

# Good

Dog Behaviour

by Choice Through

# Positive

Canine Coaching



Sally Gutteridge

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## Table Of Contents

1	Copyright
3	About the Author
4	Introduction
6	Part One: Coach How Dogs Learn
10	Canine Coaching
17	Part Two: Preparation
32	Part Three: Fun and Focus
46	Part Four. Useful Cues
64	Part Five. Into the Future

### About the Author

Sally Gutteridge has been a full-time educational writer since 2015 holding a variety of canine certifications. She is a former professional Dog Trainer with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, former instructor with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and has much rescue experience. Sally is a member of the Pet Professional Guild. She is a Graduate and award winner from The Writers Bureau. Through the organisation Canine Principles, Sally along with a fantastic team, provides reputable Continuation of Professional Development for all canine professionals. Canine Principles teaches the most up to date, positive, scientific canine awareness.

Sally lives in Rural Cumbria with her ever-patient husband and four rescued, cheeky terriers.

## Introduction

Welcome! The aim of this guide is to help you understand your dog and carry out positive canine coaching for a number of important tasks.

Dogs, at any given time, generally behave in a way that's natural to them — they don't automatically become easily managed, well-mannered and compliant just because we like that. They don't pop into the world with an ability to sit on cue and a heel position burned readily into their mind. Just like we learned to talk, walk and brush our teeth, dogs need to learn what things mean, before they can respond with the right choice. But even so, we see people saying sit and heel to dogs that have never been taught what it means over and over again. To dogs, they might as well just be saying 'bananas' for all the sense it makes.

There's good news though. With a few careful steps, some fundamental knowledge and a growing skill, you can become your dog's teacher, his coach. There's a whole science to coaching dogs based on how they learn and feel. This guide will teach you the science of canine coaching in a way that it seeps into your mind and puts down roots, all the while you are having fun with your dog.

The missions we teach here are not traditional obedience commands. We are not aiming for a robotic dog that can parade through a series of positions. We are going for ten cues that embrace your relationship whilst empowering both of you — and making you feel great.

## Positive Canine Coaching

If you feel up to it, you can document your progress through each step with notes and pictures. To read your success story would truly make my day, so feel free to post it on my Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/sallyanddogs/> visit my website at [sallygutteridge.com](http://sallygutteridge.com) or email me at [sally@sallygutteridge.com](mailto:sally@sallygutteridge.com). I always respond to every message.

Note: I refer to dogs in the book as “him” purely for ease of reading; the advice applies to males and females in equal measure.

# Part One: Coach How Dogs Learn

Dogs are amazing, communicative, loyal and dependable companions. They don't ask for much and don't complain much either. Whilst they are thought to have crept into our lives as wolf-like ancestor thousands of years ago, there is no animal today that remotely compares.

However, dogs are still fairly misunderstood. Even though in the 21st century we know so much about them, people still mistreat dogs. Perpetuated by the media and despite evidence to the contrary, dogs are still abused or inadequately taken care of by many people, including dog professionals.

A vast number of learned professionals and even scientists are exploring the intricate details of dog domestication. One day, there will no longer be people telling confused dog guardians to be the boss or practice dominance and dogs will get the true understanding they fully deserve. While I don't want to dwell on the bad stuff for long, I must share the reason why we don't need to be the boss and where that idea came from in the first place.

### **The History**

There was a study on a group of unrelated wolves, carried out to find out how they behave when observed. They were not a family and they didn't get on very well. The conclusion was drawn after a few months that the tension was based on every animal being keen to lead the group. It's unclear why that conclusion was drawn, but it was quickly also applied to domestic dogs.

A few years after this theory was presented, another study took place, this time by a different scientist who recognized the flaws of the first, which were plentiful.

## Positive Canine Coaching

Natural, wild wolves live in family groups, and all members of the pack are somehow related, so studying unrelated wolves is more of a wolf social experiment than reality. Studying captive unrelated wolves is as natural as assuming people live like they are all on Big Brother, and we know how fraught with tension and squabbles that is.



The family group consists of the breeding parents and their offspring. They live together, hunt together, play and eat as a family. Parents guide with kindness and cubs defer with respect. There are few physical reprimands and aggression is rare, much like any good, loving family group. Wolves successfully communicate with a slightly different ear position, a glance, a brief posture or facial expression. It's amazing to see.



Meanwhile, dog trainers that still embrace the idea that wolves have a power quest and that dogs are inherently wolves, decided that being the alpha wolf to their dog was of high importance. In fact, some believed that if they establish themselves as the Alpha wolf, all the dog's problems would naturally melt away. So, people everywhere started going through doors first, eating from their dog's bowl and standing in their beds. I imagine their dogs were somewhat perplexed, as patient as they may be though.

### **The Consequence**

When this weirdness didn't solve problems such as lead pulling or jumping on the furniture, dog trainers hung onto the theory regardless, as many people do. There's social safety in sticking to our beliefs along with a generous dash of ego. Trainers started to become forceful, to establish their place as the alpha wolf (it sounds ridiculous because it is). This is where force and fear-based dog training originated — if the dog didn't respond to being second through a door by not pulling on the lead, he was considered dominant and forced into submission. According to this idea, dominant dogs were everywhere, planning to take over the world!

Next, we saw painful collars, alpha rolls and general physical punishment. Dogs suffered for human ignorance and many still do. Humanity is slow at keeping up with new developments. We make our mind up on something based on our first experience of it, then gather evidence to reinforce our set belief – often for the rest of our lives. Even today, long after the original theory was revoked, there are still far too many 'pack leaders' stalking the dog world, giving the worst possible advice, ignoring the truth and yet selling their services as dog professionals.

## **The Biology**

There's another reason that we can't possibly believe and use the alpha wolf theory. Even if wolves did live with tension and a quest to be the boss in every social group — which we have established they don't — dogs have thousands of years of evolution between them and their wild cousins.

Evolution of any species is based on successful reproduction. If the species don't reproduce in their current environment, they become extinct. However, dogs have been reproducing in domestication for thousands of years now, and have literally evolved to live alongside people with, and even carry out tasks for people. If DNA were an individual, it would be a genius, adapting to be a bit more suitable for the environment with any generation. Wolves living in the wild as a family are rightfully scared of people due to mass persecution. Dogs sitting on your sofa has thousands of years adapted DNA, to live in your home as a companion and friend. Your dog already knows he's not a wolf and knows you are not a wolf either. It doesn't take a genius to work that out and our dogs are pretty astute.

## **The Future**

It's not all bad news and stubborn pack leaders though. There is a growing, evolving movement within the dog community that embraces ethology and science. Ethology is the study of animals in their natural environment, whereas science is generally either proven or the most likely theory on anything.

Science currently tells us that kind, motivational teaching has excellent results and ethology tells us that dogs are happiest with a positive, kind and force-free approach. Trainers that learned the old methods initially are changing over and embracing kindness, there is a new generation of dog professionals spreading the word that 'pack leadership' is a myth and causes problems. Highly educated ethologists are presenting new evidence all the time that dogs excel to be the best they can be, with positive treatment and teaching.

## Canine Coaching

Canine coaching is kind. Based on empowerment of the dog, we change our perspective as a coach. We don't see behaviour as a thing to be changed, no matter what it takes, we see it as a symptom of a feeling and work out why that feeling may exist. The coach works with the dog's inner state, his freedom to make choices and his uniqueness. Coaching accepts and embraces the dog's rights to be free of force and fear.

Canine coaches work through their minds and hearts, to inspire the dog to find and use his natural strengths. The missions in this book will help you become a successful canine coach, and your dog will love you for it.

### **The Important Bits**

There are some things you need to know about your dog. The fundamentals of teaching that apply to dogs, and interestingly to people too. So, let's explore the facts and theories which positive coaching is based on such as how your dog learns and how his brain works.

When your dog was born, learning began right away, well almost. After the first couple of weeks he began trying new things. If he liked the result, the puppy would try it again, because the result was rewarding. Early in his life the puppy's brain is not fully formed – in fact it's barely formed at all so this early learning puts decisions and choices into the brain as it forms, so these choices and experiences become strong and well-established. By the time the puppy reaches adulthood, his brain will be filled with ideas about which choices worked, his habits will be formed.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

Learning doesn't stop at puppyhood though, every time a dog tries something new, no matter what his age, he is making a choice. That choice will lead to a consequence and if the dog likes the consequence, he will make the same choice again. This is the basis of positive reinforcement. In the same way, if a dog chooses to do something for the first time and the consequence is not rewarding to them, it's not being reinforced, so it will probably not be the dog's first choice next time.

Positive reinforcement means that a favourable consequence is linked in the dog's mind to a choice they make, so the choice is made stronger. Within coaching we can manipulate consequences by providing the dog with reward, to make the dog's good choices stronger than the choices that are not so good.

*Why does this work so well?*

Positive reinforcement is one of four learning processes which also include force and punishment.

If you like the scientific terms, they are called quadrants and include the following. Examples are in brackets below the definition.

## Positive Canine Coaching

Positive reinforcement; something good starting. For example, giving the dog a treat for a good choice.

(Stopping pulling and creating a loose lead)

Negative reinforcement; something bad stopping. For example, loosening a choke collar for a good choice.

(Stopping pulling on the lead)

Positive punishment; something bad starting. For example, giving the dog a smack for a bad choice.

(Jumping up)

Negative punishment; something good stopping. For example, withdrawing attention from the dog for a bad choice

(Nipping hands)

Take note of the first two points above. You can probably see that both approaches give the same result, a loose lead. There is a big difference though. Positive reinforcement empowers the dog, whilst negative reinforcement disempowers him. Negative reinforcement relies on something the dog dislikes, being done to him, to work. We must ask why, when rewarding the right choice has the same positive result.

### The Dopamine Effect



There's another reason that positive reinforcement works so well, the neurotransmitter Dopamine. Neurotransmitters are brain messengers that change the way your dog feels, and Dopamine is a feel-good chemical that's rocket fuel for learning.

This neurotransmitter is a big part of reason dogs (and people) repeat behaviours that provided a reward. When something good happens, we get a Dopamine high and that's the chemical reason that the dog repeats something for a reward. Linked with motivation and building memories, this neurotransmitter is the neurological basis of positive reinforcement.

