



Bark Savvy Presents:
Bark & Learn: Good Dog! Positive Reinforcement 101

To be a good trainer, you need to understand how dogs learn!

Lesson #1: Positive Reinforcement

- Positive- something is being added to the scenario. It has nothing to do with whether something is good or bad
- Reinforcement- a reward that your dog loves
- In general, if a behavior has a favorable outcome (i.e. it was rewarded) that behavior will happen more often. If a behavior has an unfavorable outcome (i.e. the reward went away) that behavior will happen less.
- This type of learning builds favorable behaviors in a way that also strengthens your relationship with your dog. We want your dog to listen and comply because he respects and trusts you, not because he fears you.

Lesson #2: Three Criteria for Effective Training

1. Motivation- Your dog's paycheck-money motivates us which is why we go to work. Find something that motivates your dog, usually food.
 - a. Different dogs have different motivators.
 - b. Different environments may need different motivators (highly distracting environments need higher value motivators.
2. Timing- clickers or marker words. You must mark the instantaneous moment your dog does the desired behavior.
3. Consistency- the hardest of the three but most important. A rule is a rule, no matter what. You can't get mad at your dog for something you reinforce time to time, even on accident.

Lesson #3: Four Stages of Learning

1. Showing- Showing your dog what behavior you want through luring. Timing is most important in this stage.
2. Fluency- Rewarding the behavior in everyday life/routine that your dog offers the behavior without being asked. We also ask for better and quicker compliance- reward gold star work only
3. Generalization- teaching your dog that sit means put your booty on the ground no matter where we are, who's around or what's going on. The hardest part of training.
4. Maintenance- If you don't use it you lose it!

Lesson #4: Extra notes

- If my dog is doing something I don't want him to be doing, I need to effectively communicate what I'd rather him do instead.
- Training is a lifelong process. Your dog is always learning whether you're actively training or not.
- Reward your dog for real life calm behavior. Don't only give your dog attention when he's misbehaving.
- Physical and MENTAL stimulation are of utmost importance!
- Dogs are expert observers of your body language and routine/schedule.
- You must work through the grade levels.
- Don't assume your dog knows how to act in any given scenario; you must teach him and show him.
- Make training games and have FUN!