



The Tao of Training

Many of my clients wonder why their pups are transfixed by me, even as they offer the very same treats that I do; why their pups follow me with rapt attention while they stall and sputter with their parents. Well, I'm about to reveal some of the mystery and the magic of dog training – the tao of it. The key to the mystery of dog training is that I make training *no* mystery to the dog. I am clear about what I want, I make it easy enough for him to succeed, and I reinforce highly for a job well done. Well, here's how to do it...



Max on leash

Management Techniques

First, we need to set your dog up to succeed without too much trouble. If his tasks are not made simple enough at the start, he's liable to get frustrated and be turned off to training altogether. Management techniques can help with this:

- Your dog's leash is a great management tool. With your dog on leash, hold the leash's handle in one hand, letting the middle of the leash drag. Now step on the leash at a distance from your dog

so that he can sit or stand comfortably but *cannot* jump up. I call this *control position*. When you're in the bank, when you're on an elevator, when you stop to talk to someone in the street, assume control position. This way you know that he can't jump up on people, no matter how excited he gets, and you also know that, if you get distracted with other things, he can't get into any trouble. He's riveted to his spot!

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About the Trainer

Dog trainer **LAURA GARBER**, CPDT-KA, 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.



Introductory Training Offer

Get an extra 30 minutes of training when you purchase a 4-session training package.

(Offer details based on location.)

Call **WOOF GANG** at **646.345.5116** to make an appointment.

The Canine Tap-Out

Dogs sometimes roll over on their backs in an evasive maneuver, referred to as a "tap out", to avoid certain handling. To persist may only drive him to escalate his protest because, from his perspective, his wishes are not being heard. Instead of insisting on continuing, help your dog gain more ease with what you're trying to do.

WOOF GANG can help you get your dog more comfortable with handling.

Mine!

Does your dog stiffen or growl when you approach his bowl, a chew toy, or his favorite resting spot? He is *resource guarding*, a potentially dangerous behavior. Even accelerated eating can be an indication that he's guarding.

WOOF GANG can guide you in helping your dog get more comfortable with you around his resources. Call **646.345.5116** today!

The Tao of Training (cont.)

- Humans are space sensitive – you know how uncomfortable you are with people who are close talkers. Well, dogs are very sensitive to the use of space, too! So, when dogs jump up on us, crowd the entry of a visitor at the door, or even invade our personal space when we're seated, it is an intentional behavior – your pup knows it's pushy to invade our personal boundary. Use your body to block access to this space by stepping into him and moving him back to a polite distance before returning to your position. Keep stepping him back until he holds himself at the more polite distance.
- Touch is equally powerful. Long, slow strokes are more calming than short, fast pats or slaps. Many a dog parent can't understand why their pup gets mouthy and playful when being petted, not realizing that the tenor of their physical contact can have a lot to do with it.

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The Dominance Myth and Misnomer

The term *dominance* has developed into a catch-all for characterizing just about every undesirable behavior our dogs practice – from jumping on people in greeting to barking for attention and lunging at other dogs on the street. It has become our excuse for behavior that is really just that of a poorly trained dog.

This wrestling that we're doing with the question of dominance is perhaps the single greatest threat to our relationships with our dogs. And the things we do in the name of asserting *our* dominance mar the loving fabric we have woven together with them.

Because dominant behavior is so rarely the underlying cause of behavior problems, we should challenge ourselves to leave the word dominance out of our vocabulary entirely, and instead compel ourselves to identify the true root issues. Our relationships with our dogs would undoubtedly be the better for it

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



Ask Woofie...

WOOFIE, I recently moved and my 4 year old terrier mix will no longer leave the house with a dog walker. I've had a walker for Sadie since she was a puppy and never had any issues. Now that we've moved and I have a new walker, she growls and hides in her bed. I have been staying in the apartment to put the leash on. At that point she is fine but once they get back she will once again growl. I am not sure if I am doing the right thing by forcing her out with a stranger but I don't want to feed into this by allowing her aggression to win out. Any suggestions? Patty

Hiya, Patty! So that's a lot of changes for your pup. Be patient and give her some time to adjust. I think what you're doing sounds good, being there to hand off your dog to the dog walker. I'd suggest that the dog walker be armed with some fabulous treats (chicken, cheese and the like) and have her offer these to your dog on the walk. The dog walker may well become a very welcome visitor to your dog.

Just a note here: you say that you don't want her aggression to win out. Her aggression is an expression of discomfort and unease. The message should be heeded and respected. Your goal here is to help her gain comfort with this her new dog walker and her new life.

Hope that helps! **WOOFIE**



This smiling girl is a young pit bull mix Baby. With a keen desire to connect with people, this gal just wants to be as close to you as possible. She wiggles her whole body in joyful, exuberant greeting. If you're looking for a BFFF, visit Baby at the Liberty Humane Society.