Your Dog and Your Baby was written when she was a member of the British Institute of Professional Dog Trainers, Associate Member of Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors and Senior Obedience Instructor with Berwick Obedience Association. This was also just after the home birth of her second son.

This 100 page book has heaps of useful advice for mums and dads-to-be. Articles cover such issues as handling, food, toys, sleeping places and sleeping arrangements, before the birth, first meeting, hygiene, safety, training and lots more. The last chapter deals with decisions that may have to be made should your dog not be suitable for retraining to cope with a new baby in the home. Practical solutions are offered and dealt with sympathetically.

Appendix one covers basic training including practicing walking with a pram or stroller. The tricks and games ideas can give family and friends a fun way to interact with the dog as well as provide entertainment for the children.

Appendix two covers the check list “Is My Dog Safe?” Very helpful for pinpointing areas where further training may be required.

Appendix three covers home birth. This is a very important part of preparing pet dogs for the new arrival as Hartmann-Kent was able to explain from her own experience.

Appendix four advises on getting further help and further reading.

Every section has an action plan that helps to understand the issue being discussed and how to implement training. The book is filled with appropriate cartoon illustrations by ZAK. All in all a great book for mums and dads-to-be as well as for the trainers who are helping them train their dogs.

**Sounds Good CD “Babies” - Legacy Canine Behaviour and Training by Terry Ryan**

This is a fantastic CD that every mum and dad-to-be should have for desensitising their dog to baby noises when the new baby arrives. I tried it out with my dogs and found it a very worthwhile exercise. Using this CD in conjunction with Your Dog and Your Baby booklet, families can prepare their dogs to meet the new addition with calmness and trust. The right kind of preparation eliminates the stress and worry of bringing a new babe into the home where perhaps the dog has, up to then, been the couples only ‘baby’.

Three months ago Beryl’s son was born. Beryl showed off her new son to me and told me how great “Your Dog and Your Baby” book and “Babies” sounds CD has been for the family. Jess (the Rottweiler) has

adjusted extremely well to the new addition to the family. Mum, Dad, two older brothers, Mitchell (new son) and Jess are all doing fine in a very happy home environment.

## **Lure-Reward Training.**

**By Dr Ian Dunbar**

(reprinted from Chronicle of the Dog July/august 2006 with permission of the author)

In pet dog training, there is an endless quest for the quickest, the easiest, most enjoyable and most expedient route to produce equipment free and gizmo-free response reliability.

Recently, some trainers have criticized luring, stating that dogs are trained "better" if they have not been lured. This, of course, is learning theory heresy. Behaviour is consequence driven, not antecedent driven. By tautological definition, once a dog has been trained to criterion, he's been trained to criterion. A dog is not trained better depending on whether he's trained or not. If he's trained, he's trained and if not, he's not.

However the choice of training technique will have a huge influence on 'time and trials to criterion.' As the quickest and one of the simplest of all training techniques, lure/reward training is the technique of choice for most owners to teach their dog basic manners. For behaviour modification and temperament training food lure/reward training should be mandatory. There is extreme urgency to prevent and resolve

behaviour problems. Simple behaviour problems such as house soiling, destructive chewing, and excessive barking, kill dogs. Time is of the essence. Similarly, fighting, biting and fearful dogs are hardly happy or safe to be around and so there is simply no time to mess around with time consuming techniques. We must resolve the dog's problems, relieve their chronic, yet acute, stress levels, and improve their quality of life using the most time efficient methods available.

Other techniques are championed in other specialist training fields, wherein the syllabus is finite and the trainer knows the rules and questions (criteria) before the examination and especially, when time is not an issue- knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated trainers will train for hours to perfect a desired behaviour. However pet dog training differs markedly from teaching competition or working dogs, from training marine animals, and from computers autoshaping rats and pigeons in laboratories. With pet dog training, the questions are unknown and the syllabus is infinite- comprising all aspects of a dog's (and owner's) behaviour, temperament, and training. But the most important difference- owners are not dog trainers; they seldom have the trainer's education, interest, dedication, experience or expertise.

