

# ACADEMY OF CANINE BEHAVIOR

## Basic Behavior and Obedience Class

Orientation:

### **FOCUS: Conditioning Markers.**

1. Your dog will never take responsibility for getting trained. You must take the responsibility for educating your dog. This means that you must also take the responsibility of learning to communicate with your dog. Without communication there can be no education.
2. In the canine world there are no such things as equals; you will either lead or follow. A dog's reasoning ability is similar to that of a two-year old child. A two-year old child does not make an effective leader; you must be the leader.
3. Every time you interact with your dog, they are learning something. If you are not teaching them the right behavior, they are learning the wrong behavior.
4. Negative attention is still attention. If the only way your dog can get your attention is by being bad, you will train them to act bad for attention. Remember to always reward your dog for good behavior. Pay attention when they are doing something right and let them know you like that behavior.
5. The consistency of your dog's behavior, good or bad, will mirror the consistency of your training. If you train your dog by repeating the command ten times, you can expect the dog to respond 10% of the time.
6. A dog's concept of right and wrong are very different from ours. Do not expect the dog to know what you may think is right or wrong.
7. If you are correcting the dog, are you certain the dog understands why it is being corrected? Have you educated and then generalized the concept?
8. You are your dog's primary role model!!!!
9. Your dog's hearing is much better than yours. There is no need to shout.
10. Vocabulary will be decided by the amount of time and energy you choose to put into their education.

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### **HOMEWORK:**

**GOOD:** This is a conditioned vocabulary word. This week find ways of influencing a positive and happy state of mind in your dog. While the dog is in this state of mind, quietly and softly repeat the word "Good". Some examples of ways to bring about this state of mind are:

- \* while the dog is eating a treat
- \* while you are scratching the dog's back
- \* while you are rubbing the dog's belly

**SIT:** This is a concrete vocabulary word. Work on educating this position, either by using treats to encourage the head up and rear down or by placing the dog in the sit position.

**OKAY:** This is a release word meaning the exercise is finished. Make sure you release the dog from each command. It must be your idea the exercise is over.

**QUIET:** This is taught as an abstract word. This means stop barking or whining. Should the dog persist, the consequence of not being "Quiet" will be a squirt from your vinegar and water bottle.

This week be thinking of the behavior you do want from your dog, not the behavior you don't want!

**NEXT WEEK: Bring a rug for your dog and some special treats that he likes.**

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## Word List

The following list of words are some of the vocabulary taught to dogs that are enrolled in our training program. This is just a sampling of words - not all dogs will need to learn every word on the list. Some of the words also have hand signals that can be used. When saying most of these words to your dog, please keep in mind that you are requesting that the dog do something for you. *Give the command in a calm, authoritative voice.* It helps if you remember to say the word as it is spelled, e.g., the word “sit” is a three-letter word - do not say it as if it were spelled with more letters “s-s-i-i-i-i-t-t”. To get a little more authority in your voice, you may say the word “sit” as “SIT”. But this should not be done with an increase in volume. It is an authoritative TONE that should be used. The commands you use should also be used in praising the dog for a job well done. Tell the dog what it did that made you happy, e.g., “GOOD SIT!”

**GOOD:** This word is used to communicate with your dog that he has made the right choice. It is said with a pleasant tone, and sometimes accompanied by physical praise (treats or pats). When your dog hears this word, there should be no doubt in his mind that you are happy with him. Be genuine with your praise!

**NO:** This may be the hardest word to use properly. When you use this word, the dog should NOT feel a sense of dread. Rather, it is used to let the dog know that he must *THINK*, as he has made the wrong choice. If he puts his mind in gear and pays attention to you, you will help him figure out what he can do to make you happy. It is in conjunction with this word that you are allowed to give the dog a correction. Please make sure you understand this concept completely before you work with your dog.

**OKAY:** Okay is the word that lets the dog know that she is done doing whatever you just asked her to do; the *release*. It is important for you to learn to use this word consistently, as it helps the dog understand the difference between one command and the next.

