



DOG TRAINING

Helping you and your dog become best friends for life.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CESAR MILLAN "THE DOG WHISPERER"

'Dog Whisperer' Training Approach More Harmful Than Helpful

"The training tactics featured on Cesar Millan's "The Dog Whisperer" program are inhumane, outdated and improper according to a letter sent yesterday to the National Geographic Channel by American Humane the oldest national organization protecting children and animals.

Several instances of cruel and dangerous treatment – promoted by Millan as acceptable training methods – were documented by American Humane, including one in which a dog was partially asphyxiated in an episode. In this instance, the fractious dog was pinned to the ground by its neck after first being "hung" by a collar incrementally tightened by Millan. Millan's goal – of subduing a fractious animal - was accomplished by partially cutting off the blood supply to its brain.

"As a forerunner in the movement towards humane dog training, we find the excessively rough handling of animals on the show and inhumane training methods to be potentially harmful for the animals and the people on the show," said the letter's author, Bill Torgerson, DVM, MBA, who is vice president of Animal Protection Services for American Humane. "It also does a disservice to all the show's viewers by espousing an inaccurate message about what constitutes effective training and appropriate treatment of animals."

Americanhumane.org - 'Dog Whisperer' Training Approach More Harmful Than Helpful – September 6, 2006

C'mon, Pooch, Get With the Program

Dr. Dodman [veterinary behaviorist and director of the Animal Behavior Clinic at Tufts University] said: "My college thinks it [The Dog Whisperer – Cesar Millan] is a travesty. We've written to National Geographic Channel and told them they have put dog training back 20 years."

[The New York Times](#) - C'mon, Pooch, Get With the Program, By Anna Bahney February 23, 2006

Steve Dale on “The Dog Whisperer”

“I have serious concerns because his [Millan’s] methods are often intimidating rather than motivating. On TV, the dogs often comply but often they’re being forced to – you can tell by their body language: tail down, mouth closed, ears back, eyes dilated.”

“For me, Millan makes too many dog-to-wolf parallels, particularly that we have to dominate a dog like an alpha wolf. Although there are many similarities, dogs are simply not wolves any more than we are chimpanzees.”

“Millan has himself told me his training methods aren’t replicable. The cable channel that airs his show, the National Geographic channel, apparently agrees (or its lawyers tell it to) with pop-up warnings ‘not to try this at home.’”

“I argue that motivating leadership is far more effective than leading through intimidation.”

Pet World, By Steve Dale December 7, 2006

Don’t Whisper – We Favor behavioral science over showmanship

“I Don’t like Millan’s techniques. Many are antiquated and dangerous, for dogs and owners, in my view and that of many of behavior experts I respect (such as Drs. Ian Dunbar, Patricia McConnell, and Nicholas Dodman, as well as our own training expert, Pat Miller).”

“Modern behavioral scientists understand that there is lots more to canine interaction than constant displays of dominance and submission, and that humans are probably at their least effective as trainers when they try to ‘act like a dominant dog.’”

“Millan’s ideal is a dog who exhibits ‘calm submission’ to its owner. In contrast, most pet dog owners I know, myself included, want an affectionate, trusting, respectful coexistence with our dogs, not wary subservience.... The most effective way to accomplish this, with the least fallout or dangerous side effects, is with the dog-friendly behavior modification techniques we regularly detail in WDJ.”

The Whole Dog Journal, By Nancy Kerns, December 2006

Jean Donaldson on “The Dog Whisperer”

"Practices such as physically confronting aggressive dogs and using of choke collars for fearful dogs are outrageous by even the most diluted dog training standards. A profession that has been making steady gains in its professionalism, technical sophistication and humane standards has been greatly set back. I have long been deeply troubled by the popularity of Mr. Millan as so many will emulate him. To co-opt a

word like 'whispering' for arcane, violent and technically unsound practice is unconscionable."

—Jean Donaldson, Director, SPCA Academy for Dog Trainers, San Francisco.

A 'tough love' dog whisperer spurs some yelps

"To call his operation a psychology center is a total paradox," says veterinary behaviorist Nicholas Dodman, director of the Animal Behavior Clinic at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and author of "Dogs Behaving Badly" (Bantam, \$14). "I think, like a bullfighter, he understands how to approach and work around a dog, but thereafter he stops. He doesn't understand separation anxiety. I doubt he knows what obsessive-compulsive behavior is. Basically, with a smile, he's going to war with these dogs."

Dodman says Millan relies on two musty tools popularized a half-century ago by heavy-handed military dog trainers and considered out of vogue amid the current emphasis on reward-based training. One is "positive punishment," where an aversive action - "poking and jabbing and pulling and prodding" - is applied to get the dog to stop a behavior. The other is "flooding," in which the dog is "basically drowning" in something it doesn't like, sort of "Fear Factor" for Fido.

"Imagine," says Dodman, "if there was a new Dr. Phil for children, and he said, 'If your kid is playing too many video games, get a big paddle and whack him on the head.' People would be incensed."

[Newsday.com - A 'tough love' dog whisperer spurs some yelps, Cesar Millan has plenty of believers, including celebs, but veterinarians snarl over tactics, By Denise Flaim, May 17, 2006](#)

No. 039 Misguided Expert of the Year – The Dog Whisperer Should Just Shut Up

"My position is, Millan is a poseur," Claudia Kawczynska, editor in chief of *The Bark* magazine, says of the ex-dog groomer. "He is a hairdresser, not the real guy in terms of being an expert. He doesn't have credentials. And it is shocking to me how easily people are ready to fall for it...He is doing a disservice to the real experts in the field...He gives quick fixes, but they are not going to be a solution for most families with problem dogs."

[Esquire - No. 039 Misguided Expert of the Year – The Dog Whisperer Should Just Shut Up, by Curtis Pesmen, October 2006](#)