THE DOGGY DIGEST

TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

Basic Obedience Day 1 Recap

First of all, thank you again for choosing Mutts With Manners. We look forward to a long relationship of training and positivity with you and your canine family members!

The first day of class we went over several things. Among these were paperwork, collection of payment, and training philosophies.

Training Philosophies: Operant conditioning coupled with Classical Conditioning are the main ways we will be teaching you how to train your dog. In OC (operant conditioning), we will be focusing on positive reinforcement as the preferred training method.

What is Operant Conditioning? OC is a form of learning discovered by a man name B.F. Skinner in the 1950's. There are four quadrants of learning that all animals can learn from: Positive Reinforcement, Negative Reinforcement, Positive Punishment, and Negative Punishment. Mutts With Manners focuses on the positive reinforcement quadrant of learning. This is where (by definition) the likelihood of an event occurring again is increased by the consequence that follows.

EXAMPLE: Your dog gets a treat every time he sits. The treat (consequence) will cause the sitting behavior (event) to be more likely to occur again and more often.

What is Classical Conditioning? CC (classical conditioning) is a form of associative learning. Ever heard of a man named Ivan Pavlov? Does the name ring a bell? (Okay, bad joke!) In a nutshell, Pavlov was a scientist in 1927 who was doing some research. He would present a group of dogs with meat powder and to get them to produce saliva and then he would collect the saliva for his experiments. The dogs did not have to learn to salivate to the meat powder, just like we don't have to learn to salivate to a nice steak or hot fudge Sunday. What Pavlov did, is ring a bell right before he presented the meat powder to the dogs. The dogs learned that the ringing of the bell was a predictor of food coming very shortly. The dogs began to salivate to the sound of the bell. This is associative learning.

EXAMPLE: You are saying the word "Yes!" and then giving your dog a piece of food. In 3-4 days, you will start seeing the association your dog is making in his little brain between food and the word "yes". In seven days, when we are in class again, your dog will have a very good association between the word "yes," and the food is presented. Make sense?

HOMEWORK:

1. Find your dog's favorite food. This gets to be a fun experiment your dog will love! Try different treats. You may find that what works in your kitchen or living room will not work at the Dog Park or beach. The beach may require tiny pieces of chicken while kibble is just fine in your home. Your primary training treats should be small, pea-sized, soft pieces of treats for a maximum number of repetitions. Repetitions will be the "magic fairy dust" in the training you will be doing over the next six weeks with your dog.

2. Build your bridge word. For the next seven days, say "yes" and then immediately give your dog a little, pea-sized piece of food. Do this 10 times a day for 7 days, one session a day.

3. Begin working on name recognition. Call your dog's name, once they look at you say "yes" and then give them a treat. Practice this around the house for the next week. Having good name recognition is literally priceless and will help once we get to the recall portion of the class.

Until next time, keep it pawsitive!