**RIGHT HERE:** An informal version of the command “Heel”. When your dog is on leash, it is both the dog’s job and your job to make sure there is no tension on it. Most dogs do not seem to be bothered by a tight leash, even if it causes them constant pressure on their necks. This command means that you can walk with your dog not pulling on the leash *and have their attention on you*. If your dog does pull against the leash, simply use your “No” and say “Right Here.” Make sure that you are not the one guilty of tightening the lead, thus causing the dog to pull against it. This command does not require the dog to sit when you stop. It does require that the dog walk on a loose leash, at your left side, with his shoulder roughly aligned with your leg. This makes for a more controlled walk with your dog and should not be used the entire length of the walk.

**LET’S GO:** This command is used when moving from a stationary position. It is a courtesy command, letting your dog know, “I’m moving, move with me.” The only rule for your dog in a “Let’s Go” is that the leash be kept loose at **your** pace. Once you have established your “Let’s Go”, you can say “Right Here” and get your dog into position.

**SIT:** This command is used to get your dog into a sit position. The hand signal for “Sit” is raising your hand, open and flat, palm up, over the dog’s head.

**DOWN:** This command is used to get the dog into the laying down position. It is NOT used to make the dog get off of something. The hand signal for “Down” is moving your hand, palm down, towards the ground in front of the dog.

**OFF:** This command means that the dog should get all four paws back on the ground, off of you, off of someone else, or off of the furniture. Remember, negative attention is still attention. Use your leash or your body to get your dog off of you, NOT your hands.

**WAIT:** Often thought of as the most useful of the commands, this word means respect the boundary. It is used at doorways to let the dog know he must wait for permission to go through. It is also used when the dog is getting into or out of the car, and when you want your dog to wait in a certain area or room of the house. **It does not require the dog to hold a position, such as “Sit” or “Down”.** It only requires that the dog wait for your permission to cross over the boundary at which the “Wait” was given.

**STAY:** This command is an absolute. The dog must stay in the spot *and* position he was placed in, regardless of what is going on around him. Praise includes both the dog’s position (usually sit or down) and the word “Stay”, e.g., “Good Sit-Stay!” You do NOT call your dog off of the “Stay” - you MUST return to the dog to release him, with a tap on the head given simultaneously with the word “Okay”.

**LEAVE-IT:** This command is used when the dog is paying attention to anything you do not want him to. If there is food on the floor or on a table, if a cat or another dog has his attention, or if he is bothering another person, tell him to “Leave it”. Keep in mind that he may think that you only want him to disregard the object for the moment, and may return his attention to it shortly. If your goal is to get him to always leave something alone (i.e. the garbage), you will have to use this command many times under many conditions until he generalizes that you never want him to pay attention to what ever it is.

**QUIET:** This command simply means to stop barking.

**RUG and WAIT ON YOUR RUG:** This command means the dog should go to his special, pre-designated “reserved parking spot” in your house. It is your responsibility to first show your dog what his rug is, and ensure that the dog remains undisturbed when he gets there. Guests and children should not be allowed to pester the dog while he is on his rug, so the rug will be seen by your dog as a restful and desirable place to be. The dog is not required to hold a position, such as “Sit” or “Down” while he is on the rug. The command is “Wait”, so he must simply respect the boundary.

**COME HERE:** We use the command “Come” in conjunction with the word “Here” so it is said as “Come here!” This is the most fragile command most owners will ever attempt to use with their dog. It takes months to get this command properly conditioned, and it can be ruined in a matter of moments by a thoughtless act on the part of the owner. It is a word that needs to be reinforced many times a day. To reinforce it, it is important to understand what you are really asking the dog to do. To the dog, the word “Come” is not the process of *getting* to you - it is the end result of *being* with you. You can reinforce this word by simply petting your dog and telling him what a “Good Come Here!” it is when he is with you. That way, the dog hears the word in a positive format many times a day. If the only time the dog hears the word “Come “ is when you are yelling at him to stop doing something that he is enjoying doing (such as leaving the park), he will resent the command. “Come Here” must always have a positive association, especially when being introduced.

**YOUR DOG’S NAME:** Please use your dog’s name with respect, the same as you would like your own name used. His name is not a command - it is simply used as a courtesy to let the dog know you are talking to him.

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## Proper Sequence of Commands

**GOOD:** This word is used to communicate with your dog that he has made the right choice. It is said with a pleasant tone, and sometimes accompanied by physical praise (treats or pats). When your dog hears this word, there should be no doubt in his mind that you are happy with him. Be genuine with your praise!

