

## LURE VS BRIBE VS REWARD

[January 3, 2017](#)

Training Tip Tuesday: Lure vs Bribe vs Reward

Okay folks – this is an important one. If you’ve worked with me, you know I use food with most dogs to help them learn and understand. There are many trainers that don’t. They claim the dog gets too reliant on the food, and won’t perform the behavior when the treats aren’t present. That’s what happens when the lure turns to a bribe. So let’s talk about the difference.

A LURE is used in the very beginning stages of learning to help get the dogs body to do something. We will use teaching sit as an example. We don’t want to push on our dogs hips, we want them to find the position on their own – but we can help them do that but using a small piece of food held just over their head. When they lift their head up, their hips naturally tuck under, and their butt hits the ground. We mark it and reward. We practice this a few times before we ever introduce the word ‘sit’. The LURE helps him figure out the position, our praise helps capture the action. As soon as he starts putting the two together – we FADE OUT THE LURE! That’s the step that everyone misses. They don’t take away the help.

A REWARD is given AFTER the action is performed. It must be earned. If we asked the dog to sit, and he does so – then he gets the reward. It’s his paycheck. We don’t offer it up front. We ask, he performs, he gets paid. It doesn’t always have to be food! Play, affection, some free time to sniff – all make very good incentives.

A BRIBE is what happens when we get frazzled! When our dog isn’t paying attention, and we can’t get him to focus, and we pull out a treat and wave it around in front of his nose hoping to get him to listen – that’s a BRIBE. We don’t bribe our dogs! It doesn’t help, and it creates the dog that is reliant on food to perform. When a dog knows he can wait you out and ignore you until you offer him something worthy of his attention, you’re in trouble when you don’t have anything to give!

If the dog knows what you’re asking for, you need to get compliance before you pull out that treat! If he doesn’t know what you’re asking, then you need to help him. (and remember – just because he knows ‘sit’ in his living room doesn’t mean he knows it on the town green with lots of distractions. Always pay attention to the environment. If it’s a very different scene from what your dog is used to, help him out!)

<https://youtu.be/EzoRiIWJNxQ>