

TRAINERS!

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Training Tip Tuesday: Trainers!

You're excited to start training. You know your dog needs it. You sign up for a class, and your dog enthusiastically drags you from your car to the classroom. Once inside, he is completely distracted – pulling this way and that, wanting to greet everyone and everything. You have all you can do to just hold on. The trainer comes over and takes the leash to demonstrate a technique. Within 5 seconds your dog has snapped to attention and is offering the most beautiful leash walking you've ever seen; even sitting with the trainer stops. The trainer hands the leash back; and your dog goes back to a pulling fiend!

How many of you can relate?

As a trainer; I promise you it's not magic. We don't have a secret language. We don't bathe in bacon grease. What we *do* do is read your dog; we watch for subtle little cues and we start a dialogue with body movements. We seldom walk in a straight line; we add changes of direction and bouncy steps, use different paces. We smile and reward your dog when they are right, and we change something when they're not. We don't babble incessantly, but we make sure to capture all the 'good' moments. It's a lot of trial and error; the difference is most trainers have had the chance to experiment on hundreds of different dogs, with different drives and temperaments; fine tuning what works. You can do this too! When you're home, try different things! What happens when you turn left or right? Turn your back and run a few steps in the opposite direction? If you are in a secure area; try this off leash. If not, use a long line (30 – 50') so you aren't relying on the leash to cue your dog. Jump up and down, make funny sounds, be silly, bend over and pretend you've found something 'really' interesting on the ground. What makes your dog take notice? What gets him focused and excited? And remember – when your dog chooses to be close to you; REWARD that choice! Your body is one of the most important tools you have for training; use it!

Remember - always take *your* dog's temperament into consideration. Most dogs need enthusiasm and encouragement; but some dogs are more reserved and thrive with gentle quiet praise!

In the video below I have no treats, no toys, and I'm pretty quiet. You'll also notice there are no corrections; no leash pops, no harsh collars. Watch the dog's reaction to different body movements. When he lags, I bounce, when he's distracted I change direction, when he looks up I smile and encourage. When Dais doesn't want to sit, I just close the distance by leaning in instead of repeating the cue.

<https://youtu.be/vaqKe3wVnbQ>