



THE CHATTERBOXER

Member, American Boxer Club

April 2006

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Our next meeting is
Tuesday, April 4, 2006
Livonia Civic Center Library
7:00 p.m.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

AKC'S NEW "CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP"

The American Kennel Club Board of Directors, as a result of the Chairman's Committee on Conflict of Interest, approved at its February meeting the first-ever written Code of Sportsmanship for the sport of purebred dogs.

According to AKC Chairman Ron Menaker in his February Chairman's Report, he hopes, "everyone in the fancy will take time to read and practice the new code and appreciate the value a Code of Sportsmanship adds to the experience of being a member of 'the fancy.'"

The following is the new AKC Code of Sportsmanship in its entirety:

AKC Code of Sportsmanship

PREFACE: The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companionship. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.

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A good education ought to help people to become both more receptive to and more discriminating about the world: seeing, feeling, and understanding more, yet sorting the pertinent from the irrelevant with an ever finer touch, increasingly able to integrate what they see and to make meaning of it in ways that enhance their ability to go on growing.

~ Laurent A. Daloz



I love learning. I really do. There are few things that are as inherently satisfying to me as gaining an understanding of something about which I really didn't know much—if anything—before. It's one of the reasons I continue to spend time on public forums, because there are questions asked to which I don't know the answer, and finding it gives me an opportunity to learn something new. It's also one of the things that makes the Internet so addictive for me, because I often end up following links all across the Web and stumble across things I never even knew were there to be learned.

A few weeks ago, for example, I was looking for suggestions on writing stud contacts, and found not only that information but also a very intriguing breeding strategy used in horse breeding (where making the right choice is so much more important, as you generally only have one offspring in a litter from which to choose!). Some of this strategy is similar to Dr. Carmen Battaglia's stick-dog pedigrees, but there are other aspects that are not as clearly defined in the dog breeding world. Whether the information will prove transferable to dogs remains to be seen—but I'm happy to have gained the knowledge regardless!

Unfortunately, I also spend a lot of time learning about less-pleasing things—people looking for a puppy who are given reams of information on selecting a breeder, recommended health testing of the parents, contract stipulations, the Code of Ethics, and then go out and purchase a puppy from a flea market anyway; breeders who seem to spend more time marketing their puppies and their breeding program than they do choosing parents for a litter; owners who, despite assurances that some amount of nipping and growling are normal Boxer puppy behaviors return the puppy to the breeder, only to purchase another one the next week and then complain about the same problem; breeders who charge outrageous amounts for pet puppies, and nearly triple that amount for breeding prospects. To someone as idealistic as I am, these situations are always disheartening and generally put me on the verge of signing off of all electronic communication entirely.

Then, like a beacon of light, come the heartwarming stories that restore my faith—temporarily, anyway—in mankind. This month, it was the tragedy of a Labrador breeder who lost her bitch during a c-section, and was left with seven orphaned puppies. Through a network of breeders on a variety of mailing lists and messageboards, the Lab puppies have found a surrogate dam, who of all breeds is a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. There is a Boxer bitch on standby, as well, in case more than supplementation is needed as the pups get older and approach the size of their foster mother!

There is also the ongoing effort to find Vivi (Ch. Bohem C'est La Vie), the Whippet that was lost at JFK airport preparing for a return trip from Westminster. Not only have hundreds of volunteers turned up—some from states that don't even neighbor New York—but donations have poured in from across the country to cover expenses related to the search. Vivi has been missing for six weeks now, and continues to elude capture, though she has been spotted frequently and was last seen roaming a 1200 acre park in Flushing.

Vivi's story has garnered quite a bit of media attention, which is still going strong, especially in the New York area. While this of course will help in the search for Vivi, it is also proving helpful for other lost or abandoned dogs. A last-minute fundraiser in New York for "Bobbi and the Strays" (the JFK shelter), in Vivi's honor, raised over \$5,000 for the search. At the request of Vivi's owners and breeder, any excess contributions to the Vivi search fund (from the fundraiser or otherwise) will be donated to the shelter.

The American Whippet Club has given web space on their National Specialty site for Vivi updates, and her breeder, Bo Bengston, posts there regularly for the many people who have been caught up in Vivi's plight and continue to hope for her safe return. You can read the story of Vivi's escape from her crate (there is still no information on how exactly that happened in the first place; Delta airlines has not yet released to Bo and Vivi's owners the results of their internal investigation into the matter, though they promised it at the end of February) and the extensive Whippet-hunt that followed at www.awc2006.com/index.php?page=vivi.