Trainers should never underestimate their own expertise. Characteristically, techniques that we recommend for owners to train their dogs are entirely different (easier, quicker and less



complicated) than techniques that we might use to train our dogs.

In pet dog training, the two most expedient techniques are lure/reward training and all or none reward training. This article will describe a comprehensive lure/reward training programme, which comprises five stages:

I. Teaching The Dog What We Want Him To Do

II. Teaching The Dog To Want To Do What We Want Him To Do

III. Enforcing Compliance without Fear or Force

IV. Refining Performance Precision and Pizzazz

V. Protecting Performance Reliability and Precision

The first three steps focus on establishing response reliability and are all-important in all fields of dog training. The last two steps- for refining precision and for protecting precision and reliability - are primarily for obedience, working, and demo dogs and will only be summarised in this article.

### **Teaching The Dog What We Want Him To Do**

Stage I involves completely phasing out food lures as they are first replaced by hand signals (hand lures) and then eventually by requests (verbal lures).

Given the prospect of the plethora of rewarding consequences for appropriate behaviour, most dogs would gladly respect our wishes and follow our instructions, if only they could understand what we were asking. In a sense, Stage I involves teaching dogs ESL- English as a Second Language- teaching dogs the

meaning of the human words that we use for instructions. Dogs need to be taught words for their body actions (sit, down, stand etc.), places (bed, car, inside, outside etc.), and people (e.g. Mum, dad, Jamie, etc.).

The basic training sequence is always the same:

1. Request
2. Lure
3. Response
4. Reward

This simple sequence is all that there is to the “science” of lure/reward training. After just half a dozen repetitions, the food lure is no longer necessary because the dog will respond to the hand-lure movement (hand signal). After twenty or so repetitions (with a half a second interval between the request and the hand signal), the dog will begin to anticipate the signal on hearing the request i.e., respond immediately after the request but before the hand signal. The hand signal is no longer necessary, since the dog has now learned the meaning of the verbal request.

The “art” of lure/reward training very much depends on the trainer’s choice of and effective use of an effective lure. The lure can be any item or action that reliably causes the dog to respond appropriately. Obviously, the trainer and the trainer’s body movements are the very best lures (and rewards), with interactive toys coming a close second. However, for pet dog owners, food is generally the best choice for both lures and rewards. Again, pet owners are not yet dog trainers, but they need to train their dog right away using the easiest and quickest technique.

Food lures should not be used for more than a half dozen trials. The prolonged use of the same item as both lures and rewards comes pretty close to bribing – wherein the dog's response will become contingent on whether or not the owner has food in her hand. Either completely go cold turkey on food lures after just six trials, or use different items as lures and rewards. For example, use food to lure the dog to a sit but a tennis ball retrieve as a reward. Or, use a hand signal to lure the sit but an invitation to the couch as a reward. Regardless of what you choose as lures and rewards, always commence each sequence with the verbal request.

For pet owners, dry kibble is the standard choice for both lures and rewards. Weigh out the daily ration each morning and keep it in a screw-top jar to be handfed as lures and rewards in the course of the day. Freeze-dried liver is reserved for special uses: rewards for housetraining, lures for kongs, lures for shush, occasional lures and rewards for men and children to use, and for classical conditioning (to children, men, other dogs, motorcycle s and other scary stuff).

### **Teaching the Dog to Want To Do What We Want Him To Do**

Stage II involves phasing out the training rewards as they are first replaced by life rewards and then eventually by auto-reinforcement. Just because a dog “knows” what we want him to do does not mean to say the he will necessarily do it.

Puppy responses are pretty predictable and reliable; but with the advent of adolescence, most dogs become more independent and

quickly develop competing interests, many of which become distractions to training. Given the choice between coming when called and sniffing another dog's rear end, most adolescent dogs would choose the latter.