**NO:** This may be the hardest word to use properly. When you use this word, the dog should NOT feel a sense of dread. Rather, it is used to let the dog know that he must *THINK*, as he has made the wrong choice. If he puts his mind in gear and pays attention to you, you will help him figure out what he can do to make you happy. **It is only in conjunction with this word that you are allowed to give the dog any form of correction.** Please make sure you understand this concept completely before you work with your dog.

**OKAY:** Okay is the word that lets the dog know that she is done doing whatever you just asked her to do; the *release*. It is important for you to learn to use this word consistently, as it helps the dog understand the difference between one command and the next.

### Three important techniques for reinforcing your dog's vocabulary

**1. Understand whether the word is a CONCRETE or ABSTRACT command.** If it is a concrete vocabulary word, you can show the dog how to do what you're asking (e.g., you can physically place your dog into a "Sit"). If the word is an abstract vocabulary word, it means you cannot show the dog how to do it. If so, you must rely on the association of the word and the action (e.g., your dog learns the word "Speak" by associating it with barking).

**2. Follow the proper sequence of commands: ASK-GET-PRAISE.** Make sure the dog knows you are talking to him by stating his name to get his attention (This does *not* mean the dog has to look at you), then clearly ASK the dog to do what you want by stating the proper command for the situation. If the dog does what you asked, PRAISE him with the command word, e.g., "Good Sit!" If the dog does not do what you asked, GET what you asked for by telling the dog "No" and clearly give the command word again, e.g. "No, ... sit." You may or may not need to use a correction in conjunction with the word "No", depending on where your dog is in his training. It is very important that the command word never be repeated immediately after itself (sit, sit, sit, SIT). It must always be asked only once and followed by a "Good" if the dog complied, or a "No" if the dog did not. An example of the proper sequence of commands is as follows:

**ASK:** "Fido, sit." ..... (*Fido doesn't sit*)  
**GET:** "No (correct), sit." ..... (*Fido still doesn't sit.*)  
**GET:** "No (correct), sit." ..... (*Fido now sits.*)  
**PRAISE:** "Good sit!" ..... (*Fido gets praise*)\*\*

**\*\*Remember:** The level of praise should reflect how well your dog performed. As a general rule, your dog gets physical praise (treats or pats) when he responds **first time** asked.

**3. Troubleshoot after three attempts at the command.** If you have asked more than three times and your dog has not complied, then one of two things is wrong. Your dog may not understand what you are asking, in which case you must back up and make sure you have done a good job of educating. Or, your dog chooses not to mind you because you have not presented yourself as a leader to whom your dog feels compelled to listen. In either case, examine *your* training methods to understand why your dog is acting a certain way.

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## THOUGHTS TO A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR DOG

1. The cornerstones of **ALL** good relationships are **Communication** and **Respect**. Once you have both the By-Product is **TRUST**.
2. Proper training is about opening **Communication**. Instead of teaching your dog "commands" think of teaching them vocabulary. Dogs are capable of learning hundreds of words.
3. **Respect** is earned not bought or bribed. Good leadership (clear communication, being predictable, taking charge when there is some threat and role modeling confidence) will lead to **respect**.
4. Trying to make Rules without a Relationship leads to Rebellion.

### BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

1. The number one rule when you want to modify a behavior is to **NOT** let your dog practice the behavior you want to change.
2. It is called Behavior **MODIFICATION** not Behavior Elimination. You must identify what **NEW** behavior you want that will **REPLACE** the undesired behavior.
3. A dog's concept of right and wrong is very different from ours. Do not expect the dog to know what you may think is right or wrong. Often the information you think you are giving the dog is **NOT** the information the dog is receiving.

### TRAINING THOUGHTS

1. Every time you interact with your dog it is **TRAINING**. If you are reacting to a behavior of the dog, it is training you.
2. Negative attention just brings more negative behavior. If the only way your dog can get your attention is by being bad, you will train him to act bad for more attention.
3. Catch your dog doing something right and identify and encourage that behavior.
4. If you want a dog that is consistent in responding to you, you must be consistent in your response to actions of your dog.
5. You are your dog's primary role model. If you are not, you should be.
6. Good training puts the dog in charge of their actions. If you are assisting the dog by pushing, pulling or restraining the dog will not learn to take responsibility for his behavior.
7. Rewards can be productive. Bribes become destructive to the relationship.
8. Nature has no form of punishment only consequences.