Dopamine is triggered by good feelings, play, reward, positive interactions, food and general rewarding experiences.

### The Cortisol Effect



Whilst Dopamine is rocket fuel for memory and learning, Cortisol has the opposite effect. This hormone is the body's alarm system and causes a fight or flight reaction to keep the dog safe.

An ancient hormone, cortisol acts alongside adrenaline when the dog experiences a threat, to help him fight or run away, essentially to survive. This hormone does the same thing in our own bodies; when you go weak at the knees because something has made you jump, it's because your survival system has been triggered by the release of cortisol. The fight or flight system is split a little further, your dog may try to run away, try to chase the scary thing away, go to battle, freeze and hope the threat doesn't see him or fool around. Fooling around might involve jumping up or mouthing hands and clothing. All of these tell us the dog is stressed. Stress hinders learning, digestion, immunity and memory, it's a huge hindrance to learning.

## Positive Canine Coaching

Cortisol is a response to stress and is triggered by force, fear, confrontation or environmental tension – for example, something the dog is scared of being in his immediate environment. When dog training isn't positive and uses punishment, or force, the dog will experience stress and can't learn to his potential.

Our aim is to dial up the dopamine, avoid cortisol, teach some useful cues and have fun, so let's get going.



## Takeaway Points

- Dogs and wolves are - behaviourally - completely different animals based on separate evolution and the domestication of dogs.
- There is no such thing as an alpha dog.
- Scientific and kind dog training shows empathy and education. Punishment and force show lack of both.
- Cortisol prevents learning. It's triggered by force, fear and punishment and is directly related to stress.
- Dogs learn from trying new things and dependent on the consequence they may or may not repeat their behaviour.
- Positive reinforcement is rewarding a choice, so the dog repeats it.
- Canine coaching empowers the dog and the coach.
- Dopamine aids memory and motivation. It is triggered by feeling good and reward.

# Part Two: Preparation

The first part of any canine coaching must always be building a trusting relationship based on communication and observation. We can live with dogs, love them with all our hearts and simply not understand them. With the risky quality of people giving advice on dog behaviour in the world, we can even get professional advice and still misunderstand our dogs, leading to confusion and even worse, broken trust.

You may fully understand your dog already. You might have been through tough times with your friend and share a mutual frustration based on lack of understanding. You might have a little gentle puppy who is keen and willing to learn or a rescue dog who was abandoned at adolescence because he was never taught any manners, therefore was unmanageable.

This is the point we start afresh. The beauty of science-based coaching is that if we follow the right steps they will work. The more help your dog needs to learn, the more different tricks we can use, but the steps work I promise you this.

### **Know Your Dog**

Knowing your dog means that you empathise with him and try to see the world from his point of view and not your projection of him. Projection is something we do naturally and way more than is particularly healthy. We look at a stranger and decide how they feel, when we disagree with someone and things get heated, we decide how they feel – often without any evidence or communication.

## Positive Canine Coaching

We can look at our dogs and decide that their fear is naughtiness, their stress is because they are feeling obnoxious or their confusion ignorance. Even whilst none of these are true, they certainly make us feel differently about the dog and his behaviour.

Take some time out and just chill with your dog. Stop acting and responding and start observing. Ethology is the act of observing an animal in their natural environment, with no interference from the watcher. Become your dog's ethologist and learn from him.

Your dog's behaviour is a direct indication of how he feels. So, if he looks relaxed, he will be feeling relaxed. If your dog looks excited, he will be feeling excited and if his body tenses up, he is likely to be feeling pretty tense. The way a dog feels is usually dependent on what the environment around him is like.

There is an exception to this. When a dog is ill or in pain it will naturally change their behaviour and the way they look. Any unusual behaviour should be assessed by your veterinarian, to check your dog's health and wellbeing. When a dog is feeling poorly or in pain, it's their right to see the vet.

The dog with a clean bill of health, that has a behaviour change will usually do so based on an environment change. So, if your dog is asleep and the doorbell goes, there's an obvious change, he might bark and run around. If your dog is scared of bangs and is relaxed, but a firework goes off in the distance, his behaviour will change, he may tremble and hide. The dog that is scared of children might hear a scream and become tense then bark in response – telling the screamer to stay well away.

## Positive Canine Coaching

Your task is to witness these overt behaviour changes and empathise with your dog. He doesn't know who is at the door, he may feel that the firework is a direct threat to his survival or it could really hurt his ears. Your dog may never have never had a good experience with animated and noisy children, so is scared of them and gets defensive. When we start to observe with empathy, we stop focussing on the awkward behaviour and we place focus on how the dog feels and his motivation behind that particular display. When we start to approach observation from this viewpoint, we are becoming enlightened observers, we are ethologists.

The basis of any behaviour change is how the dog feels. The way he feels is usually triggered by the environment and the reason he chooses that particular behaviour is because he has learned to choose it in similar situations in the past. So, when you observe your dog, ask yourself, how does my dog feel, what has made him feel that way and what is reinforcing this type of response.

Because a consequence will always drive behaviour, without fail, if your dog finds that his behaviour worked in a situation, that behaviour will get stronger by repetition. Here's a common example:



My terrier, Chips is socially awkward and somewhat fearful of other dogs. He actually really likes other dogs and with proper introduction he will be friendly and enjoy a brief hello. He's much more comfortable with the smaller dogs and those that don't have obscured faces, such as long haired or black dogs which are more difficult for others to read.

When he sees a dog that he's not comfortable with, Chips will put on an aggressive display – as Braveheart terriers often do when they feel awkward or worried. His display can easily become full on lunging and barking, whilst on the lead. The consequence from his 40cm viewpoint, when the dog leaves without approaching him, he has maintained his safety with that behaviour. He's a winner in his mind and next time he feels awkward and anxious he will use that same technique again.

Interestingly though, I have been in a position where He's been on the lead and another dog has too, I have let Chips off and he's ran the other way. Chips doesn't want to practice defensive acts, he's done it when he feels there was no other choice. When there's choice, he makes a good one and goes the other way. He has made lots of new friends by learning a good approach, and that he doesn't need to practice defensiveness. Yet had I dragged him past dog after dog, whilst he ranted and raved, his behaviour would be stronger than ever.

### **A Series of Choices**

Just like Chips in this scenario, your own dog's behaviour is determined by his choices. Dogs have few choices in the world we have brought them into. We choose most things for them and we try to do our best to make the right ones, because we love them. I'm not sure there's anyone that has ever loved a dog who hasn't thought at least once, "I wish you could tell me what you want".

## Positive Canine Coaching

We can enable and empower our dogs though, by ensuring they choose as many things as they want to, in their lives. For example, I empower Chips by practicing off lead walking around but not too close to other dogs, he gets the chance to look at them and then the choice to follow me. That natural choice for him was set up so he can make the right one – following me – whilst lack of choice would be keeping him on a tight lead whilst he ranted, because he had no other choice in his mind. It took some time to do this with him though, and a series of set-ups for him to make the right choices, so don't just let your dog off the lead if he rants.

It will be easier for you to understand how simple canine coaching is, by viewing it as a series of choices for your dog. Then we attach a favourable consequence to the good and useful choices, whilst tweaking the environment to make the less useful choices less accessible.

For example; if your dog jumps up. For attention, he has probably learned that jumping leads to your attention. Any type of interaction with you is better than none – because you are the centre of his world. So, whilst you may sigh, say no and push him off, your dog just sees you looking at him and touching him, which is a pretty powerful reward for any human focussed dog. Compare that to being ignored if he doesn't jump up and you can see how easily the choice to jump up is made and reinforced.

You can tweak the choices and consequence to change the act of jumping up and empower your dog at the same time. This is what we are going to cover during the missions in this book.

Choices are routes in the mind. We all have these routes, humans and dogs alike. In fact, all sentient beings have the capacity for choice. Here's an analogy of choices and how your dog makes them:

## Positive Canine Coaching

Imagine a meadow surrounded by a high wall, the grass on the meadow is high too, probably up to your dog's knees. There are three exit points, gates along one wall and no other way of getting out of the meadow. Your dog hears you call him and has to choose whether to come or not, his choice will be made initially based on how motivated he is to come when you call. He looks across the field and can see you stood behind one of the gates. The other gate has a friendly looking dog and the third gate is another meadow. Your dog has to make a choice so runs towards the gate which motivates him most of all. As he runs, he flattens the grass and gets to your gate for a reward and a game.

Now imagine this is repeated ten times, the grass will be quite flat by now and the easiest route to take will be the one that comes directly to you, add that to your successful motivation and your dog has learned to make the right choice, the pathway through the flat grass is set and you are the rewarding consequence.

Now go back to the first time your dog made the choice and imagine that you were less interesting than the gate with the friendly dog behind it. So even though you are calling your dog, he chooses a different gate. You decide to try again, without changing your own offering, so your dog makes the same choice again, then repeatedly until the easiest, trodden pathway leads away from you and to the other dog.

This describes how neural pathways work when your dog learns. This is what the out of control dog at the park has done, the one who is shouted constantly by their human but still running at every dog that he sees.

If we replace the trodden grass for well used routes in a dog's brain, we can see exactly why the most practiced route is the easiest one for the dog to take, along with why we need to make the favourable choice the easiest one for the dog, by enhancing motivation and tweaking consequences.

## Mission One. Motivation and Markers

The first mission in the guide is designed to lay the foundation for everything we do afterwards. Learning what motivates your dog and introduction of a marker, for good choices.

A marker is something that tells your dog that they made the right choice. A natural marker is delivering a food reward, but dogs do multiple things very quickly and it's easy to miss the exact point that we want to reinforce, so a marker is used to pinpoint the choice.

Using a marker makes timing easier, because it helps us to mark the exact choice we want to reinforce, with one single, known sound. The sound is paired in your dog's mind with his motivating reward. Then it has the ultimate power for reinforcing choices to change them from awkward ones to excellent ones.