To maintain response reliability, all of the dog's hobbies and competing interests must be used as rewards. Training must be completely integrated into the dog's lifestyle. Training should comprise: short preludes before every enjoyable doggy activity (a la Premack) and numerous short interludes within every enjoyable long-term doggy activity. For example, the dog should be requested to sit before the owner puts on the leash, opens the back door, opens the car door, takes off the leash, throws a tennis ball, takes back to tennis ball, allows the dog to greet another dog or person, or offers a couch invitation or tummy rub. And of course, the dog should sit before the owner serves supper. Additionally, walks should be interrupted every 15 seconds for a brief training interlude, (e.g., random position changes with variable length stays). Each interruption allows the resumption of walk or play to be used again as a life reward. As a cautionary note, if walks and play are not frequently interrupted, the puppy/adolescent will quickly learn to pull on leash and no doubt become an uncontrollable social loon or bully.

Food rewards are no longer necessary for reliable performance, but it is smart to occasionally offer kibble rewards prior to life rewards during training preludes and interludes, so that the presentation (and eating) of kibble (an average

value primary reinforcer) becomes a mega secondary reinforcer. Supercharged kibble is useful when teaching subsequent exercises.

The ultimate goal in dog training is for the response to become the reward so that the dog becomes internally motivated and the response is auto-reinforced. This is similar to what happens when people are effectively taught to play tennis, dance, or ski; external rewards are no longer necessary.

### **Enforcing Compliance Without Fear Or Force.**

Stage III involves teaching the dog that he must always respond promptly and appropriately by enforcing compliance without fear or force.

Just because a dog really really really wants to do what we want him to do does not mean to say that he will always do it. Internally motivated dogs usually have response reliabilities of around 90%. I have always thought that dogs are pure existentialists- they revel in the here and now- and that squirrel, that dog's rear end, or that little boy on a skateboard is right here, right now. In a flash reliability goes down the toilet.

There are times when a dog simply must follow instructions to the letter. A pet dog requires an ultra-reliable emergency sit or down, a rock solid stay, and respect for doorway or curb side boundaries. Once we have used just about every conceivable life reward under the sun to internally motivate the dog to want to comply, we must also teach the dog that there are instances when he must comply.

In all the fields of dog training, enforcing compliance is the most misunderstood science to a religion and some trainers express emotional extremes. Some trainers hold a view that compliance must be enforced by physical (often painful) punishments, such as leash corrections or electric shock. Other trainers abhor the use of positive punishment and negative reinforcement. And yet other trainers even eschew the use of negative punishment and no reward markers, deeming them too stressful.

Regardless of where any trainer lies on the continuum of relative use of rewards and punishments:

1. Minor stressors are essential during early development for an animal to develop confidence as an adult, and certainly to develop sufficient confidence to live with humans. Learning, training and development are often stressful. Adolescence is extremely stressful. It's a simple fact of life.
2. It is essential to consider, "What to do when plan A fails? What to do when the dog dashes out of the front door and into the street to chase the boy on the skateboard? What is the plan B and Plan C?"
3. For the dogs safety, compliance must be enforced to raise the response-reliability to 95% ( within two seconds after a single command) and to 100% (following plan B or C).

Compliance may be effectively enforced without fear or force. Technically, a punishment decreases the immediately preceding behaviour. A punishment need not be physical, painful, scary, aversive,

or unpleasant. Most important, punishments need to be effective (another tautology), instructive and immediate, yet not overbearing.

Personally, I dislike using any gizmo or permanent management tool. Instead, I like to rely on the things that are always readily available: voice (for requests/commands, praise and instructive reprimands), food and toys (as lures and rewards), and hands (for rewards and control). In those instances when the dog does not respond following a single command, the dog will eventually respond (100% of the time) after any number of instructive reprimands delivered in a negative reinforcement format (see 'On using Instructive Reprimands' at the end of this article).

Once a dog has been trained (exclusively via positive reinforcement) to 90% reliability, whenever it fails to respond within two seconds, I instructively reprimand the dog. The volume of the instructive reprimand is lower than normal and the tone is soft and sweet yet insistent. Once the dog sits, for example, I say "thank you" and then the dog has to immediately repeat the exercise to meet the original criteria. Once the dog sits within two seconds of a single request, I praise the dog, offer a couple of treats, and say, "go play". If the dog does not sit following the instructive reprimand, the instructive reprimand is repeated in a negative reinforcement format until the dog complies, whereupon the dog has to immediately repeat the exercise and meet criteria, before "life as the dog knows it" continues once more.