**CONSEQUENCE:** Not emotional. From the dog's perspective it does not involve you. It is just cause and effect.

**CORRECTION:** To correct. A proper correction is not emotional. The dog knows it is coming from you but accepts the correction as instruction to correct behavior.

**PUNISHMENT:** An emotional venting that has no place in a good relationship.

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## WHAT DO DOGS LOOK FOR IN LEADERS???

The American Heritage Dictionary offers the following definitions: “LEADER - One that leads or guides; one who is in charge or in command of others; one which has influence or power. LEADING: Having a position in the lead; foremost.” So, if you have a really smart dog, hand him the dictionary and have him look up the words! Then all you have to do is tell him you are the leader. If you are not fortunate enough to have a dog that reads, the following are some “doggie” ways of looking at leaders!

### 1. ***LEADERS LEAD!***

- Do you go through doors first?
- Do you get into and out of the car first?
- Do you follow your dog on walks, or does your dog follow you?

### 2. ***LEADERS EAT FIRST!***

- Do you fix your dog’s dinner and feed him before you sit down to eat?
- While you are eating do you stop to offer the dog a “treat” from the table?

### 3. ***LEADERS DON’T CHASE!***

- Does your dog like to turn a game of fetch into a game of keep-away?
- Does your dog steal things? Do you have to chase him to get it back?

### 4. ***LEADERS INITIATE INTERACTIONS!***

- When your dog brings you the ball, do you usually throw it for him?
- When your dog bumps your hand, do you usually pet him?
- When petting your dog, do you stop when you want, or does the dog walk away on his own?
- Can you groom your dog whenever you want to, including toenail trimming and ear cleaning?

### 5. ***LEADERS MARK THEIR TERRITORY!***

- When out walking your dog, do you follow him round when he urinates?
- Do you go around the backyard wetting over all the places your dog has urinated?

### 6. ***LEADERS SLEEP IN HIGHER PLACES!***

- Does your dog sleep in your bed or on your couch?
- Does your dog sleep in your lap?

### 7. ***LEADERS HAVE THEIR SPACE!***

- When your dog is sleeping on the floor, do you carefully move around him?
- When your dog is sleeping on the couch, do you carefully sit beside him?
- When your dog is in your bed, do you carefully get in so as not to disturb him?

### 8. ***LEADERS MAINTAIN DOMINANT POSTURE!***

- When you are sitting on the floor, does your dog come and stand over you?
- Does your dog put his paws on your feet, or sit on your feet?
- Does your dog think it is okay to ever put his mouth or teeth on you (even in play?)

### 9. ***THE LEADER’S JOB IS TO PROTECT THE PACK!***

- Does your dog feel safe when he is with you?
- Does your dog overreact in a strange situation, or, if a stranger approaches?
- Does your dog bark at people or other dogs and won’t stop when you tell him to?
- Can you discipline your dog if he’s done something wrong?

### 10. ***LEADERS ARE CALM, IN CONTROL, AND CONFIDENT!***

- Do you stay calm when your dog is doing something wrong?
- Do you get nervous when a large dog approaches?
- Do you start yelling at the dog if he is barking?
- Do you play tug-of-war with your dog...and win?
- Are you consistent in your expectations so the dog can figure out what you want?

## ARE YOU A GOOD LEADER FOR YOUR DOG????

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## NO FREE LUNCHES

1. **Anything we get in EXCESS, regardless of how much we like it, loses value over a period of time.** If you really like ice cream and indulge in a bowl daily, you might look forward to that as your special treat each day. But if you ate ice cream for breakfast, lunch and dinner and all your snacks, at some point you would not consider ice cream to be very special.
2. **Anything we have ACCESS to anytime we want it, loses its value as a reward.** When you go to work, you know that at the end of the pay period you will receive money for the time and energy you spent working: your paycheck. You could say that money is your reward for working. But, if you could go out into your backyard and pick money off of a money tree anytime you wanted, how long do you think you would continue to work for your paycheck?

The two concepts above become very important to anyone who is trying to resolve a behavior problem with a dog: the concepts of *excess* and *access*. These concepts are not only applicable to humans, but also apply to dogs. The big difference between the two lies in what is perceived as *valuable* and what is perceived as a *reward*, both of which are critical in altering dog behavior.