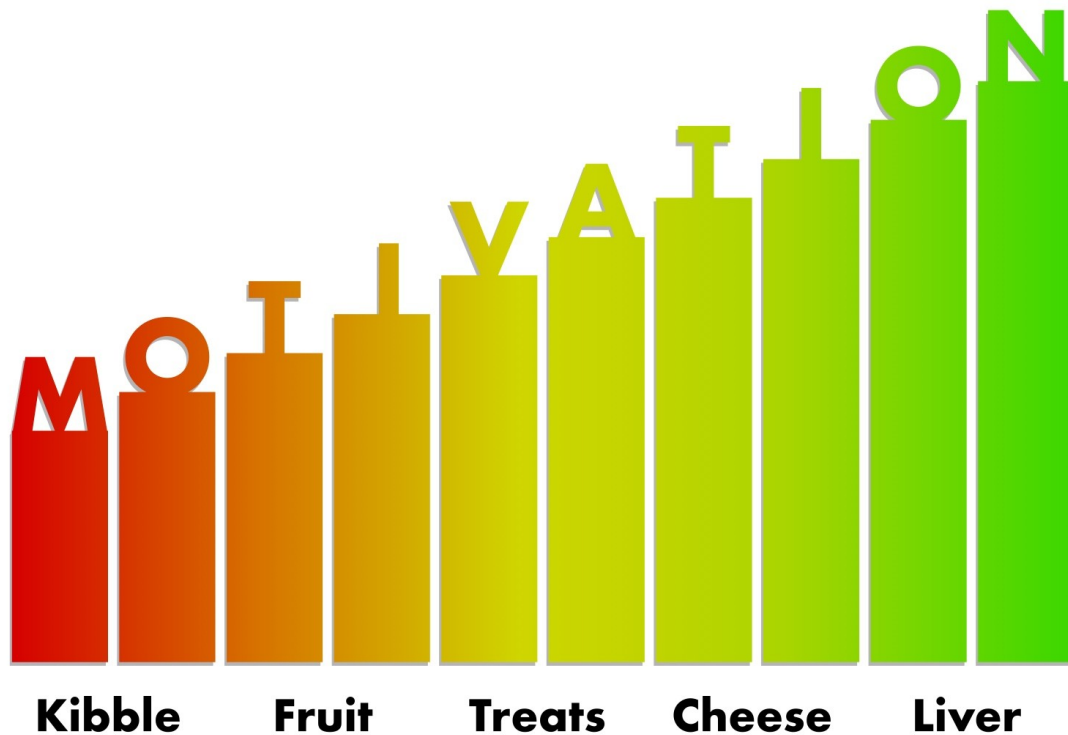
What is a motivating reward? That depends on your dog and what he likes best.

Your dog will be motivated by something unique to him. Markers are generally paired with food reward, because food reward triggers dopamine. It's also extremely powerful because food is required to keep the dog alive, so it's an important reinforcer due to its high importance to survival.



## Choosing Food Rewards

The type of food you use will depend on your dog's preferences. One of mine loves a reward of peas or butter beans, whilst the others spit it back, looking offended. The more your dog likes the food that you are using for a reward, the more motivated he will be. Don't go straight for the one that drives your dog demented with expectation and glee though, because you will be using your secret weapon much sooner than you should.



I suggest you test a few food types by seeing how excited your dog gets when you produce them. The keener he is, the more that particular food will motivate your friend. Then choose five or six on a sliding scale that you can alternate depending on whether your dog needs a boost.

The image below shows an example of how to scale food reward to task. It's important to have options with food reward, where your dog has sufficient interest to learn for food low on the scale, but you have options for that motivation boost, if he needs it.

**Important note:** when choosing food rewards beware of highly processed dog food and treats. There are a lot of scary ingredients in dog treats, colours, preservatives and chemicals that could change how your dog feels and acts, all on their own. Watch out for heavily marketed treats with long chemical names in the composition area. Just like colourings and preservatives affect the biological brain health of people, they affect dogs. So, at best case scenario bad treats will make focus more difficult for your dog and at worst case, adversely affect their long-term health.

### Choosing A Marker

Choosing a marker also depends on your dog. You can use one marker or many, I suggest you start with one as we work through the first few missions at least, just to keep things consistent in the early stages.

A word you don't usually use is a good marker, be careful of this though because when your dog has learned that the marker leads to food you must always provide a treat when you use the word, for optimal results. I use the marker, "good" during some fun sessions at home and the dogs know it when we are walking too. So, if they make a nice choice when on a walk, I can accidentally mark it with "good boy" and am instantly the focus of at least four expectant eyes and have to produce something for them to eat. Rewarding a marker is particularly important if you want to maintain its power after an initial pairing of marker to reward.

## Positive Canine Coaching

The beauty of using a marker word is that you can use tone and inflection in delivery. If your dog gets over excited regularly and is very animated, you can use a calm tone to deliver your marker, along with calm, quiet movements during coaching. Your dog will respond to your own sounds and movement, so if you move quietly and steadily, your dog will be more settled too.

If your dog is low in confidence you can deliver the marker with excitement. Move yourself around with some animation and your dog's energy will become more animated too.

A classic marker is a clicker. The clicker is a neutral sound created by a small box that you click with your thumb. Clickers are great, as they really pinpoint the moment that the choice is made. Some dogs don't like the sound though, which can be counter-productive, wrapping it in a towel might help with that, but it's not really convenient when out and about. If your dog doesn't like the sound of the clicker – perhaps you could practice a tongue click instead. With marker use, anything goes – if it's consistent and always rewarded.

### **Making the Connection**

Connecting a marker to your dog's motivation of choice (the food) is pretty straightforward. It's just a case of following the marker with the food until your dog knows that the sound leads to food delivery.

It usually takes a few short sessions of marker and food reward before your dog is fully aware that one leads to the other.

What you need:

1. A consistent marker, such as a word, clicker or other sound.
2. Many tiny tasty treats. The tastier the treats, the more powerful the connection will be with the marker. They should be large enough to taste and small enough to swallow without chewing. The brief taste will leave your dog wanting more, whereas a big chunk to chew is distracting and filling, so your dog will get full and bored more easily.

This task is best carried out in an area that your dog knows really well, such as at home or in your garden. Distractions such as sniffs, passers-by, sounds and other stimulators should be avoided when teaching anything new. Remember the choice gates in the meadow? Set your coaching sessions up so that the gate with you behind it is the most fascinating one, make yourself interesting and your food offerings irresistible.

Position yourself so you are and offer the most tempting thing in the area, you can't go wrong.

## Coaching Steps

1. Sit on the ground, or a chair if your dog gets over excited with you on the ground, with your treats and marker at the ready.
2. Let your dog explore the area first if you have just gone into it.
3. Wait until your dog is either considering what to do next or glances at you, then deliver the marker and one bit of food, five times in a row.
4. Throw a bit of food across the room so that your dog goes to fetch it.
5. Repeat steps three and four – three to five times depending on how interested and happy your dog is, then end the session.

After doing a few sessions your dog should be naturally aware that the sound of his marker provides a treat. You can test this by being in a normal area – free from distractions and waiting until he's not looking and delivering it, if your dog comes for his treat, the connection is made. If he doesn't come when he hears the sound, your dog hasn't made the connection yet, you maybe need to do one more session.

When the connection is made there are two important things to remember:

The sound will reinforce whatever your dog is doing at the time it's delivered. So, if he's jumping up or running away and you use the marker, you have made that particular behaviour stronger, by reinforcing it. Your dog will repeat that behaviour, without a doubt.

Secondly, always use the marker with food. If you use it and don't give food, the sound will lose its power. Your dog will stop bothering with it, and you have undone all the work you carried out when you were pairing the sound with its real power source – the food.

### **Mission Accomplished**

Your first mission is accomplished when your dog knows exactly what the marker means and comes directly to you expecting a treat when you mark a nice choice that he makes. The choice can be anything from looking your way on a walk, to keeping all four feet on the ground when he might otherwise jump up.

When we use a marker, we can use it with one or more of the following approaches:

1. Marking/Capture means that we use the sound to capture any choice the dog makes, that we appreciate.
2. Luring is the act of showing the dog what we would like, then we capture the act by marking it with a click.
3. Shaping is teaching a choice via a few different smaller choices and marking each one. This works well when building the confidence of a worried dog.

### **Capturing Choices**

When you have an established marker, start to use it to reinforce your dog's good choices, on a regular basis. Think of it like you're capturing something special that your dog chose to do by taking a snapshot with your marker. Capture everything you want your dog to repeat. It's a good idea to put bowls of small treats around your home so you will always have one to hand. Then if your dog does something you like, mark and reward the choice, then he will repeat that choice because it's been reinforced.

One of the things we can all do if we don't focus is ignore good choices from our dogs or not notice them at all. We then notice the bad choices because they are inconvenient to us. This is quite sad for the dog who is only trying things to see which choices work, after all. If a choice has no consequence, your dog is likely not to practice it anymore, instead favouring a choice that makes something interesting or rewarding happen.

A typical example of ignoring good choices is when the dog checks in with his human on a walk. Checking in is a wonderful choice, because it reinforces the bond between the dog and his human. The dog looks back and makes brief eye contact, the person acknowledges the dog's effort and the walk continues.

Many dogs check in initially but are ignored, so they stop bothering and just wander along on their own. We people like our screens and it seems to be a default option to pull out your phone on a walk. If your dog checks in with you, but you're looking at a screen and don't acknowledge him, he's more likely to go off and approach other dogs and people instead. This will naturally put him, or the unknown dogs he approaches, in danger. It will also be terrible for his self-esteem and your relationship. Our dogs have short little lives, so we need to embrace them as often as we can, because one day we won't be able to.

**Important note on checking in:** some dogs check in naturally all the time. These dogs may be genetically visual, such as the collie or shepherd breeds. Some may be quite seriously attached to their human and desperately want confirmation of that bond, as often as possible. It's important to find a balance with checking in. Too much and the dog will lose the freedom they naturally get during a walk, and too little will give the dog no reason to check in at all.

