

Kelly Krager

From: Aidan, Positive Petzine [editor@positivepetzine.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 22, 2007 10:02 AM
To: Kelly Krager
Subject: [positivepetzine] What is Pro-Active Dog Training?

Hi Kelly, thanks for joining us again in this 3rd installement of our e-course "Secrets of Positive Dog Training for Real Results".

Today we're going to look at the difference between **"pro-active"** and **"reactive" dog training**.

What is the difference between "pro-active" and "reactive" dog training? When we make pro-active training choices we don't say "stop doing that", we say "this is what I want you to do instead".

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Imagine you draw a circle or pie-chart of 24 hours of your dog's typical day. You fill in pieces with every separate activity or behaviour your dog does in a typical day. You've got a large chunk filled up with sleeping, another chunk with drinking, another chunk with eating, another with ear scratching, going to the toilet, barking, running, walking, getting patted, chewing up your shoes, scratching at the door, jumping on your guests etc etc

Then you decide you want to take out all the unwanted stuff. So you take out the chewing up shoes, scratching at the door and jumping on guests.

You still have 24 hours in a day. So what fills in those missing pieces?

Think about it. How does your dog know what to do instead? How do you know it's going to be something beneficial to your relationship and your lifestyle? You don't. In fact, it might make matters worse...

Let's say he has some sort of emotional or physical need for exercise which is not being met. So he goes out into the yard and digs.

You catch him digging and give him a telling off. Then you put chicken wire over the parts of the garden that he likes to dig.

So what does he do instead? Maybe he starts escaping the yard and wandering about the neighbourhood.

You build a higher fence.

Then what does he do instead?

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Another scenario... Puppy is teething and needs to chew for relief, it might be from boredom or from the pain of teething.

Pup looks around the room and finds a pair of your shoes, they look chewable! You decide to squirt him with water to punish the chewing. What does he chew instead? How does puppy's need to chew for relief get fulfilled?

The answer, in part, is to become **pro-active**. Put your shoes away and give pup legal things to chew. It's ok to say 'no' in a neutral tone of voice when pup is chewing the shoe you foolishly left on the floor, but then you need to follow up by swapping your shoe for a pig's ear or chew toy instead.

For the dog who is digging, maybe he needs a longer walk each day? Or maybe you could sign up at a local agility class for some fun activity, socialisation and training all in one?

You see, dogs do what works for them. The trick is to make what works for them work for you too. By being proactive we can channel their needs into activities and behaviours which complement our lifestyle and our needs.

Until next time...

Regards,
Aidan
Editor

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