



TRAINING SOLUTIONS FOR BUSY LIVES

A quarterly newsletter bringing you informative treats from the dog world, and keeping you up-to-date with our services

[Training Without Trying]

A summertime approach to working with a reactive dog

By Caroline Spark

One of the most memorable experiences I have had so far this summer was at a Vacation Training Retreat with a dog named Tigger, a small, brown nugget of a dog with huge ears and a very sensitive nature. For much of his life, Tigger's experience told him that he had better be afraid, very afraid, of other dogs and people he didn't know. And despite his small size, he had also better make himself look as fierce as possible, barking, lunging, and threatening to bite lest Bad Things Happen to him.

Fortunately for Tigger, he found a home with Deb Good, a kind and caring person who was absolutely committed to helping Tigger change his view of the world and learn how to feel safe. Deb worked with Tigger over two years, with professional help as well as personal dedication. She learned various behavioral approaches to decreasing reactivity and aggression in dogs, taking private lessons, attending a Call of the Wild Reactive Dog Camp, and putting what she learned into practice in her day-to-day life with Tigger.

Tigger became less reactive, but he still had a way to go. Then Deb signed up for a Vacation Training Retreat for Tigger and her service dog, Morrie. She figured Morrie could use a vacation in the country as a reward for all the ways he makes life easier for her. And she wondered if a training weekend specially tailored to Tigger's needs might make life easier for Tigger too, by helping him turn another behavioral corner. As it turned out - it did, but not exactly in the way that I expected. Tigger taught me at least as much as I taught him that weekend.

We started out with conventional reactivity exercises, setting up training scenarios in which Tigger was not subjected to overly close proximity to scary dogs or people, and building more positive associations to them using food treats.

But then something magical took over. We decided to give Tigger a break and let him run free in the meadow. Ecstatic, he bounced and raced through grass and wild flowers taller than he was, rolled on his back in the sunshine, and generally let loose. He sniffed, he hunted, he raced around some more, huge ears catching the breeze and looking as though they might lift him into flight any moment. His happiness and ease were so evident, it occurred to me that no human-delivered reward, like a food treat, could compare to what he was experiencing. This was nature meeting nature, and it was beautiful to see. It occurred to me that this was exactly what



was needed to help Tigger move forward in his reactivity rehab work as well.

So, from then on, everything we did with Tigger was centered in moving from one wonderful experience to another - hiking along creeks, playing in the forest, and most especially exploring and hunting in tunnels dug into the earth (heaven for a Dachshund mix). All his senses were fully engaged in pleasurable activity - and into that experience we introduced, as peripherally as necessary, exposure to triggers (people and dogs) to whom he would normally have reacted.

Over the course of a few hours a profound shift happened - Tigger became more and more comfortable with the people and dogs he had initially feared. His posture changed,

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"Every dog is a lion at home." – H.G. BOHN

[Did You Know?]

These Unusual Doggie Products?

(Please note this is not an endorsement of any product, just an update on dog-related innovations.)

Potty-training doorbells. These are portable, wireless doggie doorbells that—with some training—allow your dog to alert you when she needs to go outside. (Example: Pet Chime)

Protective eyewear. With shatter-proof, anti-fog lenses that block ultraviolet light, these goggles for dogs protect eyes from trauma, reduce glare, and can relieve light sensitivity. (Example: Doggles)

Umbrella. If your four-legged friend loathes rain, a raincoat is not the only solution. Dog umbrellas attach to your leash and form a protective shelter for your dog. (Example: Pet Life Pour-Protection Umbrella)

Note: All these products would require a bit of training before you jump in. You'd need to teach your dog to ring the doorbell to let you know she has to go potty and most dogs would need desensitization to things like protective eyewear and umbrellas.

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expressing greater confidence and ease. His eyes shone, especially after he popped out of the end of a long tunnel, having braved it from one end to the other. He worked on other training exercises like leash walking and played some more – not reacting to dogs and people even inches away from him. And although we thought the effect might have been just temporary, this shift in attitude and behavior persisted after Tigger returned home. Deb wrote some weeks afterwards: "Tigger has all but forgotten that people were scary!"

So what happened here? Of course there was a cumulative effect from all the work Deb and Tigger had done to that point. Certainly there was a lot of deliberate training going on. But I believe there was something else at work too, and it had a lot to do with humans being willing to let go of our need to control and see ourselves as inevitably central to a dog's behavioral change process. For a while that day, we stopped trying so hard to change Tigger's reactive behavior. All we did was make sure that the environment he was in was safe and wonderful for him. And then suddenly, on that lovely afternoon in a sunlit meadow, where we were more important than what we did. It was a subtle shift, but a powerful one. We were able to step back and savor the natural environment doing for Tigger what we could not – putting together scary things and whole body experiences of joy and freedom until his fear melted away. Apparently, at least for one small dog with a lot of heart and for those of us who witnessed it, that made a big difference.