## Takeaway Points

- Our role as caretakers and friends of domestic dogs is to manage their lives so well that they have a good experience.
- The first step of understanding is total observation.
- When dogs learn through coaching, they are becoming empowered along the way.
- Behaviour is a series of choices, and each choice will be repeated if it produces a consequence that the dog likes.
- If a dog is ignored when he makes a helpful choice, he will usually not do it again, based on the lack of interesting result.
- By making the result of helpful choices the most rewarding in the area, the dog will choose it more often.
- Your dog will choose his own motivation.



### Part Three: Fun and Focus

Before we begin any more practical steps, we are going to take a look at communication. It's important to know that our dogs are happy and having fun when they learn, for the reasons we already know.

Canine body language tells us a great deal when we focus on it and know what to look for. Like people, dogs have personalities of their own and their own unique communication styles. There are some universal signs that tell us how a dog feels and we can learn a lot from them.

Take some time to observe and learn your dog's neutral state. How does your dog look when he's not showing any strong emotion such as fear or excitement? Where do his ears sit on his head, how do his eyes look, and what position is his tail in? A lot of this will depend on his breed type — my little Pomeranian cross, for example, has a tail held high over her beautiful self, and when it drops there's something wrong with her for sure.



## Positive Canine Coaching

But if my Jack Russell terrier holds his tail as high as our little Pomeranian lady, he's far from feeling neutral and is probably highly aroused by something in the environment. This picture shows an aroused dog with a hard stare and high tail. His body also looks quite tense as he is deciding how to react.



Even though the first dogs have higher tails, the dogs show very different intent, which is exactly why you need to pinpoint your own dog's neutral body language and work from there.

Tails, ears and posture are three of the easiest things to read in a dog's body language.

A tail that goes below neutral can dictate fear or anxiety, and how much is directly related to how low the tail drops. If it goes above neutral and high behind the dog, like a flag, the dog is usually aroused and interested in something. He may even be offering conflict. Think of a high tail like a flag — the higher the tail is from its neutral position, the bolder or more aroused a dog feels.

## Positive Canine Coaching

The dog's ear position is again based on neutral. There are many ear shapes, so exactly how your dog's ears look will depend on his neutral position. Generally, the further back the dog's ears go on their head, the more uncomfortable the dog feels. If he can't pull his ears back because they are floppy or heavy, the same attempt is made but the ears pinch to the side of the head instead. Ear shape is linked with facial tension.

This dog's ears are pulled right back, and his eyes and face are tense. The Pomeranian shown above and this tense dog here are similar breed types, so their neutral ear position is one of pricked ears like the Pom's. This dog, however, shows extreme anxiety because his ears are pulled towards the back of his head – as far from neutral position as possible. This position is sometimes called seal ears.



Posture is measured by how loose or tense the dog's body is. A neutral posture is relaxed and shows no tension. A happy dog that's enjoying himself will be loose and relaxed from his nose to the tip of his tail. He may be wriggly and smiling. Here's a loose-bodied, happy dog who is very pleased with life and smiling all over his face.



A scared dog will tense up, try to avoid conflict and crouch with the tail and rear tucked under, in an attempt look smaller. A confrontational dog, on the other hand, will tense up but try to look bigger. The tension is because they are worried about something in the environment. Whether they respond by fight or flight will depend on their prior experiences and learning, plus their personality.

### **Mission Two. Spotting Neutral**

Your own dog's neutral position is unique to their body shape and breed type. Whilst you probably already have an idea of their general, neutral stance and the way they look when they are happy or sad, it's good to start looking for the smaller signals of change, too.

I can confidently say that canine coaching is 90% observation and the other 10% is split between timing, understanding and empathy.

## Signs of Confusion

Calming signals are the name given to behaviour changes, by Turid Rugaas. As a natural behaviour, calming signals are split into two types or can also be described as mild or extreme. Some people simply call them signs of anxiety or stress.

A dog will use these signs to show other dogs, people and other animals that it means no harm and is trying hard to defuse any kind of tension. The dog can also use them to calm himself, even when left completely alone. It can be either conscious or unconscious, depending on the situation and the individual dog.

When we try to teach dogs something new, we must look out for calming signals, to check for any signals of worry or stress.

Mild signs of stress can include:

- A big nose lick
- Glancing away and back
- Lip licking
- Looking to the distance
- Pulling back the lips, maybe in a submissive grin
- Sitting down and lifting a front paw
- Yawning

It's important as we work through the missions that you look out for these signs and change your tactics if they start to appear, because it means the dog is feeling pressured or confused. If the basic mild calming signals do not alleviate the feeling of anxiety, by being properly accepted and adapted to, and the dog continues to feel anxious or stressed, other calming signals will appear.

These can include:

- Cowering
- Drooling
- Dropping to the ground either rolling on his back or crouching over his stomach
- Freezing, maybe tucking the tail
- Panting
- Urinating
- Walking slowly

These later signals should honestly never appear when a dog is learning. We need to notice the milder signals and react by changing the approach, taking a break or making the lesson clearer to the dog. They usually occur when we ask too much, too soon.

Dogs use body language to express confusion, commonly called displacement behaviour. It means the dog is experiencing two conflicting thoughts or emotions, such as a desire to please but also anxiety because he doesn't know how or what is expected of him.

Common displacement behaviours include sniffing the floor, fetching a toy, some calming signals, even snuffling and sneezing. Dogs may scratch themselves as if they have a serious itch, pace around or try to get you to play. If the lesson is not changed at this point, the dog's confidence will seriously drop. He may start to show appeasement signals such as licking and crouching, dropping his eyes and head, or rolling on his back. At this point, stop pushing your dog and switch to something easier. He obviously doesn't have a clue of what is required of him, so let the dog succeed and play.

## Mission Accomplished

This mission is accomplished when you have written the following five points down and committed them to your memory, for use in all canine coaching sessions and everywhere you go with your dog.

Your dog's neutral:

1. Posture
2. Ear position
3. Tail position

Then:

1. What happens when your dog gets tense?
2. How do you know that your dog is happy?

Keep observing your dog for any signs of change in how he feels, and you will start to notice the things that catch his attention on walks and how he responds to them. If he looks a bit anxious when learning, he will drop from neutral, and if he's having fun, he will rise from his neutral position and smile.

### Mission Three. Watch Me

At this point, we begin using our marker and the observation we have learned to teach cued choices. The cue is a word that we attach to a choice, via a careful learning process so that the dog knows what the cue means, and what we would like him to do.

Mission three is a prelude to all other cued choices because it's important that you have your dog's attention before you ask him to do something.

We often see people talking to their dog, who is totally engaged in something else and takes no notice of the requests he is given. It's no one's fault really — it's just that both the dog and his human are not in a place where they can properly communicate and understand each other. That is where canine coaching comes in.

Sadly though, when people talk to their dog who is otherwise engaged in something entirely different, the dog usually gets the blame for not responding. Dogs are called ignorant, stubborn and even dominant because they refuse to engage. Oftentimes, they get punished for not listening, which can lead to even less engagement because the dog becomes scared and tries to hide or leave.

The 'watch me' cue is wonderful for engagement. We can use it to get the attention of our dog, or as part of play and mutual enjoyment. This is a great relationship and bond builder.

All you need to teach this cue is a marker, some food reward and a toy that your dog likes. If he doesn't particularly like classic toys, that's fine, just use the food.



You can teach this cue in the following steps:

1. Sit on the ground if possible, facing your dog. If not, sit on a chair as the idea is to make your face as accessible as possible to your dog.
2. When your dog looks into your face naturally, mark quickly and give a food reward.
3. If he doesn't naturally look into your face, you can offer a small lure such as a squeak from your lips or bring your hand over your head then down behind the back of your head until your dog's eyes hit yours, then mark the choice to look at you.
4. Practice steps one to three a few times.
5. Introduce the cue directly after the marker then bring the cue forward until it is delivered before the marker and then start to deliver it before your dog meets your eyes.
6. Practice these steps over a few sessions in a quiet area, then gradually increase distractions at a pace your dog can cope with. Don't ask too much too soon, and always ensure that your dog can handle any added distractions before asking him to watch you on cue. When you move to new areas, it's a good idea to use higher value rewards, to ensure you're still the most interesting thing when your dog is learning to watch you.

The most important point is to have fun. Don't keep asking your dog to do the same thing over and over in one session. If he's got it, play a game to cement that new knowledge in his mind. It can be tempting to ask over and over again when a dog is learning a cue. However, forced repetition is counter-productive and will cause confusion or lack of confidence. Carrying out two good cued choices and a game is much more useful, and play has been proven to build memories in dogs, more so than simple repetition.

# Positive Canine Coaching

## Cues

A quick recap on cues and how to introduce them, establishing them as an associated term to a choice.

Firstly, we make an association between the cue and the choice by delivering it after the marker.



Then we strengthen the association by delivering it before the marker.



Then we begin to deliver the cue before the dog makes the choice and soon the dog knows exactly what it means.



The rate at which you bring the cue forward depends on how quickly your dog gets the idea.

## **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is completed when your dog can watch you on cue at home and in the garden. It may take three to six sessions of around ten minutes to get to this point. Remember not to expect too much too soon, or your dog will lose his self-confidence. So, take your time and have fun.

## **Proofing**

Proofing a choice means making it the easiest choice in any situation. Basically, we make the cued choice environment proof, often called generalisation. This is something that can't be rushed. Any dog that can do something perfectly at home will struggle when out in the environment, because everything looks and smells differently — there are simply too many distractions. Think about moving into a new neighbourhood as you slowly get accustomed to your surroundings.

To proof a choice, we make one thing harder at a time. We also raise motivation when we make it harder, by using special rewards when we ask something new and tough from our dogs. It's a good idea to re-teach a cued choice, briefly with the first few environmental changes as this will raise your dog's self-belief and not expect too much from him.

Successful proofing alternates the following points, to teach the dog his choice in all environments he goes to.

## Positive Canine Coaching

- Increase the time your dog holds the cue. For example, in the beginning of the 'watch me' cue, a brief glance is fine. Then you can withhold the marker and reward for increasing moments until your dog has learned to hold your gaze for much longer. Then you can release the dog's gaze by marker and reward delivery.
- Change the environment by adding in reasonable distractions, then re-teach your dog the cue. Start with a quiet field and build to a busy park. Remember to raise your reward and drop your expectations of long cued eye contact at this point. Always raise difficulty of one thing at a time, and ensure the right choice is always the easiest one.
- Change reward delivery and timing as your dog learns the choice in real time.