**WHAT IS "VALUABLE" TO A DOG?** A dog is much like a 2 year old child in his perception of value. Abstract concepts have no meaning. For instance, if you asked your dog to do something for you such as "sit" and offer him a \$5 bill if he'll do it, he will not perceive any value in that piece of paper in your hand. Money is a very abstract concept. As you get older you realize that you can exchange money for other things of value to you such as food. ***But a dog, like a two year old child, only puts value on the moment and only if they perceive the need at that moment.*** If they are hungry or if the food being offered is thought of as a special treat, it has value. But again, if they have just had two or three hamburgers and are full, the juiciest hamburger has no value.

**PETTING AND ATTENTION:** One thing that most dogs value is *physical contact with their owners* or anyone that they care about. This contact is often in the form of "petting." It can also be in other forms such as leaning on, jumping on, mouthing, or their bodies touching our bodies. Many dogs also value other types of *attention from their owners* such as eye contact and verbal interaction. But, if your dog *controls* these types of interactions, their value is going to be diminished.

**Example:** You are sitting on the couch and the dog comes up to you. Without even thinking about it, you reach down and pet the dog. You may even talk to him.

**YOUR POINT OF VIEW:** Let's face it, petting is one of the things you like about having a dog. Touching a warm furry body and interacting with animals feels good both physically and psychologically.

**THE DOG'S POINT OF VIEW:** The dog has come up to you and asked to be petted. You comply. The dog has just controlled the interaction. Chances are good that he will also control when the petting stops by simply moving away.

***What could possibly be wrong with this innocent interaction with your dog? Nothing, provided you are not having any major behavior problems. But if you are, you need to look at this "innocent interaction" from the dog's point of view.*** If the dog can have access to petting by simply presenting himself to you,

what reward value does petting retain? None! Of course, one incident is not a problem. But if you start paying attention to how many times a day the dog does control the situation, a pattern may emerge.

**THE “NO FREE LUNCH” PROGRAM:** *This program means the dog must earn the attention it gets.* Instead of diminishing the value of contact with your dog, you are going to increase its reward value. If the dog presents itself for petting, ask him to do something for you first. That something may just be to "sit." As soon as the dog does a sit you can pet him. But now it is *your* idea, and not his. It is helpful to also keep the petting to a brief interaction. Make sure the dog understands you are also controlling the amount of attention and duration of petting. In other words, keep the value of the petting high by doling it out in small quantities instead of flooding the dog with petting. Give him a stroke or two and quit. If he wants more, again, ask him to do something for you before you resume petting him. **KEEP CONTROL!**

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## Management Techniques

Taking responsibility for controlling the environment in which your dog lives, so he can be successful and his correct (good) behavior can be reinforced, is what we like to call “management.” Management is YOUR responsibility, not your dog’s! By showing your dog what you want, you set rules of the household and teach your dog what those rules are. Remember, your dog’s reasoning ability is that of a two-year-old child’s. Like a child, your dog needs leadership, education, and companionship *in order to learn how* to be your “best friend.” And like a parent, you’re responsible for your dog’s education. Combined with essential elements of basic obedience training and proper socialization, a good management program is a key component of your dog’s complete education.

### I. PROVIDING YOUR DOG A DEN

Dogs are naturally and instinctively denning animals. An indoor kennel, more commonly known as a dog crate, is an inexpensive and practical way to satisfy your dog’s denning instincts. Dog crates are often misunderstood, thought of by new dog owners as a cage, or little prison. But to your dog, it’s a bedroom, a safe place to relax when there’s too much activity going on. It’s his own little piece of real estate right there in the house. With proper training and management, the crate is a positive thing. It prevents him from developing chewing problems and other destructive behaviors while allowing him to be more conveniently included in the family. When choosing a crate, ensure the dog has enough room to stand up, lie down, and turn around in. (See our separate handout “Providing Your Dog A Den” for complete how-to’s on choosing and introducing a crate.) Use your dog den when:

- **You must leave your dog alone.** Your dog is safe, comfortable, unable to soil or destroy anything in the house.
- **You are house training your dog or puppy.** Your puppy avoids mistakes, learns bladder control, and establishes a schedule.
- **You are unable to supervise your dog.** Your dog can relax while you study, work, or attend to other household activities.
- **You simply need a break from your dog, or suspect he could use a nap.** Your dog needs daily, quiet down time.
- **You must travel with your dog.** Your dog will feel instantly secure in new surroundings, safely within his dog den.