For more, see Tigger's blog at www.vtrtiggermorrie.blogspot.com/

For information about Vacation Training Retreats see www.citydogcountrydogtraining.com/retreats.shtml



[Living with Dogs]

Dog – Child Etiquette

The risk of being bitten by a dog is low compared to other common causes of accidents, in or out of the household, but that's no consolation to those who find themselves on the business end of a pair of canine choppers. Kids especially are vulnerable. They tend to get excited around dogs and might approach too suddenly, shout too loudly, or dish out well meant but unwanted hugs. To keep kids safe, here's a primer on what to teach them:

Don't know the dog? Avoid. Lesson number one for kids is to avoid dogs they don't know. Never approach an unfamiliar dog, especially one who's tied up or confined behind a fence or in a car, regardless of the dog's size or overpowering cuteness.

Know the dog well? Respect the space. Just like people, dogs have personal space we should respect, particularly during dinnertime, naptime etc. Tell your kids not to approach, touch, or try to play with any dog sleeping, eating, or chewing on a toy or bone. Mother dogs with puppies are also best left alone. This goes for both strange and well-known dogs, even your own.

At all times: Let the dog choose. "How should a child approach a dog?" is really a trick question. Because they shouldn't. A person may say that your child can greet their dog, but it should still be up to the dog to choose whether she wants to be petted. How? Let the dog approach. This goes for dogs your child knows well too. The likelihood of any kind of incident between dogs and your child is greatly reduced by following this one simple rule.

Finally, be your own dog's advocate. Even if you know your dog to be friendly, always let your dog choose whether to approach for a pet and respect her choice when she doesn't want to.

[Dogs in Action]

Tips for Running With Your Dog

If your dog is healthy, loves to run, and is capable of running a respectable distance, you have the makings of a wonderful running partner—whether Labrador or toy poodle mix. Dogs don't mind if you rouse them at the crack of dawn and never fuss about runny noses or side stitches. But unless you happen to share your life with a born side runner (like Dalmatians, once bred to run alongside fire engines), you may have to teach your dog the human version of running. Dogs like to go faster than people, check out interesting smells along the route, and chase the occasional squirrel up a tree.



If you haven't done so already, the first step is to teach your dog on-leash manners during walks. Then proceed to walks interspersed with periods of jogging and finally graduate to full runs. Build distance and time slowly—in increments of 10 minutes, for example—to ensure your dog's muscles and connective tissue have time to adapt to the challenge without injury. Don't be discouraged if your dog is distracted or lags behind; give her time to figure out what she's supposed to do. Running steadily without pause isn't immediately logical to a dog, but if you're patient she will catch on soon and likely love it.

[Tips & Tools]

A Greener Home For A Healthy Dog

Chemicals and toxins in your household—from furniture polish to bug bombs—may put your dog at risk. Long-term exposure to many cleaning solutions can cause cancer or damage your dog's liver or central nervous system. Greener cleaning can help:

Pest control. When possible, stick to natural methods like sticky or non-lethal traps. There are many options for each type of pest, e.g. tannic acid to combat dust mites and brewer's yeast to fight fleas.

Carpets & flooring. Choose safe, low-toxicity materials made from natural fibers with little or no chemical treatment or opt for eco-friendly flooring like hardwood, cork, bamboo, or tile.

Cleaning. Nix air fresheners (a big air pollutant) and use baking soda to neutralize odors, and natural oils like vanilla and lavender to make your home fragrant. Stick to green all-purpose cleaners.

[Healthy Dog]

Lyme Disease in Dogs

Lyme disease is a tick-transmitted disease most prevalent in the northeast, the upper Midwest, and the Pacific seaboard states, but found throughout the U.S. Awareness is important, as dogs are 50 to 100 times more likely than humans to come into contact with disease-carrying ticks. Common symptoms include lameness (especially recurrent), fever, lethargy, and swollen lymph nodes. Ticks must be attached to your dog for 48 hours for him to contract Lyme disease, so daily checks and quick removal dramatically ups your chances of keeping your dog healthy.

To remove a tick, put on gloves, dab the area with rubbing alcohol, then use a pair of tweezers to grab the tick as close to your dog's skin as possible (if you accidentally leave parts of the tick behind, it can cause serious problems). Pull straight up; don't twist or jerk the tick. Disinfect the area, wash your hands, and sterilize the tweezers. Monitor the bite site for the next few weeks. If you see redness or swelling, visit your vet right away.

The Afghan Hound

This sleek, silk-coated aristocrat of the canine world was originally bred for life in rough mountainous terrain, but now spends more time at the doggie equivalent of the runway: the dog show.

