



DOG TRAINING

Helping you and your dog become best friends for life.

THE DEFINITION OF DOG TRAINING

How would you define “dog training?” This is a question we always ask our incoming students. People have many preconceived ideas about what it takes to train a dog. The old traditional approaches to dog training say you have to show the dog “who’s boss.” This is just not true and in fact, is counterproductive to training and the relationship you have with your dog.

At Green Acres we view you and your dog as a team and encourage you to do likewise. Training your dog is not about “you against your dog,” it is about “you with your dog.” By working as a team you will both be more successful and have more fun.

Our definition of dog training is: “A **process** where you **motivate** your dog, to do what you want, at your request, while having **fun**.” There are some very important words in this definition, so let me break it down and explain.

Dog training is first and foremost a **process**. Your dog will never stop learning, so you can never stop teaching. This does not mean you and your dog need to be in a training class forever, but it does mean you need to remember your dog is always learning, either good habits or bad ones. Also, once you teach dogs something you must continue to have them use it, or they will lose it over time.

Like all animals, including humans, dogs need to be **motivated** to do things. You need to get to know your dog well so you know it's likes and dislikes. One of the strongest motivators for dogs is food, and even among food, a piece of liver is more motivating than dry dog food (or in the case of people, most of us would be more motivated by a good piece of chocolate than a stale saltine cracker).

I have to laugh when people say they want their dog to work for just “praise” and not food. If your boss told you that beginning tomorrow you would be working for “praise” instead of a check, would you be as motivated to go to work? I think not. Remember, the goal is to use the food as a reward for getting the dog to do something right. It is not meant to be used as a continual bribe. When you properly use food to train your dog, the dog will respond to your voice or hand cues and the food will no longer be necessary.

We also emphasize making training **fun**. Think back to your years in school. You probably had some teachers who taught you a great deal, and I bet they worked hard to make things fun. In my years of training I have watched the difference in how people will train their dog to do a trick like “rollover” versus training them to “sit” or “down.” The people training “rollover” are having fun and both they and the dog feel less pressured to get it right the first time. The people training “sit” are often serious and frequently pressure themselves and the dog. The result is the person and dog working on “rollover” learn quicker and have more fun doing so.

Remember, training takes time, requires motivation for the dog and handler, and should be fun!

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