



# Bark Park's Talking Dogs

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## How to Choose the Right Dog Trainer

Great teachers have the ability to draw you in and make learning fun. Just like people, dogs learn best when the learning is a game. Think back to a teacher you really liked. Most of us remember a person who cared and wanted to make a difference. Dogs also enjoy learning from teachers who care. A great dog trainer must love dogs and people. A great dog trainer is a good communicator that will effectively coach you to train your dog. It is possible to teach a dog anything she is mentally or physically capable of using positive reinforcement. Positive

reinforcement is anything that the dog determines to be a reward. Most dogs enjoy food, toys and human attention, so those things can be used to train those dogs. If a dog does not like human attention then you won't be able to use that to train the dog. A good dog trainer understands this and has lots of creative ideas for motivating your dog. Positive Reinforcement The most powerful way to modify behavior is to use positive reinforcement. If a dog trainer recommends that you use spray bottles, throw objects near your dog or

shout at your dog, then that trainer lacks the understanding of the principles of behavior. Dog training is not regulated. Anyone can say they are a dog trainer, so consumers need to be educated to choose wisely. Imagine if teaching children was not regulated, what kind of teachers might we have? How would you know if the teacher your child has truly understands her subject? Consumers are in a vulnerable position, and uneducated dog trainers exploit this every day. Trainers committed to using positive reinforcement can be identified by the tools they use. Simply ask the trainer what type of equipment they use. Many tools are dog friendly, meaning that they do not medically harm the dog and are not based on coercion. Unfortunately many people are still using old tools that can be harmful and are forcing the dog Cont. on Page 3

## What's **NEW** at Bark Park ?

**Holiday Cards!  
And Photos!**

Make your appointments Now to have your dog photographed for your Custom Christmas Cards this year! We will have several options available for the photos and for messages inside the cards. More samples are available to view on our website.



**Group Classes are Back!** Starting Wednesday October 1st, 2008, we will be offering basic manners classes. Every Wed. at 5:30 pm or 6:30 pm and Every Sat at 10:00 am and 11:00 am. Call now to Register or Sign up Online!

**VISA Credit Cards! MasterCard**

We Now accept Credit Cards, E-checks and PayPal, Online ONLY. We still gladly accept Checks and Cash at Bark Park.



## Ask a Trainer?

### How do I stop my dog from bolting out the door?

Dogs learn mostly by association. This means that anything they associate with a reward or a good thing, they will repeat. In the case of an open door, there are several good things—new sights and smells, someone chasing them and “freedom”. The goal is to make the open door associated with something even better than those things? It can actually be as simple as hot

dogs! What you do is take your dog to the front door and show them you have hot dogs. Ask them to sit and give them a tiny piece of hot dog. Repeat this a couple of times so that they are focused on you and the hot dogs. Then open the front door just a crack and toss them tiny pieces of hot dog one at a time for about 10 seconds then close the door and praise them. Wait a few seconds and repeat the procedure. Continue to repeat the procedure each time gradually opening the door wider and adding time to how long it stays

open. Don't Go Too Fast here! You want your dog to Succeed. After a few sessions, only give the hot dog after you have closed the door. If you do this procedure for several days, eventually the dog will not expect the treat until after the door has opened and closed. If you don't want to keep a treat jar near the door you can eventually reward your dog only with praise. But in the beginning use the hot dogs liberally to get your message across and later switch to something that doesn't need refrigerated to keep in the



Photo by Janice 2008

Photo by Gil Fernandez 2008



“Colt” in the Tire at the Agility Trial

“Dogs are not machines...”

“Don't expect any dog to learn in an organized or orderly fashion.”

**Success Story - WOW!** I couldn't be happier! Colt was awesome and we had so much fun. Our runs were respectable considering it was a first for both of us, the lack of time we have been able to spend training and Colt's history. There were no fearful episodes at all, he was completely into what we were doing and truly enjoyed himself. I am so proud of him and just ecstatic at how much he has overcome in such a short time! Colt is living proof that dogs can overcome a bad history and move on to even greater things. Rescue dogs ROCK!

