



Redfern Ramblings

Summer 2007 Edition

Clicker 101 — Common Errors

Clicker training is a relatively simple concept:

- Reinforce the things you want the dog to DO.
- Do NOT reinforce the things you want the dog to NOT do.

Unfortunately it is too easy to create training problems if we don't pay attention to ALL of the signals we're giving to our "students". Some of the common errors that are way too easy to commit are:

- Using the clicker as an **attention-getter**. Remember, the clicker marks a behavior you want (and says "there's a treat coming real soon"), it is NEVER used to CRE-ATE or START a behavior.

- **Missed Opportunities.** We need to be aware of what our dogs are doing ALL the time (especially during training periods). "Catch them doing something RIGHT", even the seemingly-insignificant steps toward what we want them to do. Don't just wait for them to be "perfect".

- **Too Much Too Soon.** Lower your expectations! Determine what the "perfect behavior" would look like, and then create at least 5-10 steps toward getting there. [To get a dog to look at you, reward first when the dog **looks away** from distractions, then when the dog looks even slightly **toward** you, then when they look toward your **upper body**, then toward your **head**, then when they look at your **face**, then when they look at your **eyes**, then when they hold a look at your eyes for a **few seconds**, then **longer**, etc., etc. The whole process will take at least a WEEK.]

- **Show & Tell.** Resist the temptation to put a name to the behavior too soon. Especially resist NAMING the behavior and THEN showing the dog what to do. The best training results from PATIENCE and waiting for the dog to make the first step SPONTANEOUSLY. When the behavior is the DOG's idea, and is REWARDED, the dog will be a much more enthusiastic learner.

- **Huh?** It is important to have a clear and precise idea of what you want the dog to do. If it is sort of a "vague fuzzy idea" the dog will pick that up, and be confused by the lack of clarity.
- **If it's not fun, why are we doing it?** Have fun during training, be enthusiastic, even goofy, especially when the dog "gets it". Listen to your voice, and squash any frustration you hear. End on a high note, so the dog will look forward to the next training opportunity. The dog should be BEGGING you to do more training, not seeing it as a chore.

Urgent need for RING STEWARDS
 ... for 3 dog shows @ the Farm Show August 10-11-12.
 Free Admission & Parking.
No experience necessary! Contact Betsy ASAP at 232-0235 or redfern@ioweb.com

Weiner Treats

These treats are yummy for dogs, cheap, and easy to make in your microwave.

Start with 3 hot dogs (the cheapest you can buy!). Slit them lengthwise. Then rotate them 90 degrees and slit them again. You now have 4 long strips of hot dogs. NEXT, slice them in 1/4 inch sections.

Place a double thickness of paper towels on a plate. Spread the hot dog morsels on the paper towel, and then cover with another double-thick paper towel.

Microwave on high for 4 minutes. Check to see how well they are done. You may need 2-3 min more depending on your oven. The end result should be crunchy when they cool. BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-COOK to the point that the paper turns brown, which could be a fire hazard!

The treats are almost greaseless and easy to store.

Summer Training Classes begin July 28-August 12

Included this semester are

- ◆ Loose Leash Walking
- ◆ CGC/TDI Preparation
- ◆ Agility — Introduction
- ◆ Rapid, Reliable recalls
- ◆ Puppy Sampler
- ◆ Rally Obedience — Introduction
- ◆ Beginner Obedience
- ◆ Manners Class

Classes are held in W. Hanover Twp. For full Class Schedule, Class Descriptions and Registration Information go to www.redferncanines.com

CGC/TDI Evaluations

August 5
September 16
October 6/7

By Pre-Registration only,
additional info at
www.redferncanines.com

Redfern Seminar Series

The Healing Power of a Dog

[AAT/AAA for Handlers (No Dogs)]

Sept 29 & 30

\$100 by Sept 15

\$115 after Sept 15

For details on seminar content and registration procedure go to www.redferncanines.com

The Power of the Clicker

October 13 & 14

\$125 with dog by Sept 15

\$150 with dog after Sept 15

\$100 without dog by Sept 15

\$115 without dog after Sept 15

SAVE THIS DATE: August 10-12 — **Keystone Cluster dog shows**, sponsored by Penn Ridge Kennel Club and Harrisburg Kennel Club. Air Conditioned. Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

What is a **Tug-A-Jug**? Get the scoop at www.redferncanines.com/toys.html



Mixed & Confusing Signals

Take a moment to put yourself in your dog's shoes (paws?) to see what THEY see and hear coming from you. Remember, dogs are VISUAL animals, and they're getting a lot more messages than the ones you speak.