### Food Reward Delivery

Delivery of your marker and food reward can be used to teach then strengthen a choice.

At the beginning in the very early stages of learning the choice, you can use continuous rewards, which means you pay out regularly and quickly to show your dog that he's doing exactly the right thing for the best possible result. So make sure your deliveries are quick during continuous reward stages.

When your dog is making the choice unprompted, you can change the delivery of your marker and subsequent reward to make it less frequent. This acknowledges that your dog has learned but is not yet fully competent. This reward delivery type is called variable reward and is great for choice reinforcement. A little like a slot machine that pays out often but small, so we keep trying until we get a big pay out. Remember that it's your marker that's variable. So, don't ever mark then not reward because your marker will lose its appeal. Just gradually withdraw your marker as your dog starts to consistently make the right choice.

## Optimism

Canine coaching sets a dog up to succeed by delivering a lesson in manageable steps without expecting too much too soon. This keeps the dog's confidence nice and high, which is excellent for learning. A confident dog will try new things, stay optimistic and happy, which yields the best possible outcome for his efforts. However, if he gets it wrong, gets confused or senses that you are even the least bit frustrated, your dog's body language will change and he will become pessimistic. A dog in a pessimistic state yields the worst possible results for his efforts, will often expect to fail and may not even try at all.

You can boost your dog's optimism by teaching simple-steps lessons, avoiding too much repetition, making the right choices the easiest ones for him and celebrating his achievements every step of the way until he becomes an optimistic genius.

## Takeaway Points

- Coaching must always be fun for the dog.
- Every dog has a neutral body and face position that we see when they are experiencing no strong emotions.
- A happy dog will smile, and is loose and relaxed.
- A worried dog is tense and holds his body tight.
- Confrontational dogs make themselves bigger.
- Non-confrontational dogs make themselves smaller.
- Confused dogs show specific behaviours called calming signals or displacement behaviour.
- Play increases learning.
- Proofing increases the ability for dogs to make correct choices.
- A dog that takes an optimistic view of learning will expect good things and try new things with natural confidence. A dog with low confidence may take a pessimistic view and avoid trying new things due to lack of self-belief.
- We can create optimism by setting our dogs up to succeed and rewarding them when they do.

### Part Four. Useful Cues

Now that we have achieved a good base of knowledge on canine coaching, we can teach some cues that make life easier for you and your dog. For this area, I have chosen useful cues as opposed to ones that may have been traditionally taught in the past.

#### **Alternate Your Tasks**

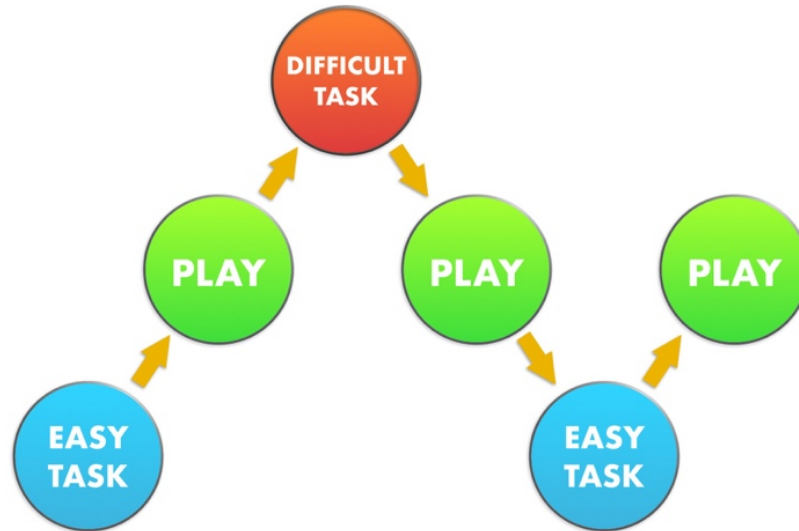
Alternating tasks is something you can do when your dog has learned a few different cues, whilst he is learning new ones. If you ask your dog to do something new and difficult followed by something else new and difficult, it will knock your dog's confidence.

Use a ping-pong effect with your teaching.

Start with something easy, play, switch to a new and tougher lesson, play, then finish with something easy followed by your final game. If your dog is keen to carry on, do one more ping-pong but remember that it's easy to go beyond your dog's capacity and interest so it's better to stop a moment early than to push beyond a successful session and then regret it.

The following visual is a good blueprint for coaching that covers a ping-pong approach to teaching. If you coach every day, using this as your guide will give the quickest results.

# Positive Canine Coaching



A few tips to remember as you coach:

- Every session should begin after your dog has had the chance to toilet and check out the coaching area. So, don't go straight to the park and start coaching — allow your dog a few minutes of freedom to sniff, toilet settle and then do a little coaching.
- Start your sessions with an easy cue, to get your dog keen and confident to learn the next big thing.
- All sessions should end on a good note. End your lesson on a high and your dog will be happy and brimming with confidence.
- Sessions should take no longer than 15 minutes. Shorter sessions are even better. It's better to do a 5-minute session that's good than to push on for longer whilst the dog is bored and confused.
- Sessions should always be fun. If you don't feel like coaching one day, don't do it! Your dog will know that you're not completely engaged, and he will feel bad too.
- End everything with a game. Play has been proven to make learning much easier, so split your session between play and learning — then always finish with play.



### Mission Four. Hand Press



The hand press is an extension of targeting which can be used for husbandry jobs such as visits to the vets and nail clipping. Your dog will literally learn to press his nose into the palm of your open hand until you release him with the marker and reward. The his choice can be strengthened so much that your dog will be so focused on the press that a vet can examine him without too much stress.

It needs to be taught as targeting first, then strengthened via shaping. We teach this early, because it will help with things like recall and jumping up throughout the other missions.

Hand press can be taught by following the steps below:

- This lesson can start with a lure to your palm and capture when your dog touches your hand, or it can be a simple capture if the dog has any interest in touching your hand with his nose. With the lure, you simply place your hand, palm up on the floor, or at your dog's nose height, then place a treat on top of it.
- When your dog gets the treat and inadvertently touches your hand, mark and give him another treat.
- Do this a few times and then progress to just pretending to put a treat onto your hand, but still click as your dog touches your palm.
- Next, you can include a cue word as the dog touches the you. Then, move your hand around and click as your dog follows it and touches you with his nose.
- After the dog is totally confident to touch you with his nose, start to withhold the marker. Do this carefully because if you move on too soon, your dog will lose confidence and will be less capable of learning.
- The idea is to withhold the click, shaping the behaviour of keeping his nose on your hand for longer each time. With a dog that finds this difficult, a simple shaping session would focus on shorter touches, followed by longer touches until the dog really presses his nose into the palm of your hand.

The steps are adaptable depending on the individual dog. Your dog may fly through them, miss some out because he is finding them too easy, or get stuck on some because they are too hard. If you get stuck, then simply make things easier by going back to a step that the dog finds easy in order to rebuild the foundation knowledge and ability.

When you teach the hand press, remember to use your cue in the way we previously covered.

By the time it's taught, you have also taught your dog the basis of targeting. Now you can follow the same steps to target your dog to anything you wish. For example, a soft keyring with its own cue word, in case you ever drop your keys on a walk, and your dog can find them. You could name his toys and target him to each one, or even teach him to fetch the remote control for the TV. Simply replace the final touch and press by shaping the act of picking the item up instead and bringing it back to you. It's a good idea not to teach the hand press and retrieve too close together as your dog may be confused as to whether he's supposed to press or pick up. Perhaps got through a couple more missions after teaching the hand press before teaching a targeting for retrieve.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is accomplished when your dog will press his nose into your hand on cue then hold it there for five full seconds. After this mission is accomplished, remember to proof the choice in many different areas, building distractions gradually.

## **Mission Five. Get Moving**

After your dog has learned to touch your hand on cue, you can use it for fun, recall and as general targeting to your hand for teaching more elaborate cues. Mission five is a fun one to get your dog moving and get his energy flowing. You can carry this out alone or with someone else.

The cue is yours to choose but ensure it varies enough from the hand press cue, to prevent confusing your dog.

## Positive Canine Coaching

1. Go into a spacious area, maybe the garden or a field, and offer your dog your palm to touch. When he does, use a different cue from the hand press and release immediately with the marker and reward.
2. Next, run away from your dog as quickly as possible until you are a few metres away, then offer your palm again, with the new cue. When he runs to you and touches, mark and reward immediately.

Or:

Have another person that your dog knows offer their hand and give the cue, making their hand obvious, then mark and reward instantly. This might need to begin within a couple of metres of your own position and make the distance further over time.

1. Repeat step two five or six times and finish with a game.
2. Getting the dog moving is great for confidence and this mission is particularly good for building self-belief, and the fun and extra movement gets the dog's energy flowing just as play does.

The engagement associated with this mission is wonderful. It's a great relationship builder, a new cue that can be used to call your dog back, and generally great fun for everyone involved. The movement benefits us too, releasing feel-good endorphins that provide happy and positive feelings.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is complete when you have carried out ten full sessions of this exercise, either between you and your dog, with another person whilst your dog runs between you, or as a mixture of the two. Enjoy this mission — it's designed to feel great and get you playing like you did as a child — just for the sake of it.

### Mission Six. Come When Called



Recall is one of the most common problems that people have with their dogs. Calling a dog that won't come when you ask, or even acknowledge you, can be frustrating and embarrassing.

Excellent recall prevents associated embarrassment. Most of all though, it is safe and prevents accident, fights and your dog harassing other dogs, even if he's just being friendly. Many people have dogs that shouldn't be approached on walks — they may be old, ill, scared or defensive.

## Positive Canine Coaching

Running free is every dog's right and really good for them, too. They should run free and enjoy themselves. They should also come back when called for everyone's sake. Teaching a good recall is fundamental for positive walks; we do it by teaching them a recall cue and making sure that coming back is the most motivating choice. We can't just let them free on walks and hope they come back because we have some tasty food and a toy — we need to build and proof the cue like any other mission.