## How Dogs Learn

Dogs are not machines; you can't just put in your kibble, buckle the collar and get your well-behaved dog. Dogs are a lot like people in that they are very individual in many ways, like how they learn, what stresses them, what motivates them, what their preferences are, etc. Some learn very quickly even with little or no kibble. Others require, extra kibble, quiet while they have it, repetitions to know what they are supposed to do with it, etc. Just like people. Certain breeds are known for being easier to train, but individual dogs within the breed or mixes of the breed, still may not live up to that expectation. Generalizations such as “it's not possible to obedience train terriers, especially Jack

Russells”, or “Border Collies are so smart, they practically train themselves.” are not always true. The truth is there have been some very famous well trained terriers including quite a few Jacks, and while Border Collies are extremely smart, sometimes that fact can even hinder their learning when they anticipate too much. The lesson here is that ALL dogs have the capacity to learn, it's our job to figure out which way each one does that best. Don't expect any dog to learn in an organized or orderly fashion. When you think they've got something one day, they'll give you a completely blank look when you ask for it another day. Or, during another exercise, you may be



Photo by Heather Bencivengo 2008

“Colt” Happily Studying for His Canine Good Citizen Exam!

ready to give up after really struggling and suddenly your dog gets it. Learning occurs randomly, not specifically. Never, ever say “this dog is stupid” or “This dog can't be trained”. I've never truly heard about or experienced a truly brainless dog. More likely (in fact almost always) Your dog communication skills aren't well developed yet. It actually



## How to Choose the Right Trainer, continued from front page.

into compliance. If a tool is forceful it can create not only medical problems for the dog but also cause unwanted side effects. These side effects can include serious problems like aggression which means that your dog may end up behaving worse than she did before the training started.

**Dominance** If a trainer you are interviewing makes use of the word dominance, this may be a red flag. Unfortunately, because of the lack of regulation of dog training, most use this word incorrectly. Even more alarming is the fact that the use of the word usually causes owners to assume that their dog is trying to take over and that they must be forceful with the dog to prevent this. That fact is that dogs are domesticated.

Domestication by definition means that dogs are dependent on people. Furthermore, dogs are just like people they are only trying to get what they want. Attributing a dog's unknown motivation to "dominance" is almost always inaccurate.

**Punishment** When interviewing a trainer, ask what type of punishment they use. The answer you are looking for is time out,

removal of rewards or negative punishment. Any trainer that uses objects that are thrown at dogs, or spray bottles used to intimidate a dog, should be avoided. Leash yanking, shouting and hitting are other forms of undesired punishment. The reason it is important



to avoid anything that intimidates or causes fear in a dog is that these methods cause side effects. These side effects can include other new problems, your dog becoming aggressive or your dog becoming so fearful that she is unable to learn. **Certification** While there are some excellent dog trainers available that are not certified, there are many certifications available at this time that are a good starting point. Here is a list of certifications that require rigorous study. **CAP2**, Clicker Assessment Protocol level 2

[www.LearningAboutDogs.com](http://www.LearningAboutDogs.com) CPDT, Certified Pet Dog Trainer a certification connected to [www.APDT.com](http://www.APDT.com) CDBC, Certified Dog behavior Consultant offered through Two other organizations that offer endorsements they are [www.NADDI.org](http://www.NADDI.org) and [www.IIACAB.com](http://www.IIACAB.com)

The certifications listed above all take years to get. They require study, experience and a completion of some form of testing. Avoid any trainer who was required to train for weeks to be certified. Dog training is based on the

science of behavior and that takes years to truly understand. There are many questionable certifications available that are granted after less than a month of training. **Abuse** There are trainers in every state that have been charged with animal cruelty. While these people are not truly trainers, they are usually smart marketers and know how to fool people into using their services. They frequently offer in board training and it is common that they do not allow people to observe their training because it is "secret". The secret is that they are using abuse. If a trainer does not let you watch the training process, pass on hiring that trainer. There are no secrets; dog training is based on the science of behavior this information is available to anyone with a commitment to learning. Abusive training will cause a dog to go into a state called learned helplessness. In learned helplessness a dog is very quiet and shut down. This is what some people want from their pets so they mistakenly think the dog has been trained. The reality is that training modifies behavior not personality.

