



CHANGING UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOR

HELPING YOUR DOG TO OVERCOME DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Many dogs display unwanted behavior in certain situations. During these times, they are usually too overwhelmed to listen. In order to change their behavior, we need to start by changing how they feel about the situation. Creating positive feelings toward the challenging situation targets the root of the problem instead of merely addressing the outcome (unwanted behavior). This will make it easier for the dog to focus and learn from us.

HOW TO START:

- Determine what causes your dog to react (**THE BAD**). Does he bark at passing dogs or run and hide when the nail clippers come out?
- A trigger is the part of **THE BAD** that causes the unwanted behavior to start.
- Find something that your dog considers extremely valuable (**THE GOOD**). Dry kibble and Milk-Bones are not enough. Some suggestions include small pieces of hot dog or baked chicken.
- Pair **THE GOOD** with the step before the trigger. Continually reward your dog while **THE BAD** is present and stop when it's gone.
- Make small progressions through **THE BAD**, treating with **THE GOOD** at each stage. The goal is not to see the unwanted behavior. Only move forward when your dog is relaxed at the previous stage.
- Once your dog reacts in a relaxed manner during **THE BAD** situation, you can start teaching him an alternative behavior to offer instead. For example: Now that your dog isn't barking at passing dogs, we can ask for his attention or a sit instead. This will give him a behavior to do instead of barking.

WHAT CAN I USE THIS FOR?

This approach for addressing unwanted behaviors can be used in a variety of situations including guests arriving, collar grabs, foot restraint, moving people or cars, and being around other animals.

OTHER THINGS THAT CAN HELP:

- Diet: Feeding your dog a healthy diet will help ensure that all his nutrition needs are satisfied.
- Training: A dog focused on a task will feel more confident in his environment.
- Exercise: A well-exercised dog is less reactive than one with too much energy.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Use premium treats for this. Remember: We're working on something that the dogs finds difficult or scary. We want to help him by using something he finds extremely valuable (\$1 versus \$100).
- The dog should continually receive treats while the negative stimulus is present.
- If the dog will not take treats, he's too overwhelmed and the training should go back a few steps.
- This will take time. Patience is the key to success!