The good news is that you can utilise the hand touch now, to help with recall. If you have been running around and playing with your dog, or he has been running between you and another person, you already have a head start. Your dog should associate running to you with all the best rewards. We just need to go through the steps of making sure your dog makes the right choice, then strengthening that choice until it's the only one.

We first start to teach in the most boring areas, building to areas of high distraction gradually and always setting the dog up to succeed. We do this with tempting rewards for motivation and by creating an environment in which your dog will both make the easiest and best choice.

The following steps are a guide to teaching flawless recall, even if your dog has got into the habit of ignoring you to this point:

## Positive Canine Coaching



Decide your motivator; it's a good idea to go for a high value food reward but not the most favourite, as we will need that as we use distractions. Consider other motivators to add strength to the food reward, too. Some dogs really like squeaky toys, so perhaps have a special toy that only comes out for recall and goes back at the end of every practice. To get recall right, it's important to be rewarding and remain calm. If the dog is not responding to his name when we are kind, he certainly won't improve as a result of anger or frustration.

Decide your cue. You can use your dog's name for this if you want to, then add 'come' or something similar at the end. A word or a whistle or the dog's name all work fine. Start by sitting with the dog and have your food reward available. Once your dog looks at you, use the cue word (we'll use 'come' for this example) and immediately reward the dog. Repeat this a number of times but make sure the dog isn't losing interest.

The second stage requires a little trickery. We are going to use the dog's own actions to make them believe they were coming anyway. As soon as the dog begins walking towards you, make yourself the most attractive thing in the room and encourage him to get there as soon as possible. As soon as he is too close to escape, repeat the cue word 'come' and instantly reward. This method allows the dog's choices to become part of the process, which makes for a solid learning experience.

## Positive Canine Coaching



For this step, be in an environment with enough space for both of you to move a couple of metres in any direction. A back yard will usually do just fine. With the dog on the lead, we begin by repeating step 1 a couple of times to promote the idea of what is happening. It's something familiar and also helps with proofing. Next, we begin to walk away from the dog, just a few steps at first, as soon as he begins to follow, use the 'come' cue and reward as soon as he arrives. Repeat this process and slowly build to longer distances. If the dog seems confident and relaxed, we can add running away to this step but make sure the lead is used safely



## Positive Canine Coaching

By this stage, we should have built up a pretty good response from the dog to the cue word 'come'. Making sure of this in a way that did not allow failure was an important part of building the dog's confidence to succeed. It is a good idea at this stage to change the treat to something with a stronger smell and better taste to aid motivation. Still working from a lead in a big space, allow the dog to wander away. When he is a few steps away, say 'come'. The dog should return immediately for his treat. Repeat this step and allow for longer distances. Be careful not to call the dog in the middle of some other behaviour (such as toileting or sniffing something interesting).

After a lot of careful practice around the home and garden, we can move outdoors to a local park or open space. With the dog still on a lead, use steps 3 and 4 in this new environment. If your dog is likely to run away, even if you're not sure of their complete attention, use a long training lead. Slowly build up the length of lead to allow more freedom. If you can see that the dog is distracted, stop using the cue word. We want him to be 100% sure about what 'come' means. • Go right back to the beginning but this time take the lead away. If at any point the dog does not return, during this stage, go back to using the lead until you are confident, he has got it. Go through steps 1-5 again and proof the behaviour without the lead. Take care if you intend to do this in a public space. At this stage, a tempting distraction may be too much to overcome.

Now that your dog is becoming an expert, you can begin to use the cue word in new environments and even introduce new people to say 'come'. As before, begin with on-the-lead coaching and follow the same steps.

Whilst the steps above are a blueprint for excellent recall, there are some extra coaching skills that will help too, particularly if you're teaching this to a dog that doesn't always respond when called.

## Positive Canine Coaching

First, use your voice with real wisdom. We often see people shouting their dog's name from a good distance, whilst the dog looks totally oblivious to their efforts. I have never once seen a dog hear their name called on the umptieth try and suddenly decide that they have brilliant recall — bombing back to their person like their return was never questioned in the first place. What usually happens is the dog stops listening altogether, whilst their human's voice gets further from them as they run.

When learning recall, dogs have an invisible perimeter around them and their human. If they stay within this perimeter, recall will always succeed, because the choice to come back when called is at a distance they have learned. If, however, the dog goes beyond that perimeter, they are likely not to come back to the first or the twentieth call, particularly if there's something exciting in the distance. If your dog was to go beyond his perimeter and towards something interesting, you can be sure you have expected too much too soon, and after the second time you call him, you need to stop calling him and do something else. Each time a dog runs through their human's voice, they are creating a habit of it and will more likely run through the same voice again. The best prevention of this choice is not to expect too much too soon.

After trying the voice and if your dog loves a squeaker, perhaps pull out the toy and squeak that. It might be just the motivation your dog needs to come back. As soon as he turns and looks, make yourself exciting and your dog might choose to come running back. Don't fall into the trap of calling and squeaking all over the place though, if your dog isn't listening. If the same tactic doesn't work on the second attempt, do something else.

Another little trick you can try is running the other way. If your dog looks at you but considers going further from you, that look is pure gold. It's your chance to be overwhelmingly exciting. Use a high voice and run in the other direction and your dog is likely to come after you, as you have suddenly become more interesting than everything else in the area.

### **Mission Accomplished**

Your mission is complete when your dog comes right back on your first call in five different areas.

## **Mission Seven. Loose Lead and Easy Walks**

I spoke to someone recently that said they had stopped walking their dog because he pulled so much on walks. What a sad situation that is, particularly when a dog has lived with their family since puppyhood. Dogs love walks, the only exception is stressed or worried dogs who benefit from less outside time because the world is a scary place.

A dog pulling on the lead makes that choice because it's his most natural behaviour. No animal is born on a tether and if we put a tether on, we must also include guidance on how to act when tethered – for the dog.

The first thing we consider when a dog pulls on walks is what they are wearing. A collar or slip collar around the neck of a pulling dog is a recipe for throat pain and injury. The dog's throat is a tender area and – in my opinion – collars should be reserved for dogs that never pull or discarded altogether.

The worst use of collars is by trainers and those giving advice that a certain collar is the key to solving a dog's behaviour. For example, a tightening chain or even a chain with prongs on that push into the dog's skin when they pull. Another collar type is one that uses electricity to change behaviour, which is thankfully becoming gradually banned in most European countries.

The idea behind a collar like the ones I have mentioned here is that they make the dog change their choices via the threat of pain. They don't really teach a different choice though or start off with a good lesson because the dog has to practice the behaviour before the pain is delivered.

So, what we have in this situation is a dog that has never been taught to relax on the lead. We then bring in a collar that's supposed to change that dog's behaviour. The dog then pulls as he always does, but this time, he gets hurt, getting punished for doing something that no-one has asked him not to do. The punishment has been delivered by his most trusted human or a stranger whilst his human looks on. How very sad is that?

There is a much nicer option though, an obvious one if we look at it carefully. It could still involve changing walking equipment but this time to something kinder, a harness. There are a range of harnesses available now; however, some scary looking harnesses with areas that tighten in vulnerable places should be avoided. Most are comfortable though and redistribute the dog's weight to make walking less of a struggle for the human and often naturally stop pulling. A good harness will fit around less vulnerable body areas, and be comfortable and kind to the dog. If you have a dog that pulls on a collar, it's worth considering a harness instead.



When we have the walking equipment right, we can begin teaching the dog not to pull. To make the choice of a loose lead because it's rewarding and motivating to do that. Like everything we have learned on this journey so far, we are aiming for helpful choice that's easy and has the best consequences.

First, change the routine. A new routine is a good idea to teach a new skill. If you usually go out of the front door and get dragged to the park down the road by an excited dog, don't start trying to teach a loose lead at the moment you leave the house because your dog will be highly excited and less likely to learn something new. Time your lesson wisely and you will get to the desired point much more quickly. It is wise to begin teaching this lesson during or after a walk, particularly if your dog is high on energy. Trying to teach a loose lead with a dog that's brimming with energy is unlikely to succeed.

## Positive Canine Coaching

We have already covered a few things that will help with this mission. By this point, your dog should be generally way more engaged with you. Be sure to have plenty of tiny food rewards and your chosen marker at the ready.

Then, it's just a case of implementing the following steps:

1. Ensure your dog is not full of energy. You can do this by giving him a loose run or walk before you begin.
2. Have your dog on the lead in an area of no to low distractions. Remember that we need to make this as easy as possible for him, to make your request his easiest choice to make.
3. Stand and wait, and if your dog is trying to pull you, wait until the lead goes slack then mark and reward your dog. It could take a while the first few times but if the area is dull enough, your dog will turn and ask what you're waiting for. This will slacken the lead ready for your marker and reward.
4. When your dog gets the idea, he will start to slacken the lead quickly, because it's rewarding. Great! Keep delivering your marker and reward.
5. When you can stand together comfortably, start to move. Your dog may then pull to the end of the lead because it's what he's used to doing when you walk. At this point, change direction and use the words 'this way' as your dog turns with you, the lead will go slack. Mark and reward this natural good luck and practice.
6. Lengthen your sessions and practice facilitating a loose lead then marking it by changing direction a few times, using your 'this way' cue then ending the session with a game. Put the loose lead on cue too and your dog will start to relax his pulling.

Next, you can build time and distractions by proofing the new choice of walking without dragging you along. You already have a considerable toolkit to help if a big distraction comes along. You can ask for a hand touch, swiftly change direction whilst saying 'this way' or ask your dog to watch you until the distraction has passed by.

Another good thing to do — particularly if your dog is focused on things and reacts to them overtly — is to drop a few small bits of food on the ground for him to sniff out. Providing a distraction that overrules the interesting thing in the environment is key to having your dog choose what you want, rather than something else. It's all about the engagement and how interesting you are at the time.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission can be considered completed when your dog walks nicely on the lead for a full ten minutes. It may take some time to get to this point, but ten minutes is a sweet spot and when you reach this, the rest will come naturally because you have laid the foundation for choosing a loose lead. Then you just need to continue to motivate it for a bit longer whilst adding distractions carefully during proofing.