Learned helplessness will fade over time, if the abuse isn't continued, and frequently the dog will then display aggressive behaviors. **Joy** Just like people, dogs learn best when the training is fun. Learning to sit, down, come, stay and so forth can be taught as games that are enjoyable to both the human and the dog. By making what you need your dog to learn a fun game both you and your dog are much more likely to comply. You are more likely to practice, and your dog is more likely to respond to the cues that you give her. **Trust and Compliance** When you find a trainer you trust and like, stick with that trainer. It is important to make a commitment to the training process so it can be successful. Changing your trainer's instructions or including things you have seen on TV or read in a book can undermine your dog's learning. Most of all, the goal is for both you and your dog to feel happy during training, that is why we have dogs to have a fun companion to bond with.

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## How Dogs Learn, Cont.

may be you who is making the mistakes in your communication and blaming your dog. As you learn how dogs think and perceive our actions and language and consistently apply that knowledge your dog will automatically become better behaved. Honest! The reason is because all this time your dog didn't understand what you expected or the cues you gave the dog meant something entirely different to the dog than it did to you.



This Newsletter is Produced and Sponsored by Bark Park Dog Daycare and Positive Training

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**Cage Free Dog Daycare**

**Where Your Dog Feels at Home When You Have to Be Away**

**Force Free Positive Training**

**Where It's Always Fun to Learn How to Behave**

E-mail: [questions@barkparkdogdaycare.com](mailto:questions@barkparkdogdaycare.com)

Look for this sign on County Line Rd. in front of Bark Park



## Did You Know?

...that October is Adopt-A-Pet Month?

...that October 4th there is a Golf Tournament at Rivard to Benefit the SPCA of Hernando County No-Kill Shelter?

...Friday October 24 at 6pm there is a Pet Costume Contest at the Hernando

County Fairgrounds Fall Festival?

...a dog that has been exposed to lots of different environments is better able to adjust to new situations?

...a dog that is taught tricks is

mentally happier because they regularly use their brain?

...not all dogs like all dog toys, they have preferences just like people?

...a dog who spends 15 minutes using its nose, such as in a game of "find it", is mores tired than if it just went on an hour walk?

At Bark Park Dog Daycare, we are committed to making your dog feel at home when you have to be away. We are a cage-free facility. We offer daycare, overnight boarding and force-free positive training. We are located near Spring Hill/Brooksville on Hernando/Pasco County Line Rd. between US 41 and the Suncoast Parkway. We are open Monday—Friday from 7 am—6 pm. Please feel free to stop in and see our facility anytime during normal business hours. Please see our Website for lots of pictures a video and even more information.

[www.barkparkdogdaycare.com](http://www.barkparkdogdaycare.com)



Happy Holidays!

Make Appointments NOW For Your Dog!

Some of the things your dog can look forward to during a day at BARK PARK...

\*A 2 1/2 Acre Dog Playground that is Cage & Crate FREE and Completely Supervised

\*Safe, Clean, Dog Friendly Environment

\*Fun Engaging Play with Other Dogs and Qualified Professional Bark Rangers

\*Indoor Climate Controlled and Spacious Outdoor Play Opportunities

\*Doggie Swimming Pools, Treadmill and Play Areas

\*Doggie Games...Fetch, Frisbee, Tug-o-War, Find-It, Agility, FlyBall, Obedience

\*Quiet Restful Periods on Choice of Plush, Comfy Beds, Couches and Cots

\*Lots of Toys and Tons of Love

See your best friend soon!

## Next Time in Talking Dogs...

- Is Your Dog Aggressive?
- Answers to Your Questions
- Do Dogs Need Toys?
- Dog Sports and Other Fun Things to Do With Your Dog



### WHY DAYCARE FOR YOUR DOG?

- Dog's are social, pack animals and there are proven benefits from spending time with other dogs
- Daycare reduces boredom, eases separation anxiety and destructive behaviors that may occur when a dog is left home alone with nothing to do
- After exercising, playing, and socializing throughout the day your dog will be healthier, happier, and peaceful in the evenings
- You're having an open house, your carpets cleaned, pest control, etc. and your dog needs a place to go
- No more coming home to an overexcited dog, destroyed furniture, or messes on the floor.