Recently I have been working with a level IV biter (deep punctures of more than half the length of the canine tooth, with lacerations and/or slashes in both directions from the puncture). I elected to take the case because the owners are responsible and complaint and will crate the dog when visitors come to the house, but they desperately want to normalise the relationship with the dog. By my fourth visit, the wife had learned how to keep the dog in a long-term settle-down on his mat (for five and a half hours), while she cooked dinner and went about other household duties (and her husband observed in awe). In the course of the five and a half hours the dog briefly left his mat a total of 22 times. Each time, the wife instructed "Rover go to your mat, go to your mat, go to your mat." Her voice was always soft, sweet, and insistent. As soon as the dog returned to his mat and lay down, she praised. Periodically, she would visit, praise and reward the dog for lying on his mat. At no time during the procedure did the dog display any obvious behavioural or psychological concomitants of stress, even though we were using occasional positive punishment and negative reinforcement in conjunction with copious positive reinforcement. On the contrary, the owner is regaining control and the dog is being integrated into family living. I have videotaped this session to show at the upcoming APDT educational conference in Kansas City. Positive punishment and negative reinforcement can be sweet and soft, yet extremely effective.

I seldom recommend negative punishment because doing so often

allows the dog to getaway without responding appropriately.

### **Refining Performance Precision and Pizzazz.**

Once response-reliability tops 95%, it is time to shape and differentially reinforce performance precision and pizzazz. For example, fronts and finishes and stays are refined by improving attention, expression and exact location (forwards/backwards, closer/away etc.) and body position) e.g., five types of down stay). Recalls are progressively accelerated and heeling is finetuned by teaching speed up and slow-down.

### **Protecting Performance Reliability and Precision.**

Stage V requires a substantial time-commitment and so it is essential to 'protect' the dog's superior performance. Snazzy obedience is quickly destroyed when obedience commands- most commonly 'heel' and 'down' are used to control the dog in stressful situations e.g., around dodgy dogs or people. Much worse is when obedience commands are misused by family and friends. For example, when a husband instructs five dogs to "sit stay" at the front door, when admitting three buddies for pizza, beers or while watching televised sports. One dog barks, one dog jumps up, one dog gooses the guest, one dog lies down (knowing that husbands don't know the difference), and one dog sit stays... and is forgotten. When the obedient dog eventually breaks his sit stay and creeps into the living room, he is rewarded by laughter and pizza.

Training is best protected by having three command levels: DogCon one, DogCon two, and DogCon three. The

dog is given a different cue, or perhaps easier-a different name for each command level: an informal pet name, a formal name, and a competition working/demo name respectively. The choice of name informs the dog which level of obedience is required: the pet name prefix signifies a mere suggestion (which may be ignored) the formal name prefix requires 100% reliability, and the demo name calls for ultimate reliability, precision, and pizzazz. It's showtime!

The notion of allowing a dog to ignore a command used to shock trainers. But this is what happens most of the time around the home, anyway; giving commands and not enforcing the dog's response is the major reason why reliability goes downhill. By acknowledging and formalising "disobedience" and allowing a dog to ignore pet-name suggestions, we can better protect formal name reliability. All we have to remember is that on those occasions when we use the formal-name prefix, we must insist on 100% compliance.

As T.S Eliot might have said, "A dog requires three different names.

### **On Using Instructive Reprimands**

When communicating with dog owners, I use the term "punishment-training simply to mean, using punishments when training- most usually short-duration punishments but occasionally, long-duration punishment and negative reinforcement), adhering to the eight criteria (see 'Eight Criteria for the Effective Use of Punishment in Pet Dog Training', in Chronicle of the Dog, July August 2006) and preferably, predominantly using

well-timed, soft and sweet instructive reprimands. Similarly, I use the term “reward-training” simply to mean, using rewards when training- most usually short-duration rewards but occasionally long-duration rewards (positive reinforcement and negative punishment), adhering to similar criteria for the use of rewards, and almost entirely using soft and sweet praise and mega life-rewards.