## Takeaway Points

- Always coach after a walk and give your dog the chance to explore the area and toilet.
- You can teach your dog any new choice by following a ping-pong approach.
- By following the diagram and only teaching one difficult choice per session, you will get to the desired point quicker and on excellent foundations.
- Don't rush teaching anything at all because the foundations are the most important step to learning new choices.
- If you move on too quickly, before the foundations are properly laid, the new behaviour will fall apart later on. Just as any structure would if it were built without foundations.
- Every behaviour is a choice; if you set up the environment to be conducive for your dog to make the right choices, then mark and reward them, and your dog will make them more often.
- Use your voice wisely.



### Part Five. Into the Future

Well done! By now, you should have a dog that makes excellent choices prompted by your own skill and understanding. The final area of this guide cover three more missions that you will find helpful in everyday life with your dog.

#### Mission Eight. Don't Jump Up.



Jumping up is another choice carried out because it's naturally rewarding to the dog. It's also something that can be changed easily by changing the consequences. The best approach to coaching a dog not to jump up is to teach an alternate choice and reward that one instead.

The most important thing to remember is that taking away the opportunity to practice jumping up will have the biggest effect on changing choices. Sometimes, people say ignore the jumping up and the behaviour will go away. But ignoring a practiced behaviour is far less effective than taking away the opportunity to practice altogether. The alternative choice will fill the gap in your dog's mind, where he would usually choose to jump up.

Here's how to do it:

1. The first thing to do is decide on a suitable alternative behaviour. It can be any choice that you put on cue. Common ones include sit, paw touch or even the position of having all four feet on the ground.
2. Teach the alternate choice with your marker and reward, add a cue to it the same way as usual, then practice and proof the choice on cue in any given situation. As your dog is most likely to jump up at home or on greeting the people that he likes best, you can cue the alternate choice early in the process and don't need to wait until it's proofed out and about.
3. When your dog knows the cued choice, you can use it just prior to when he would normally jump up. Mark and reward it, then give him all the attention he's asking for. Naturally, use your timing to get in first so the opportunity to jump is removed altogether. Because jumping up is an excited behaviour, make your attention slow and calm. Stroke him gently and keep your voice gentle — this should naturally calm his excitement to see you.
4. When you're sure your dog has settled down, you can end the greeting interaction.
5. Practice steps one to four every time you greet your dog. He will soon get the idea.

If your dog is a habitual jumper, it may take a little while to change this. The same rules apply though, easy chunks make good choices.

Jumping up is one behaviour that can easily be rewarded outside your control. Whilst it's lovely that other people like your dog, many people don't mind being jumped at and will reward it with attention. If it works, your dog will repeat it.

### **Extinction**

Extinction is a coaching term that describes what happens to a practiced choice when the opportunity for the dog to practice it is taken away. The behaviour becomes extinct and is no longer practiced at all because it has ceased to be reinforced. Extinction is the place where all awkward choices can end up and be replaced by better ones.

If a choice has become extinct though and the dog suddenly gets the opportunity to practice it again, and it gets reinforced, the choice will be stronger than ever. So, if you have spent a few weeks setting your dog up for success by reinforcing a different choice, then he is encouraged to jump up and is rewarded just once, the behaviour will be back. For this reason, everyone in the home must be consistent with the coaching and the opportunity to jump up must be managed outside the home too.

For your interest, the term given to a returning choice that was previously extinct is spontaneous recovery.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission will be completed when your dog has greeted you and/or others consistently a full five times without jumping up. If he jumps up once, even if he's carried out four successful alternate choices before that, you must start again from one.

This mission tests your skill more so rather than your dog's. If you coach with kindness and consistency, your dog will make the right choices and your coaching will show successful results.

### **Mission Nine. Happy Swapping**

Swapping toys and other items including food is a crucial skill. A dog who learns that giving something up leads to getting something more interesting is a fantastic way to prevent resource guarding or even deal with the onset of it. Teaching to swap is also an excellent safety cue. If your dog gets hold of something that could do them harm, for example cooked chicken bones or something nasty at the park, a swap on cue could prevent illness and injury. It's also a great thing to teach puppies early on, to prevent stealing and attention seeking whilst you chase them around trying to get the post or your socks back.

#### **About Resource Guarding**

Resource guarding is a completely natural behaviour for dogs. Dogs that live in groups with well-developed social skills are rarely overt with their requests to keep a resource. In this picture, our little dog is telling everyone not to come near that biscuit in her mouth, simply by the position of her ears.



## Positive Canine Coaching

Lacy was a lovely, easy going, wonderfully cheerful dog that came to us after five years of hardship. Yet, she was always easy to live with and this ear position was as far as her resource guarding went. Interestingly, the other dogs read this ear position with ease, and they respected it, which is an example of perfect canine communication. Most dogs do this when they have a valued resource. It's also part of the social communication of wolves, as it turns out.

Dogs that live with other dogs who don't understand them or with people who haven't learned their intricate language will guard more overtly. Like any other communication, if it doesn't work, it will get louder and more obvious.

Think about a time you have asked for something, politely at first. But when the other person isn't listening, frustration may occur as your patience is tested, and you might get sharp or louder. If the thing you're requesting is important to you, then you may feel pretty tense and your own communication will undoubtedly become more overt. This is often why dogs go from Lacy's subtle ear position above, to growling and snapping when they want to keep a resource. If a dog learns that no-one listens early in their life, they will bypass the subtle signs and go straight to defensive, seemingly aggressive signs.

For many years, dogs have been punished for wanting to keep something they particularly like. Growling and guarding have been considered a deadly sin, particularly where children and safety are concerned. Poor quality trainers still stick their hand — or a weird glove on a stick — into the bowl of a hungry eating dog. Lots of people still say that we must be able to take anything from the dog and they should *submit* and give it up out of respect. Overpowering humans tower over dogs that are just trying to eat their food in peace, to show their warped version of *dominance* over the poor confused dog.

We expect a great deal from dogs, and one of our biggest expectations is that they put up with losing choices yet carry them out without protest. It's not fair to them.

Having something they like and wanting to keep it is perfectly natural. How many things do you have that you would like to keep? I suspect it's many, much more than your dog has. I certainly do. My husband knows never to take anything from my plate when I'm eating. He wouldn't dream of it and he knows that if he wants anything that I order from a menu, he must order a portion of his own. We laugh about it, yet it's a fundamental right that all of us have, to be able to eat undisturbed or keep something we value. If anyone stood over me when I ate, I would be likely to bite them myself. Wouldn't you?

Dogs should be allowed to eat their food and treats in peace. It's a fundamental right to be left alone when eating. Make sure your dog gets peace and quiet to eat, by managing the environment carefully and respecting his right not to fear loss of his food or chews until he has finished them.

Don't get me wrong, resource guarding isn't something that we should allow to escalate until it's dangerous. Some dogs naturally guard and sometimes it must be dealt with. Taking or forcing a valued resource away from a dog is counter-productive though and will only ever succeed in making them more tense around resources. Even if the force is heavy and the dog gets hurt — seeming to give in — they are just internalising their stress. The urge to guard isn't cured, it's just suppressed because the dog is too scared to communicate how he feels.

## Positive Canine Coaching

The way we deal with the onset of resource guarding is not to stop the behaviour, but to stop the dog's perception of the reason for it. When something is scarce, dogs guard what they have more. If they have been hungry or particularly want something, they may guard it. Yet if there is plenty of everything they want, there really is no need. Teaching to swap is a fundamental skill that prevents the dog holding onto something they think is scarce. They know that there's plenty and they won't miss out by swapping. This leads to a dog that is far more relaxed about resources than he would be if we just grabbed what he has and left him with nothing.

For this mission, you will need a few things that your dog likes. The idea in the beginning is to swap something equal to or above the value of the item the dog already has in his possession. So only give free access to low or medium value things at this stage. This sets your dog up to succeed from the offset. It's a good idea to teach your dog to swap when you're playing together, as this is the easiest time to do it and the time your dog is most relaxed.

As you're playing with your dog and they are having fun with something, introduce something they really like and ask them to swap. Add a new cue word at the point you offer the alternative and if you have assessed your dog's preferred items correctly, he should spit out the toy he has and take the thing you offer instead.

If your dog goes tense, is reluctant or doesn't want to swap, you need to raise the value of the thing you're offering in return, until he's motivated enough to hand over the thing he has. You can practice this everywhere you go — but always as a game — until your dog will swap anything because he always gets the better deal.

Eventually, your dog will choose to swap on cue without you having to worry about what he's swapping for. Just remember to keep things fair to him, because if he keeps getting a rough deal when swapping things that he likes, he may become reluctant to give them up at all.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is completed when your dog swaps happily without tension, five times in a row. This is an ongoing mission really because it can be practiced through engaging play at any point. On walks, at home and during other coaching sessions.

**Important note:** If your dog is an established resource guarder and anyone at home is at risk from their behaviour, it's worth finding a local professional to help you. When we live with and love dogs, we tend to be somewhat emotionally blinded if they show a behaviour issue; I certainly do, so a second pair of trained eyes will always help. Remember to vet them carefully and ensure they are educated, positive and ethical in their approach. Feel free to email me if you need help finding someone. My details are at the end of the book.



### **Mission Ten. Relax**

Our final mission is linked to impulse control which is particularly good for dogs who act before they think things through. Relaxing in a suitable space is a form of boundary learning which can be taught, resulting in a dog that is able to relax properly without thinking he needs to react to everything that happens in the home.

Every dog has the right to a warm, comfortable and safe space to relax and regenerate. Relaxation is a fundamental need for your dog, and re-balances his body and mind, from stress hormones and adrenaline built throughout the day. It also provides the right environment to deal with his experiences in the world and will keep him healthy and happy. Without the ability to relax, a dog may be stressed, not be able to heal from minor or major health issues or recover from anxiety.

#### **About Impulse Control**

Impulse control is a fascinating topic because it applies to humans as much as it applies to dogs. Everyone's impulse control is different and based on our individuality, including the tendency to act on impulse and the way that we react when we do.

