

DOG LIFE



A past-to-present timeline

■ BY HARRY KALAJIAN

Many training methods from the past to the present run parallel to the raising of kids. Many moons ago, parents used harsh discipline in raising and correcting their children, and they used the same method in training and raising their dogs. Parents used belts and other adamantine objects as well as their hands in disciplining their children. This method was fear-based to get results. It was a tough era.

A couple of generations ago, kids who misbehaved in school would have to write out 500 times, "I must not talk in class" as punishment. By doing so they learned they must not talk in class. Teachers then would use what is now known as the repetitive method in teaching, just like how we learned the multiplication tables over and over. In parallel they used that method in training their dogs. Sit Fido, good boy. Sit Fido, good boy. Sit Fido, good boy, and now Fido sits on command. This is also known as Pavlovian repetitive conditioning.

The biggest problem with this method is that owners don't have the required patience or time to do so. For this method to become effective and reliable, you need lots of time and patience.

The next generation used the reward/bribery method. When kids took out the garbage or made their bed or did any house chore, they were rewarded with a dollar or so. Since it was easy and quick, they applied that method to dog training. It's known as the treat-training method: "Sit Fido, here is a cookie." Although it's quick, it's not reliable. Dogs

might not be food-driven, and it won't work if they aren't facing you. This is called frontal response and performance for reward, or Instant gratification. If Fido is running down the street, you can jump up and down with a hot dog and it won't make any difference. Fido is gone. (But treat training is great when teaching Fido to do tricks.)

Nowadays, when kids are hyper or have ADD or ADHD, the doctor will prescribe medication. And when our dogs become hyper, the vet will prescribe medication. It's socially accepted to use sedatives or calming pills for kids, and it has also now become



the norm for hyperactive dogs to take medication. The philosophy of raising children has been applied on a parallel level to do the same with their dogs.

During our grandfathers' days dogs had dog names such as Fido, Max, Brutus, Timber, and so on. Next came names like Cookie, Mookie, Scooby, Tootsie and more. More recently, names have become more humanized: George, Lucy, Stella, Ginger, Lily and so on. Dog owners seem to be trying to make their dogs more like humans, and they expect to get the same response as they do from humans. Flash alert: They are dogs. They are our pets. Treat them like they are supposed to be pets. Otherwise you will be very disappointed. However, if you train your dog religiously every day, you will be happy with the results.

A sure way to get as close as you can to reaching the full potential of your dog is through the following:

- 1 - Use my famous formula: patience, persistence, consistency & repetition. It will be your key to success.
- 2 - Be realistic with your goals.
- 3 - Get help and guidance through a real, non-nonsense professional trainer.

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