The use of punishment-training and reward-training are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the vast majority of pet dog trainers occasionally use punishment-training after first teaching the dog via reward training.

Obviously, the time is long overdue for pet dog trainers to completely and urgently revise the ridiculously ambiguous and emotionally inflammatory terminology of learning theory.

## **Dr Ian Dunbar –Auckland Seminar Review by Helen Reynolds**

(Cert. Principles of Canine Behaviour; Qualified Assistance Dog Instructor; Vice-chair and Disciplinary Committee Co-Ordinator APDTNZ).

February 2010, saw the return of Dr. Ian Dunbar, PhD, BVetMed, MRCVS, CPDT to the shores of New Zealand for a three day conference in Auckland, followed by a further three day conference in Christchurch.

Dr Ian Dunbar is the founder of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, a world renowned Vet, Animal

Behaviorist and Dog Trainer. This is his second trip to New Zealand, and Conference topics in Auckland included Aggression, Constraints on Learning and Raising the Bar in Dog Training.

The Conference was well attended and a new venue, also got the thumb’s up from me. It was great to see Lecturers from Waikato University in attendance as well as some Vets in addition to many new faces that did not attend the first Conference a few years ago.

Dr Ian Dunbar again, provided lots of entertainment as well as inspiring us with knowledge that included new material. On a personal level I would have like to have seen some visual aids used as it is very difficult ‘listening’ for 3 days. In addition I was also again disappointed that conference notes were not supplied. Again this is a matter of personal preference and did not detract that I thoroughly enjoyed the Conference, but a worthy point to note.

Overall I came away from the Conference with lots of new ideas and re-energized.

I made a conscious effort to meet new people and came away with some great contacts as well as feedback on the APDTNZ. A thoroughly enjoyable three days and money well spent.

## **Interview with Simon Goodall**

Simon is an APDTNZ committee member and owner of DogGuru: a New Zealand wide dog training and behaviour company that provides dog training with private training

and classes. They also work with aggression and separation anxiety issues. Dog Guru uses only humane methods and don't use choker chains or any harsh punishment methods like alpha rolls. They like to use positive methods as the first port of call for all training then may use other techniques like ignoring, walking away etc.

**Can you tell us about your current involvement with dogs both at work and at home?**

I have owned Dog Guru for nine years now after studying some dog training down at Massey. Dog Guru has 14 staff around the country all at different levels of training and experience. I live in Papakura, have been married for eight years and have two young children and two golden retrievers (and one cat).

**Who are your family dogs and how did you come to have them in your family?**

We currently have Luccas a three year old golden retriever. I actually got him off one of my clients who could no longer look after him. I also have Oska an eight year old golden retriever who we have had since a puppy. He just had those lovely eyes!

**Can you tell us about your first dog - a golden retriever called Shaan.** Shaan was great and I remember thinking with the training how strange it was that we had to tell him off severely when he did not come back. Needless to say his behaviour was quite naughty. Since then I loved dogs and started off in vet but quickly found this was not my calling so moved into looking at dog training. A lot of my initial positive techniques were trialled out on him [Shaan].

**Have your jobs always involved working with dogs?**

I have worked since coming away from University with dogs so don't know much different. In the first two years I worked with special needs people but dogs are my passion and my life. Knowing they have a soul and having lost a few dogs I know how they affect you.

**When did you decide to make working with dogs your full time occupation and how did you go about putting the idea into practice?**

I always had the mind to make it a full time profession but was constantly told it was almost impossible. I started off doing more research and dog walking. Over this time I met regularly with vets to get ideas and then started the dog training side of the business a year later. Five years ago I sold off the dog walking part of the business and focused entirely on dog training and behaviour.

**What would you consider to be important in making a successful career working with dogs?**

I think the passion has to always be there and realize that you do have to be a people person. There is no point just being good with dogs, if you don't get on with people this job is not for you. It is also important to keep training and up skilling. The biggest advantage of being successful is that I can travel anywhere in the world to learn about dog training and afford to do it. It does not mean everything I go to is how I am going to train my dogs but there is no point being ignorant when speaking to people and clients.