If we were to act on every one of our impulses, we would probably eat everything bad for us, buy all sorts of useless things, get into lots of road rage incidents and generally say the first thing that comes into our minds. If a dog were to act on every impulse he has, he would be on high alert and highly animated. He would snatch treats, jump up, bark at everything and probably guard a lot of things, too.

Symptoms of lack of impulse control in dogs include:

## Positive Canine Coaching

- Snatching food.
- Jumping up.
- Barking at lots of things.
- Chasing cats.
- Dragging on the lead.
- Dragging through doors.
- Diving out of the car on walks.

The good news is that impulse control can be learned and taught. At its foundation, the ability to control impulses is created by achieving mind space. When we teach mind space, we do so by giving the dog pause in the environment, so he doesn't feel compelled to act on the first impulse he experiences.

Some dogs are more susceptible to lack of impulse control than others and in different areas. Dogs have things they prefer, just like people do and their impulses will depend on what they like or want most of all.

You can begin the foundations for this mission by teaching your dog to wait before taking a treat.

Just sit on a chair and pop a low to medium value treat on your knee. If your dog is a snatch-and-grab type, keep your hand close enough to take hold of the treat again before he grabs it. Then if he tries to take the food, take it back. Your dog will likely then look a little confused. He may sit or take a step back. When he's settled, pop the food back on your knee and ask your dog to wait. Do this for only a fraction of a second before you give permission to take the food by delivering your marker. If you leave it too long, your dog may take the treat anyway, which is counter-productive.

## Positive Canine Coaching

After practicing the above a few times, you can teach your dog that their reward comes directly from your hand when you offer the marker. You will need to be swift with this as he will be used to taking it from your knee. So, pop a low value food on your knee and have two or three small – medium to high value – food rewards in your hand. As your dog waits for the marker whilst leaving the food on your knee alone, get your hand ready so it interrupts his journey to the food on your knee. Then reward from your hand two or three times and allow him to take the food from your knee. Then it's just a case of alternating hand reward and knee reward randomly until your dog never touches the food on your knee — without first getting your permission.

The above exercise is a simple way to teach your dog to give pause before acting on an immediate impulse.

Consider the following ways to practice:

- By putting the food on the ground and rewarding from your hand;
- By asking your dog to wait before taking a toy during a game; or
- By asking your dog to pause on walks, when you let him off for a free run, with the use of a wait, marker, treat and their freedom.

The mission itself is similar. Yet conducive to rest and relaxation for your dog, in a managed way. It's important that we use this particular cue at the right time rather than just at any point in the day.

## Positive Canine Coaching

For example, my dogs relax early in the morning whilst I write, then I next expect them to relax after we have been for a walk and they have eaten. It's reasonable to expect them to relax then, because their needs have been met. I also ask them to relax in the evenings because I usually set a few problems for them to solve in their playroom three hours after their walk ended. After their mental stimulation, which usually takes about half an hour, I give them their final meal and reasonably expect relaxation. I'm lucky enough to spend all day with my dogs and can do this with no problems.

Many people work though, and dogs spend a lot of time alone. Boredom and loneliness may set in and when dogs get the chance for interaction, they will usually embrace it. To come home from a day's work and say a quick 'hi' to our dog then expect them to relax isn't fair. A walk, a play and perhaps even a coaching session later, and we could reasonably expect our friend to be ready for a rest. Physical and psychological energy needs to be used up for a dog to be truly happy. If your dog spends a lot of time alone, it may be worth considering an excellent canine day care or dog walker to help share your guardianship duties.

When your dog is healthily tired and has fulfilled the things he needs, such as toileting, walking, playing, engagement and interacting, you can begin to tackle this mission.

Start by deciding on your dog's boundary point. This can be anything at all. A blanket is easiest because it's moveable and can go on their bed, the sofa (if they use it) in the dog's crate if they have one, or even in the car for long journeys. Ensure your dog can lie fully on the blanket and be comfortable. Decide also on a suitable cue word for asking your dog to go to their blanket or bed.

## Positive Canine Coaching

For this exercise we return to targeting, though we approach it a little differently this time around. Here's how we do it:

1. Put the blanket on the ground in front of your dog and pop a food reward on it, so that he has to step onto the blanket to get the food.
1. As he fully steps onto the blanket, deliver your dog's marker, food reward and cue. Practice this a few times until your dog gets the idea that getting onto the blanket is an excellent choice.
2. When your dog is ready, stop putting the treat on the blanket and just wait. If your dog gets the idea, he will step onto the blanket for the marker. If he doesn't get it straight away, pretend to pop a treat down — to give him a reasonable clue. Practice this a few times.
3. Bring the cue forward in the usual way, practice until your dog is getting on the blanket when you ask and is released when you give the marker and reward.
4. Move the blanket around to ensure that your dog knows it's that that he's aiming for. Then practice in a few different places.
1. Then it's just a case of shaping a longer stay on the blanket before the marker is delivered. You can shape this by waiting for your dog to sit or lie down naturally as he tries to solicit the reward from you. Reward the change of position instantly, then withhold your marker in the same way to increase the time he waits on his blanket.

It's an excellent idea to leave your dog's blanket on his usual resting place throughout the day whilst you're at home together because you can capture his choice to go to his blanket and lie down naturally, with an occasional marker and reward. It will also teach your dog that the blanket is his usual resting place and not just something else he is learning and having fun with. When the two things become threaded in your dog's mind, which may take some time, your dog will have learned to relax on cue and in general, which will be excellent for his health and wellbeing.

This mission should not be rushed. Practice it regularly but always release your dog earlier rather than later because this prevents him moving off the blanket of his own accord. Work steadily over a couple of weeks or even longer if you need to. Remember the importance of well-laid foundations.

### **Mission Accomplished**

Your final mission is accomplished when your dog will go to his blanket — placed in his usual resting spot — on cue and wait there for full ten minutes.

### **The Optional Release Cue**

Some coaches like to teach a release cue to follow a cued choice. It's completely up to you if you want to do it. It offers consistency to the dog and structure to the learning experience. Throughout the book, we have released with the marker and reward as its most conducive to a simpler way of learning.

## Positive Canine Coaching

A release cue means that the dog learns to wait after a marker, and reward is given for a formal release. It's useful on walks when letting your dog off the lead, or when asking them to wait before getting out of the car. A release cue is also excellent for reinforcing impulse control.

Common release cues are 'off you go' or simply 'go' but you can choose anything that you prefer. Your dog doesn't mind. My first Labrador enjoyed the word 'bananas' so we used that.

To teach a release cue, you can alternate the number of markers and rewards you give. For example, whilst we have been giving one marker and reward so far, you can actually use as many as you like. The important thing to do is ensure your dog knows that another marker and reward is coming, so just wait it out after the first one. You can make this really obvious by delivering your first marker and treat and holding the second one in front of your dog's nose before you mark and deliver the second reward.

As you deliver the second reward, add in your release cue and move away from your dog, then play!

Practice with a varying amount of markers and rewards, and after a few repetitions your dog will start to recognise the release cue. Then you can use it as a cued choice to end any other cued choice that comes before it.

## Takeaway Points

- It's much better to teach an alternative choice than just ask a dog to stop making an unhelpful one and leaving a gap in its place.
- If a habitual choice is replaced by another choice, the first one can become extinct. Extinction means that the choice, or the related behaviour, goes away.
- If there's a reminder of the extinct choice in the environment, and it's reinforced just once, it is likely to come back stronger than ever.
- Resource guarding usually occurs because the dog is scared of losing something valuable to them.
- We must never punish a resource guarding dog or force their resource away from them. They are not being naughty, they are just being a dog.
- Plentiful resources within a safe managed environment will relieve the dog's tension around the things he's worried about losing.
- Impulse control coaching gives a dog space in his own head, so that he can make more informed choices.
- All dogs need a safe space and ability to relax.
- We must provide physical and mental exercise before we can expect our dogs to relax.
- A release cue can be taught and used with every cued choice you teach to your dog.



## Summary

Thank you for coming on this journey with your dog. I hope you have enjoyed every moment and that your lives have been enriched by the missions and your achievements. I also hope you have learned a lot along the way about how your dog thinks, learns and the motivations behind his behaviour.

I hope your dog has learned a lot and that your relationship is greatly improved by the vast amount of new skills you have together. My ultimate aim for this book was to raise your understanding of your dog, settle your friend down and ensure that you both have lots of fun along the way.

If you need further help with your dog, or he seems to have some serious fear, habits or shows aggressive tendencies, please consider having someone visit your home to help both of you. It's difficult to see our own dogs objectively because we love them so much, and a trained professional can take an objective view and offer the right kind of help and advice exactly where it's needed.

Please visit my Facebook writing profile here <https://www.facebook.com/sallyanddogs/> I would love to have your feedback as you work through each mission. Pictures would be an added bonus and of course, any questions are more than welcome.

If you need practical help with your dog, please remember there are a lot of myths out there. If you have any doubt that someone is kind, educated and completely ethical don't employ them. If you need help finding someone, contact me as [sally@sallygutteridge.com](mailto:sally@sallygutteridge.com) and I'll help you find an excellent canine professional in your area.

### Tutored Study

I do have other books on Amazon if you're interested in learning more. In addition, my other dog project is an education resource called Canine Principles. We provide fully accredited canine focussed certification through a variety of dog focussed learning experiences delivered with full tutored support.

So, if you have found this book particularly interesting and want to take your new knowledge further, there are some reviews below. Canine Principles dog education courses can be found at [canineprinciples.com](https://canineprinciples.com)

## Final Note

If you're reading this through Kindle, could you please click the star rating at the end of the book? If you have the book in paperback would you please consider leaving a review on Amazon? Reviews and ratings are the lifeblood of self-published authors.

Reviews dictate readers, and more readers means better understood dogs and happier guardians. They also get this work seen by as many people as possible, so I would really appreciate it if you took a moment just to click to share your experience. Thank you.

If you have any questions or just want to say hello, you can contact me at my website [sallygutteridge.com](http://sallygutteridge.com) or email me at [info@sallygutteridge.com](mailto:info@sallygutteridge.com). I respond to every single message.

Thank you for joining me.