Afghans, like other supermodels, require a great deal of grooming and maintenance. A sighthound bred to catch deer, gazelles, and leopards, the Afghan boasts a top speed of 40 miles an hour and a 270-degree field of vision. The stunning exterior and strong personality of Afghans have inspired writers and artists all through history, not least Picasso, who depicted his beloved Afghan, Kabul, in both paintings and sculpture. Appropriately, the human companion of Prissy the Afghan in Disney's *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* is an artist. Who better to appreciate a dog as graceful as a ballet of swans?

To re-home an Afghan, search online for a rescue group near you.



[A World of Dogs]

The Many Benefits of Dog Sports



If you think of the practice of dog sports as a competitive and fairly serious business, you're only about 10 percent right. Just as in human athletic pursuits, the vast majority of dog sports enthusiasts are hobbyists; happy amateurs not much interested in ribbons or plaques. So what hooks people? The numerous benefits that are reaped by two- and four-legged sports enthusiasts alike. For starters, a quick alphabetic inventory reveals something for every ability and temperament: agility, caniscross, disc dog, dock diving, earthdog, flyball, freestyle, herding, lure coursing, mushing, nose work, rally-o, tracking, treibball, and weight pulling. An exhaustive list would be much longer, of course, and still wouldn't include the many fun, creative activity classes trainers, dog facilities, and dog groups might offer.

On the two-legged side of the benefits scoreboard, consider the ageless appeal of all this variety. We expect kids to enjoy playing sports with furry friends, but don't underestimate the delicious challenge to an analytical adult of helping her dog herd a group of uncooperative sheep into an enclosure. Or the allure of canine freestyle to an artistic soul, whether 23 or 53. Retirees with time on their hands can cherry-pick a dog sport that offers community as well as activity. Pile on the advantages of mental and physical exercise—at whichever level suits—and it's a no-brainer.

Of course the positive effects on dogs double up as human perks. First, a tired dog is a good dog. Burning off excess energy through regular activities, preferably exercising both mind and body, is key to a happier, healthier, and more polite dog. If Fido is blissfully conked out after a morning's rally-o, he is less likely to scavenge the trash. Also, dog sports involve cross-species collaboration and therefore boost communication skills on both sides. One common side effect of this is that dogs start to pay more rapt attention to their humans; another is increased confidence. Fun on the field has transformed many a dog from jittery to jaunty. Best of all perhaps is the deepened relationship that often results—something many cite as their chief reason for taking up a dog sport.

Call of the Wild Dog Camp

August 21-23, 2015

is a great opportunity to try out various dog sports. We still have a few spots left. Register now for some fabulous summer fun with your dog!



www.citydogcountrydogtraining.com/upcoming.shtml

[Our Amazing Team]

Caroline Spark, PhD, owns and operates City Dog Country Dog. She has a background in counseling and adult education, and multiple certifications in dog training and behavior consulting. Her special interests include canine psychology, behavior modification, and outdoor adventure events for dogs and people.

Heather Ohmart, BA, is a CCPDT certified dog trainer who runs our City Board & Train program, and specializes in raising and training puppies to be great family companions, therapy dogs, and service dogs.

Meredith Haynes, BSc, is a CCPDT certified dog trainer and is currently completing a Master's degree in Animal Behavior Counseling. Meredith is particularly interested in achieving peace and harmony in multiple-dog households, and helping dogs become less reactive on walks.

Julie Callow Since retiring from engineering, Julie has been studying to become a certified dog trainer. She is currently attending Jean Donaldson's Dog Training Academy and is interning with City Dog Country Dog. Julie lives on the Oregon Coast and assists at private training sessions, Play & Train classes, Vacation Training Retreats and Call of the Wild Dog Camps.

Debbie Golob and her Irish Wolfhound mix, The Moose, are our Call of the Wild Dog Camp Rangers. Whether preparing trails and equipment, troubleshooting, or wrapping up after events – their eyes, hands, feet and paws are everywhere, finding 1001 ways to take care of the natural environment and make every dog camp and other Country Dog events a success.

Mary Williams, MA, is City Dog Country Dog's Office Manager. She is passionate about databases and Office Dog, Suzi.

[NEW Service!]

Safe & Sound is a specialized boarding and training service for reactive dogs, offered jointly by *City Dog Country Dog* and Theresa Ciskowski, owner of *Tired Dog Good Dog*, in Portland OR.

We offer:

- In-home, solo boarding for reactive dogs, and other dogs unsuited to boarding kennels or multi-dog kennel-free boarding.
- In-home, solo boarding and training for reactivity issues
- Respite for reactive dog owners! We know reactivity can be overwhelming to live with at times, and how much it can help to take a break!

Please see www.citydogcountrydogtraining.com/board.shtml or call us for more information.

City Dog Country Dog

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