**There is a lot controversy in the**

**dog world over training techniques. How do you respond to clients who come to you with very different philosophies or ideas on training?**

I think if you tell them why the technique won't work you have started off in a negative light. The first rule at Dog Guru is respect your competitors and their methods. Of course I definitely care if they yank their dogs, shock them and yell and scream at them. But I am not there to judge, I am there to advise and put across my methods as an alternative. Our clients come to us knowing our methods and we always make sure they are on board and comfortable with the techniques. If someone is not comfortable with what we are doing they can leave.

**What are the top three books would you recommend to beginner dog trainers and why?**

1. Other end of the leash [by Patricia McConnell]. A good introduction into dog training.

2. Any book from Caesar Millan. While I don't use his methods it is important to know what he is doing so you know what people are talking about when they have tried his methods. There is no way you can judge a person's methods if you don't know them. Almost every one of our clients has read his books and viewed his videos.

3. Chicken Soup for the pet owners soul. I realize this may not help you with dog training methods but you start to realize that when people talk about their pets that they have souls and that people will do anything for their pets. Realize this and you will go far. If you are just in it to make money become a lawyer.

(PS I loved this last statement – Ed.)

## **Website Review**

**American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB)**

<http://www.avsabonline.org/avsabonline/>

This website has a range of resources including the following position statement which we have been given permission to reprint. The other position statements on punishment and socialisation will follow in subsequent newsletters. The PDF versions of the position statements can be downloaded are well set out. I have laminated and used them for display at various events.

This site has articles, book reviews, information on the management of behavior problems as well as archived newsletters. It also has links to other excellent resources.

### **AVSAB**

#### **Position statement on the use of dominance theory in behavior modification of animals**

AVSAB is concerned with the recent re-emergence of dominance theory and forcing dogs and other animals into submission as a means of preventing and correcting behavior problems. For decades, some traditional animal training has relied on dominance theory and has assumed that animals misbehave primarily because they are striving for higher rank. This idea often leads



trainers to believe that force or coercion must be used to modify these undesirable behaviors.

In the last decades, our understanding of dominance theory and of the behavior of domesticated animals and their wild counterparts has grown considerably, leading to updated views. To understand how and whether to apply dominance theory to behavior in animals, it's imperative that one first has a basic understanding of the principles.

### **Definition of Dominance**

Dominance is defined as a relationship between individual animals that is established by force/aggression and submission, to determine who has priority access to multiple resources such as food, preferred resting spots, and mates (Berstein 1981; Drews 1993). A dominance-submissive relationship does not exist until one individual consistently submits or defers. In such relationships, priority access exists primarily when the more dominant individual is present to guard the resource. For instance, in a herd comprised of several bulls and many cows, the subordinate males avoid trying to mate when the dominant bull is near or they defer when the dominant bull approaches (Yin 2009). However, they will mate with females when the dominant bull is far away, separated by a barrier or out of visual sight. By mating in this manner, subordinate bulls are not challenging the dominant bull's rank; rather they are using an alternate strategy for gaining access to mates.

In our relationships with our pets, priority access to resources is not the major concern. The majority of

behaviors owners want to modify, such as excessive vocalization, unruly greeting and failure to come when called, are not related to valued resources and may not even involve aggression. Rather, these behaviors occur because they have been inadvertently rewarded and because alternate appropriate behaviors have not been trained instead. Consequently, what owners really want is not to gain dominance, but to obtain the ability to influence their pets to perform behaviors willingly-which is one accepted definition of leadership (Knowles and Saxberg 1970; Yin 2009).

### **Applying Dominance Theory to Human-Animal interactions can pose problems.**

Even in the relatively few cases where aggression is related to rank, applying animal social theory and mimicking how animals would respond can pose a problem. First, it can cause one to use punishment, which may suppress aggression without addressing the underlying cause. Because fear and anxiety are common causes of aggression and other behavior problems, including those that mimic resource guarding, the use of punishment can directly exacerbate the problem by increasing the animal's fear or anxiety (AVSAB 2007).