IMPORTANT: A crate is not an instrument of punishment. It shouldn’t be something you angrily consign your dog to when you find him chewing on your new pair of shoes. The dog should never be confined to a crate constantly, but he should be expected to relax in it while you are away, for as long as is appropriate for your particular dog.

### II. SUPERVISED FREEDOM

To your dog, the house is not a den, but a den site, which must be explored. The desire for your dog to explore is perfectly normal. Unfortunately, your dog’s unsupervised exploring can be destructive and downright dangerous. Like a two-year-old child, your dog cannot be expected to run loose in the house unsupervised and “stay out of trouble. Giving a dog too much freedom in the house before he is ready (i.e., you haven’t spent enough time *educating* the dog about the house rules, and the dog hasn’t yet demonstrated his *understanding* of

all the house rules) is unsafe, helps develop bad habits, such as stealing and destructive chewing, and usually leads to isolation of the dog away from the family. To manage your dog in the house:

- **Confine your dog safely within areas of the house where you can supervise him.**
  - In rooms such as the bedroom or laundry room, simply close the door behind you.
  - In rooms without doors, use store-bought baby-gates or other like barriers to cordon off doorways.
  - In open air, or great rooms, use movable wire screens to create a playpen-type area for your dog.
- **Remove all stealable items from within your dog's reach**, to break old destructive habits and avoid creating new ones.
- **Put only a few items acceptable for chewing out at any given time**; rotate them every few days to keep them interesting.
- **When you are present (and ONLY when you are present), leave his leash on, attached to the buckle collar, so he can drag it around the house with him.** Your dog will easily get used to leash dragging and you can calmly reinforce your dog's obedience by matter-of-factly taking the end of the leash, giving a correction with your "No." Leash dragging helps you avoid grabbing for your dog in anger or frustration.

IMPORTANT: Give lots of attention and praise to your dog for desirable behavior during free time. And should your dog chew up something you inadvertently left out - don't scold the dog: manage the environment next time!

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### III. SUPERVISED TIE-OUTS

A supervised tie-out is yet another way to manage your dog so that he gets lots of opportunities to be rewarded for good behavior. (*Supervised* tie-outs are not to be confused with simply tying your dog to a tree and then leaving him unsupervised and fending for himself; that is never acceptable.) Unfortunately, most new dog owners forsake tie-outs in favor of giving their dogs total freedom in the house - and inadvertently set their dogs up for failure. To work on a supervised tie-out, tie the handle of a 4-6 foot chain leash around a doorknob, and attach the snap to your dog's buckle collar. This should allow the dog enough room to sit and lie down comfortably. Keep an eye on your dog, and when he offer behaviors you like, such as sitting quietly and lying down, catch him in the act and praise him ("Fido, good down!" and "Fido, good sit!"). Use your tie-outs when:

- **You are house training your dog or puppy.** Your puppy avoids mistakes, learns bladder control, and establishes a schedule.
- **You can actively supervise your dog and reward him for good behavior.** This includes when guests arrive, too!
- **You are training a dog to be on his rug** (below.) Set the rug underneath the dog on the tie-out, praise the dog when he is on it.
- **You want your dog to settle himself when in the house.** For most people, this is a priority for having the dog inside.

When your dog is on a tie-out, ignore any undesirable behavior, such as lunging against the leash, barking, or excessive whining. Give attention at the first sign of good behavior - even if it's only for a second. Your dog will quickly learn that good behavior will get your attention. It is imperative that good behavior is rewarded, or your dog will not understand he should be offering good behaviors - he will simply believe that he is, well...tied out.

IMPORTANT: A dog should be on a tie-out when supervised. A tie-out is not an instrument of punishment. The dog should not be tied out constantly, nor should he be tied out on anything other than his buckle collar. It is recommended you use a chain leash, so the dog cannot chew through it and get into trouble.

