

# Training for success

■ BY HARRY KALAJIAN

**W**e all want a well-behaved dog, and to have that you must be patient. Training a dog is not hard. What is hard is to be persistent and consistent. Just like everything else in life, the amount of time designated will determine the degree of success or failure. Dog training is like a puzzle. It looks difficult at the beginning, but it gets easier as time goes on.

When you begin training, many factors must be taken into consideration. A younger dog may be easier to train, because many older dogs have behavioral issues, some of them not immediately displayed and some obvious. Every dog of any age, breed or gender may require a different way of training. When trainers evaluate a dog they must seek out the positive and negative in its character and temperament. With some of these dogs, a gradual change can turn a negative into a positive.

Trainers are not magicians, but they know what method or principle is needed for a quick and stable outcome. Instructions must be carried out on a daily basis. Just like losing weight, it takes effort and time. There is no quick fix. When dealing with a puppy there are a few things to understand. The period between two and three months is the bonding stage with the owner. At three months, puppies will feel comfortable and do all



the puppy things. However, because they are puppies, owners often don't correct certain behaviors that they think are cute. They assume that over time the behavior will change. The bad news is that it doesn't. When your puppy reaches four months of age, you may have the devil on your hands and there's no stopping it. Now you must seek help from a professional trainer. But if you start with the puppy at three months, you can keep the devil at bay. If you have an older dog that you have adopted, seek the help of a professional trainer right away. Remember that there are certain behaviors that can be modified or corrected, and other behaviors you can't change. If you're planning to adopt an older dog, make sure you learn as much about its history as you can. Don't use your heart in adopting, use

common sense. Make sure that the dog you are about to adopt will fit in with your lifestyle and home. When you begin training, make sure you are working with a professional. Follow all instructions. If you don't understand something, ask again and again till you do understand. What your trainer says must make sense to you. If it doesn't, then you can't apply it, and if it does, then you can.

Make sure your training course is not capped, so that if you need additional time, your trainer won't charge you. This way you are not under pressure to achieve complete success in the number of weeks allocated for training, because if that is the case, you won't succeed. Sometimes the owner learns quicker than the dog, and sometimes it's the reverse.

Move forward only if the dog has

comprehended the command taught before moving on to the next one. If your dog is not doing well and the trainer has guided you the best he or she can, then it is your fault for not practicing as you should have. A dog's obedience outcome is the reflection of the amount of training time you put in. Every time you go out for a walk, practice the commands you have learned and correct as necessary. Take some leisurely walks, so your dog can sniff and go potty, always staying within the six-foot leash distance. If it tries to pull, give a small correction as a reminder not to pull.

And try going to different locations, so that your dog learns to respond to your commands regardless of the surroundings. Dogs of all ages will learn through patience, persistence, consistency and repetition, and that will result in your success. Once your dog knows the commands and you're finished with the training school, it is important to continue working with it on a daily basis. You'll have a well-mannered dog at the end.

Have a woof woof of a month..

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