Second, it fails to recognize that with wild animals, dominance-submissive relationships are reinforced through warning postures and ritualistic dominance and submissive displays. If the relationship is stable, then the submissive animal defers automatically to the dominant individual. If the relationship is less stable, the dominant individual has a more aggressive personality, or the

dominant individual is less confident about its ability to maintain a higher rank, continued aggressive displays occur (Yin 2007, Yin 2009).

People who rely on dominance theory to train their pets may need to regularly threaten them with aggressive displays or repeatedly use physical force. Conversely, pets subjected to threats or force may not offer submissive behaviors. Instead they may react with aggression, not because they are trying to be dominant but because the human threatening them makes them afraid.

Third, in the wild, even in dominance-submissive relationships that are well established, the relationship lasts only as long as the higher ranking individual is strong enough to retain this rank. Thus, high rank may be short-lived in both human-animal and animal-animal relationships.

### **The Standard of Care**

The AVSAB emphasizes that the standard of care for veterinarians specializing in behavior is that dominance theory should not be used as a general guide for behavior modification. Instead, the AVSAB emphasizes that behavior modification and training should focus on reinforcing desirable behaviors, avoiding the reinforcement of undesirable behaviors, and striving to address the underlying emotional state and motivations, including medical and genetic factors, that are driving the undesirable behavior.

### **How leadership differs from dominance**

The AVSAB clarifies that dominance and leadership are not synonymous. In the human related fields of business management and sociology, where leadership is studied extensively, leadership is defined broadly by some as “the process of influencing activities of an individual or group to achieve a certain objective in a given situation” (Dubrin 1990, in Barker 1997). Despite this definition, which includes influence through coercion, scholars in these fields recommend against the use of coercion and force to attempt to gain leadership (Benowitz 2001). Coercion and force generate passive resistance, tend to require continual pressure and direction from the leader, and are usually not good tactics for getting the best performance for a team (Benowitz 2001). Additionally those managers who rule through coercive power (the ability to punish) “most often generate resistance which may lead workers to deliberately avoid carrying out instructions or to disobey orders” (Benowitz 2001).

Similarly with pets, leadership should be attained by more positive means- rewarding appropriate behaviors and using desired resources as reinforcers for these behaviors. Leadership is established when a pet owner can consistently set clear limits for behavior and effectively communicate the rules by immediately rewarding the correct behaviors and preventing access to or removing rewards for undesirable behaviors before these undesirable behaviors are reinforced. Owners must avoid reinforcing undesirable behaviors and simply reinforce the desirable

behaviors frequently enough for the good behaviors to become a habit (Yin 2007).

Finally AVSAB points out that while aggression between both domestic and wild animals can be related to the desire to attain higher rank and thus priority access to resources, there are maybe other causes. These are discussed in detail in multiple veterinary behavior textbooks (please see [www.avsabonline.org](http://www.avsabonline.org) for helpful articles). Consequently, dominance should not be automatically presumed to be the cause of such conflicts, especially when the conflict occurs within a human household. Instead, a thorough medical and behavioral assessment should be conducted on all the animals involved in the conflict to determine the true cause or causes of aggression.

## Conclusion

The AVSAB emphasizes that the use of scientifically sound learning principles that apply to all species is the accepted means to training and modifying behavior in pets and is the key to our understanding of how pets learn and how to communicate with our pets.

### **Myths about dominance and wolf behavior as it relates to dogs**

**My dog greets me by jumping up, steals food behind my back, tries to climb into my lap to be petted and often ignores me when I call him to come. Are these signs of dominance?**

*No. In animal social systems, dominance is defined as a relationship two or more individuals*

*that is established by force, aggression and submission in order to gain priority access to resources (Berstein 1981; Drews 1993). Most unruly behaviors in dogs occur not out of the desire to gain higher rank, but because the undesirable behaviors have been rewarded. For instance, dogs jump on people and climb into their laps because when they do so, they get attention. Similarly dogs fail to come when called if they are being rewarded by the objects or activities that are distracting them. Even stealing food when humans are not watching is not a play for higher rank. In the wild, lower ranking animals steal resources when higher ranking animals are not around to guard the resources. This is an alternate strategy for obtaining the resources they want. Those who are rewarded by success are more likely to continue stealing in this manner.*