- ◆ Are your words and tone-of voice **consistent**, or do you vary the vocabulary, the pitch of your voice and your tone?
- ◆ Are your hand signals **clear, precise, consistent and purposeful**? Or are they vague, choppy, and bland? Be sure to use very different gestures for each different behavior, and use only ONE hand at a time.
- ◆ Is there "**stuff**" that is distracting your dog? Examples are loose clothing, such as flouncy sleeves that distract from hand movements; purses or treat bags that swing from the shoulder (the dog is focused more on the source of food than the words or gestures you use); long flowing hair that distracts from hand gestures (tie it up or pin/clip it while training).
- ◆ **Move** in the direction you want the dog to go, instead of just standing still and pointing. Your whole body flow should signal what the dog is to do, especially for Agility or Rally Obedience.

Restrict Rover's Roving with TETHERS

Pictured are two of the "un-chewable" steel Tether styles available.



For details on sizes, uses and pricing go to the Training Aids page on our website at

www.redferncanines.com/trainingaids.html

Dear Redfern...

Help! My dog does not respond to treats! I'm trying to use my clicker to help shape behavior, but my dog just does not see treats or food as a reward.

There ARE some dogs who do not see treats or food as a reward. Unless there are underlying health issues involved (check with your vet) we need to find some alternative triggers to motivate and reinforce your pooch.

One possible solution would be to simply do your training when the dog is hungry! Use your training as part of your feeding regimen. When any creature (sound familiar?) is hungry, they'll work harder for the reward. Ask any salesman!

Assuming that you have tried "high-value" (a.k.a. smelly or super-tasty) treats and still getting no response, then lets consider OTHER possible motivators.

Does your dog have a TOY that they find particularly attractive? Maybe a tennis ball, or a small stuffed toy, or something that they are constantly bringing you to throw to play "fetch". They may be motivated by ATTENTION, or MASSAGE, or a SHORT RUN. There is SOMETHING that they see as a "warm fuzzy", so it's just a matter of finding what that is.

We had a dog once that lived for the times we would turn the garden hose to a fine squirt mode. The dog would chase that "water pistol squirt" all over the yard. If we shot it at her mouth she would gulp it down, endlessly. That would have been a great motivator for Katy.

Obviously none of these things are as handy, portable, and universally available as treats. But a little bit of observation will lead you to the realization that your DOG will tell you/show you what really motivates them at the highest level.



Have a question for "Dear Redfern"? Send it to redfern@ioweb.com

Suggestions Welcome

Have a subject you'd like to see included in a future edition of Redfern Ramblings?

Send your ideas to

ramblings@ioweb.com

Dogs like to SWIM?

We've recently learned of a place in Middletown with a swimming pool that is available to dogs (and their humans who may want to swim with them). Greenlink Boarding Kennels has a Pool at their Dog Park which is just right for the 4-legged swimmer in your family. Call 717-944-9848, or check out the pictures and information at www.greenlinkennel.com.

Training Aids Available

Redfern has high-quality training Aids and Toys available, at prices below retail. Included are

- ⇨ Tethers (steel — "un-chewable")
- ⇨ "Gentle Leader®" head halters & "Easy-Walk®" no-pull harnesses
- ⇨ Treat Pouches & i-Click Clickers
- ⇨ Ultimate Puppy Toolkits®
- ⇨ Leather & Cotton Leads
- ⇨ Premier Collars
- ⇨ Busy Buddy®, Bouncy Bone™, Squirrel Dudes, Waggle™ & Tug-a-Jug™ toys

Pictures and prices are available at www.redferncanines.com. Items available at classes, or send an Email to redfern@ioweb.com