

## Training Tip: Engagement!

If you want your dog to enjoy learning, and remember his lessons – he has to be engaged! A dog that is distracted, wandering off, thinking about every other thing isn't going to be attentive to your cues and you are going to struggle. If you've ever been in a class with me, and struggled with getting your dog's attention – you've seen me do this with your dog. It's a wonderfully effective way to get your dog to tune in! It has worked on dozens of dogs, in many different environments.

Get some yummy treats, a favorite toy – anything your dog finds rewarding. Engage him! Give him a few pieces of food, play tug for a few seconds – then take one enthusiastic step backwards. Your dog will come with you! Reward it! If he has a good sit – ask for it. Now take two steps backwards. Encourage your dog to join in. You are building momentum, and excitement. Take three steps back. Your dog is engaging with you, keying in on your movement and watching your face. You should be rewarding any attention offered – even if its only for a split second. Don't turn your back on your dog. You can step past him and ask him to join, you can step backwards and invite him.. but don't turn away. If you want your dog to engage, you have to engage your dog. Smile at him, and have happy, relaxed eyes (don't stare hard at him!)

This is not the time for correction – if you ask for the sit, but don't get it – don't argue with him, just move on. Work on your sit another time. Don't ask for anything complicated or challenging (I rarely use downs for this, but I might use a spin, or a wrap...)

Come up with your own little 30 second routine... Mine is usually something like this:

One step back (dog sits)

Two Steps back (dog sits)

Three steps back (dog sits)

One big step forward past dog (dog swings into heel position)

Two quick steps forward, one step back (dog comes to front and sit)

Free dog!

Practice often and you will find your dog starts getting more excited about working with you. Keep your routine short, and intersperse it into your day... If your formal training session is getting dull – liven it up with your engagement dance!

Ms. Rosie demonstrates in the video below. She is also up for adoption! If you are interested, or have any questions – please PM me, or contact [HAPPE Dog Rescue & Adoption](#)

<https://youtu.be/EBm4GxbiU-w>