**Because dogs are related to wolves, we should use wolves as a model for understanding dogs.**

*While we can get ideas of the types of behaviors to study in dogs based on what we know about wolves, the best model for understanding domestic dogs is domestic dogs. Dogs have diverged significantly from wolves in the last 15,000 years. Ancestral wolves evolved as hunters and now generally live in packs consisting most often of family members (Mech2000). Pack members cooperate to hunt and to take care of offspring. In a given year, generally only the alpha male and alpha female mate. So the resources of the entire pack can be focused on one litter. Dogs, on the other hand, evolved as scavengers rather than hunters*

*(Coppinger and Coppinger 2002). Those who were the least fearful, compared to their human-shy counterparts, were best able to survive off the trash and waste of humans and reproduce in this environment. Currently, free ranging dogs live in small groups rather than cohesive packs, and in some cases spend much of their time alone (MacDonald and Carr 1995). They do not generally cooperate to hunt or to raise their offspring, and virtually all males and females have the opportunity to mate (Boitani et al 1995). Marked differences in social systems, such as those just described inevitably lead to notable differences in social behavior.*

**I hear that if you think a dog is dominant, you should roll him on his back in an “alpha roll” and growl in his face because that’s what an alpha wolf would do.**

*In a pack of wolves, higher ranking wolves do not roll lower ranking wolves on their backs. Rather, lower ranking wolves show their subordinate status by offering to roll on their backs. This submissive roll is a sign of deference, similar to when someone greets the queen or pope by kneeling. Consequently, a more appropriate term for the posture would be a submissive roll (Yin 2009).*

**Even if wolves don’t roll subordinates on their back, it seems to work in some cases. Should I try it anyway if my dog is aggressive?**

*The most common cause of aggression in dogs is fear. Pinning a dog down when he is scared will not address the root of his fear. Furthermore it can heighten the aggression (AVSAB 2007). In fact, a*

*recent study of dogs (Herron et al 2008) found that confrontational techniques such as hitting or kicking the dog, performing an alpha roll, forcing the dog down and enforcing a “dominance down” frequently elicited an aggressive response from the dog. The aggression may also be redirected towards inanimate objects, or other animals or people besides the owner. Even non-physical punishment, such as a harsh verbal reprimand or shaking a finger at a dog, can elicit defense aggression if the dog feels threatened by it.*

**I have heard that to be the boss or leader, you have to go through doors first: walk ahead of the dog like wolves do.**

*In a wolf pack the highest ranking wolves only lead the hunt a fraction of the time (Peterson et al. 200). Furthermore, when they are hunting, they do not keep a tight linear formation based on their rank.*

**Since alpha goes first, should you eat before your dog?**

*Higher ranking wolves don’t necessarily have priority access to food. Once a wolf has possession of his food, he may not give it up to another wolf regardless of his rank. When food is not in possession of either wolf, ritualized aggression (snarling, lunging) may still occur, with the higher ranking wolves usually winning*

**Feeding dogs treats will cause them to become dominant.**

*Even among wild animals, sharing food does not relate to dominance. Adult wolves frequently regurgitate food for puppies. Males of other species frequently court females by bringing food to them. Giving a dog a*

treat when he jumps up or barks at you can result in unruly behavior. However this does not teach him that he is higher ranked or has priority access to resources. If you would like to teach him to wait politely for a treat you can wait until he sits or lies down patiently and then give him a treat.

**Will growling or trying to bite a dog or making a claw with your fingers mimic what a wolf does when he growls at or bites a subordinate.**

*There are no studies on this. However as an experiment, you might ask a friend who has been bitten by a dog whether poking him with your fingers bent in claw formation has an effect that's similar to when he was bitten, or whether your growling or biting seems similarly ferocious. In general, we shouldn't assume that our actions mimic those of a dog or a wolf. Rather we should evaluate each of our interactions with our pets and observe their responses to determine how our pet perceived it.*

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