



Approaches to Training

There are 5 main approaches to training, but only one produces great, consistent results and a happy, confident dog. Which do you use?

1) Clasp hands and pray (CHAP) training/ MEFF training

With this, you sigh at and ignore your dog's obnoxious and unwanted behaviour and hope it improves. You **Clasp your Hands together And Pray** things will get better. Another variety of this is **MEFF** training - Making Excuses For Fido. Such as "he's a rescue dog", "he was treated badly before", "she's set in her ways now" etc.

But these approaches simply don't work.....

2) Micromanaging behaviour

With this, you micromanage every aspect of Fido's behaviour to prevent bad stuff happening. You never leave food out or unattended on any surface; you tidy away every sock and shoe; you always close important doors; you avoid the park or beach when other dogs are there; etc. etc.

Not only is this a huge responsibility, it's exhausting. And it can never work 100% of the time.....

3) Punishment

This is a common approach. Your dog "should know better" – and if he's been naughty he must be told off. With this, you live in constant judgement of your dog and the approach leads to distrust and blame on both sides. And lots of anxiety, and even fear, on the dog's side.

It's destructive and, worse, it can escalate quite quickly (on both sides). It may work initially but in the longer term it creates far more problems than it solves.

4) Bribing

Luring behaviours is a quick and easy way to start to teach them – but bribery doesn't work in the long term. If food is used constantly to bribe your dog, he will often refuse to do things unless he can see the food. Training becomes hostage to food. Some dogs are so food focused that they just try to chase the food, which means they are not learning.

Bribing doesn't help your dog to learn to engage his brain, rather it just triggers the prey instinct to chase (food).

5) Reward based training

The focus here is to *manipulate the environment to make the right choice the easy choice for your dog*. Set him up for success, by starting training at home and in quiet places and only making things harder when your dog is ready. Food and toys are given as **REWARDS**. Life rewards (sniffing, swimming etc.) are used too. It makes things crystal clear to your dog – that was what I wanted, well done.

You've probably guessed - this approach is the one that produces great, consistent results and a happy, confident dog.

"If training is right, it's simple (but not necessarily easy)"

"Positive is not permissive"

"Don't" is FAR more difficult to teach than "Do"

(with thanks to Susan Garrett)