



The WoofGang Wag Rag



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Free

From A Trainer's Notebook

As a dog trainer, I've noticed some fascinating intricacies of dog behavior. They're observations and details that anyone can see – I have no magic third eye when it comes to dogs – but somehow, along the way, patterns jump out when you're open and looking for them. I'm sure, when you read them, you'll think to yourself, "Well, of course! Anyone could see that!" and you'd be right! Just about everyone *has* seen them, and yet how many of us have really put much thought into it?

Little Dogs Get No Respect!

I worked with a client and his toy poodle and I remember watching in sadness as he yanked and dragged the little dog from one place to another with no regard for the dog's autonomy or personal space. That was the day I came by the axiom: All little dog owners should be required to own a big dog first.

Except under the most dire of circumstances, such as when a dog wanders too close to traffic and needs to be pulled abruptly out of harm's way, no one would dream of manhandling a rottie or shepherd the way they might a little lhasa. We *invite* big dogs to join us, to follow us, to move with us. With little dogs, we

force more than we invite.

Let's not marginalize our best friends, no matter how small they might be. If you find that you and your pooch are not like-minded in the ways you spend your time together, that you *need* to use your leash to keep your dog beside you, then training can teach your dog all of the reasons why being at your side is to his advantage.



Bozo

Toys are More Fun!

I remember fondly how, when I was a child, my father could make a forkful of broccoli or green beans a more entertaining mouthful by transforming it into a plane coming in for a landing on my tongue-tarmac. What child hasn't fallen for this old chestnut of

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Introductory Training Offer

Get a FREE 30-minute introductory basic training session when you purchase a 4-session package. (Offer details based on location.)

Call **WoofGang** at **646.345.5116** to make an appointment.

"Come" at the Run

Does your dog evade your calls when you're ready to leave the dog run? She's probably figured out that it usually means an end to a favorite pastime: dog-play! So, every few minutes call her by name... start easy with near calls and plenty of encouragement. When she comes, grab her collar and give her some love; then release her with "OK, go play!" This way she won't anticipate when you'll be calling to leave.

Call **WoofGang** at **646.345.5116** for help training a strong recall from your lovin' pooch, as well as other relationship-building training.

About the Trainer

Dog trainer **Laura Garber**, CPDT, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to www.myWoofGang.com.

Hide and Seek

One way to burn off some mental energy is to find games that are specifically suited to your dog's breed. This one is just like you played as a kid... put your dog in a sit-stay, then go off and hide. Call her name and let her sniff you out!

WoofGang can give you other fun ways of burning your dog's mental steam. Call **646.345.5116** today!

From a Trainer's Notebook (cont.)

a parenting trick and enjoyed it despite themselves?!

Well, I've noticed it can work with dogs, too! I've seen more than a few dogs who, though not particularly turned on by their kibble, will suddenly eat with renewed vigor when their food is distributed in a puzzle toy like the Tricky Treat ball (by Omega Paw). My own dog will overlook nuggets of food strewn on the floor and opt instead to toil over her food-stuffed ball, though the food is exactly the same!

The trick is to spend time teaching the dog how to access the food from the toy first, employing particularly tasty treats to jump-start his motivation to work. Once your dog has mastered the toy and is enjoying the challenge, then you can stuff with less valuable tidbits, like his normal kibble.

Variety is the Spice of Life

People underestimate the importance of having a variety of treats when training. Many of my clients will come to a training session with one or two of their dog's favorite treats and think that will get them through. Well, for labs, who as a rule don't have the most discerning palates and can get revved up by just about anything, one or two treats might do the trick. But most dogs max out fairly quickly and need a super-charge part way through a training session to keep them engaged. I usually start out using tidbits of hot dogs and Natural Balance. Then, when the pooch seems to hit a wall, which usually happens when we introduce a new, more difficult behavior, I pull out the big guns – boiled chicken or cheese! The novel "yum" factor of these can put a spark back into the learning process when it might seem like all is lost.

So the take-away is: Have a treat rotation for training, and hold back something especially yummy

out of this rotation, something that can relight the training fire when it seems to be burning out. Keep in mind that, when training, it's best to use soft, very small treats. Ten tiny treats are ten times better than one big treat in their eyes, and they won't fill up as fast. And soft treats can be chewed and swallowed quickly so you can be on to the next repetition faster.

The One Constant – that Everything Changes... even Me!

Perhaps most remarkable are the changes I've seen in myself, especially how I use and express myself physically with dogs. My eyes have always been considered one of my more attractive traits, as they're big and expressive, so for a good part of my life in the world of humans I have accentuated their size and flash. With dogs, though, this is an encumbrance, a challenge and, at the very least, off-putting. The way humans (and primates in general) greet each other – looking straight at someone, leaning forward, reaching out – is very assertive to dogs. When polite dogs greet each other, they approach indirectly, avert their gaze, and exchange a sniff.

In my role as a good-will ambassador between dogs and humans, translating the intentions and motivations of each to the other, I myself have become an ever more fluent speaker of *doglish*, aware of the nuances and suggestions of seemingly innocuous human movements.

So, if despite your best intentions, your dog seems in a quandary about what you're asking of him, it may well be your *doglish* that is falling short of its mark. Examine your physical expression to your dog and your dog's response to it and then perhaps the twain shall meet!

For this article in its entirety, log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



Ask Woofie...

Woofie, so we're wondering... will our pup Grizzly ever be allowed to be in the house but not in the crate? Or will this crate be where he needs to stay every night and when we are not home? We ask this because eventually we'd like him to be able to protect us and our home should an intruder come in. Thanks! Lynn
Hiya, Lynn! The crate is an important tool when teaching your pup appropriate behaviors in the house – housetraining, chew training, etc. Until you're sure that he can be trusted in your absence, you are tempting fate by giving him too much freedom.

As for protection, consider that there is no 100% perfectly trained dog. When you ask your dog to sit, you will discover that most of the time your dog will sit. But there are occasions when he just doesn't or just won't. With this in mind, imagine trying to train your pup to be a guard dog, and then imagine the gravity and danger of a failure. Add to this the complexity of training a dog to distinguish who is a welcome guest from who isn't.

Teach your puppy that all people are wonderful, from the very young to the very old, every shape and shade. It is responsible dog ownership. Often dogs themselves are natural deterrents for the unsavory sorts.

Hope this helps!... **Woofie**



Roscoe is a happy-go-lucky boy with lots of energy and joie de vivre. He enjoys the company of other dogs and works hard for his favorite treats. He's at the Liberty Humane Society waiting for his forever family. Might yours be the one?!