#### **IV. “GO TO YOUR RUG!”**

Giving your dog his own rug is another useful way of giving him manners and a secure, “reserved parking” spot in your house where he can be involved with the family but out of the way. When you come in from that walk in the rain, you can send him to his rug until his muddy paws dry out. Your dog can easily be taught to go to his rug and stay there for short periods of time, however this training requires more attention and patience on your part than dog den training. Using the tie-out technique described above until the dog is solid on the rug can be particularly helpful. The best sort of rug to get is one that is washable and rubber-backed, so it won’t slide all over the place. Use your rug when:

- **You want your dog with you, but not underfoot.** This includes waiting on his rug when guests arrive - no more ambushing!
- **You are trying to contain the spread of dirt, hair, and dander.** This is especially handy in households with animal allergies.
- **You must travel with your dog.** Your host and/or hostess will appreciate her ability to lie down comfortably, out of the way.
- **Your dog needs a place to go when there is too much excitement in the house.** This is often needed with visiting children.

Be sure to show your dog that the rug is his, by patting the rug, playing with him on the rug, and making it a fun and positive place to be. Use lots of praise and treats when teaching your dog to go to his rug. Stand a few feet away from the rug, show your dog a treat and then toss it onto the rug. Let your dog follow the treat onto the rug, and praise him with “Good go to your rug!” when he is on the rug. Gradually increase your distance so that you can send your dog to his rug from a distance, around corners, and from far away rooms in the house. This takes practice, but with patience and solid positive reinforcement, your dog will seek out his rug much of the time on his own, it is such a nice place to be.

**IMPORTANT:** Get a rug that’s the appropriate size for your dog. Make sure children or strangers are not allowed to pester the dog while he is on the rug. Avoid engaging in activities on the rug that your dog may view as negative, such as de-matting or clipping toenails; follow through on those activities - just do them elsewhere, not on the rug. Should your dog fall asleep on his rug, understand that chances are he won’t remember his was on a “rug” command, and adjust your expectations accordingly!

# ACADEMY OF CANINE BEHAVIOR

## The Colors of Dog Training ©

Whether we know it or not, we use color extensively in our society to elicit and communicate feeling. The language of color can also be applied to the dog training environment. By visualizing a “color” to represent different emotions of the dog and handler, you can accurately determine what state of mind the dog is in - and what body language you need to use at that moment - to maximize learning. The “color” you want your dog in when you are in a training situation depends on what you are trying to do with the dog. To increase productivity of training sessions, set *your* color first! If you want to change the color of your dog, move yourself into the proper color first, so that it will mix with your dog’s color and produce the results that you want.

**BLUE:** Relaxed energy. Quiet, calm, and a little too relaxed to “want” to learn anything new.

DOG: Totally relaxed. If on a “DOWN-STAY”, the head is probably down.

HANDLER: Still, like a statue. The hands are NEVER used to touch the dog. If talking to the dog, the voice stays very quiet, and only monotype vocabulary is used.

**GREEN:** Focused energy. Composed and reflective. The mind is in a “GO” state for learning.

DOG: Calmly watching and listening. On a “DOWN-STAY”, the head is up.

HANDLER: Moves are calm and authoritative with positive body posture. Hands go on the dog only for praise and always with the handler in control. Both verbal and physical praise are given with quiet, controlled presentation.

**YELLOW:** Happy energy. Sunny, tuned-in to handler. The mind needs quick and clear information.

DOG: Performance exercises, i.e., retrieving, recalls, agility, etc. No stationary positions like the “DOWN-STAY” or “SIT-STAY”.

HANDLER: Encouraging praise, presented with happy energy.

**ORANGE:** Wild energy. Distracted, frustrated and unfocused. Dog no longer tuned-in to handler.

DOG: Uncontrollable with stimulus or distractions, as when someone comes to the door, or another dog approaches.

HANDLER: Scattered energy. Quick, unfocused movements and voice.

**RED:** Negative energy. Aggression. Extreme fear. Panic.

DOG: In a reactive state, usually fight or flight. The mind cannot receive any new information.

HANDLER: Yelling and screaming. Trying to restrain or contain the dog. Feels totally out of control of the situation.

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This concept, created by Colleen McDaniel, owner of The Academy Of Canine Behavior, won First Place in the 1997 OFF-LEAD National Writing Competition, and appeared in the September 1997 issue of OFF-LEAD. The concept has since been incorporated into several nationally recognized canine behavior programs and is now a regular technique used in classes and evaluations at The Academy.