Speaking of National Specialties, the ABC National is fast-approaching. Premium lists and dinner reservation forms, as well as reservations for the Echo clinic are available on the ABC site at www.americanboxerclub.org/national-schedule-2006.html. I'm looking forward to having dogs entered this year, after going dogless in 2005, but will miss being able to just sit ringside and talk with other breeders all day long. With three weeks left in tax season, I'm growing more and more excited for a whole week away from the office—the National is my yearly vacation, and it comes at a very good time!

For the first time in a long time, I'm excited about some litters that are due. The first one is from a bitch that was bred to Hugo; puppies have been confirmed and Bonnie is due in just a couple of weeks. The other litter is still unconfirmed at this point, and we've all got our fingers and toes crossed. The pedigree is an outcross for four or five generations, so it will be interesting to see what the different line brings in. This will be my first litter in almost six years, though I'm only the co-breeder—Ginger is doing most of the work! Still, I've been trying to refresh and update the things I learned about whelping puppies and raising litters back in 2000, and a lot has changed since then.

I'm also excited about some articles I've been asked to write. One should be published in the April/May issue of the Boxer Ring (available at ABC), and the other will be in the upcoming issue of the Boxer Underground e-zine (www.boxerunderground.com). Of course I've had to do some research to thoroughly address the topics of discussion, and I've been having fun learning things along the way!

Best,

Jen

An Animal Trainer's Introduction To Operant and Classical Conditioning

Stacy Braslau-Schneck, MA

Learning Theory and Learning Theory

"Learning Theory" is a discipline of psychology that attempts to explain how an organism learns. It consists of many different theories of learning, including instincts, social facilitation, observation, formal teaching, memory, mimicry, and classical and operant conditioning. It is these last two that are of most interest to animal trainers.

Why should animal trainers be bothered with learning the theory behind how their animals learn? Many excellent trainers have no formal schooling or organized understanding of how their training is effective or how their charges work. But training is both an art and a science. More and more trainers - pet owners, show competitors, horseback riders, show-business trainers, zookeepers, aquarium trainers and more - are finding that an understanding of learning theory helps them understand their animals' behaviors better, and plan their training accordingly. So trainers are learning the theory of learning theory!

Classical or "Pavlovian" Conditioning

Theory

Classical Conditioning is the type of learning made famous by Pavlov's experiments with dogs. The gist of the experiment is this: Pavlov presented dogs with food, and measured their salivary response (how much they drooled). Then he began ringing a bell just before presenting the food. At first, the dogs did not begin salivating until the food was presented. After a while, however, the dogs began to salivate when the sound of the bell was presented. They learned to associate the sound of the bell with the presentation of the food. As far as their immediate physiological responses were concerned, the sound of the bell became equivalent to the presentation of the food.

Classical conditioning is used by trainers for two purposes: To condition (train) autonomic responses, such as the drooling, producing adrenaline, or reducing adrenaline (calming) without using the stimuli that would naturally create such a response; and, to create an association between a stimulus that normally would not have any effect on the animal and a stimulus that would.

Stimuli that animals react to without training are called primary or unconditioned stimuli (US). They include food, pain, and other "hardwired" or "instinctive" stimuli. Animals do not have to learn to react to an electric shock, for example. Pavlov's dogs did not need to learn about food.

Stimuli that animals react to only after learning about them are called secondary or conditioned stimuli (CS). These are stimuli that have been associated with a primary stimulus. In Pavlov's experiment, the sound of the bell meant nothing to the dogs at first. After its sound was associated with the presentation of food, it became a conditioned stimulus. If a warning buzzer is associated with the shock, the animals will learn to fear it.

Secondary stimuli are things that the trainee has to learn to like or dislike. Examples include school grades and money. A slip of paper with an "A" or an "F" written on it has no meaning to a person who has never learned the meaning of the grade. Yet students work hard to gain "A's" and avoid "F's". A coin or piece of paper money has no meaning to a person who doesn't use that sort of system. Yet people have been known to work hard to gain this secondary reinforcer.

Application

Classical conditioning is very important to animal trainers, because it is difficult to supply an animal with one of the things it naturally likes (or dislikes) in time for it to be an important consequence of the behavior. In other words, it's hard to toss a fish to a dolphin while it's in the middle of a jump or finding a piece of equipment on the ocean floor a hundred meters below. So trainers will associate something that's easier to "deliver" with something the animal wants through classical conditioning. Some trainers call this a bridge (because it bridges the time between when the animal performs a desired behavior and when it gets its reward). Marine mammal trainers use a whistle. Many other trainers use a clicker, a cricket-like box with a metal tongue that makes a click-click sound when you press it.

You can classically condition a clicker by clicking it and delivering some desirable treat, many times in a row. Simply click the clicker, pause a moment, and give the dog (or other animal) the treat. After you've done this a few times, you may see the animal visibly startle, look towards the treat, or look to you. This indicates that she's starting to form the association. Some clicker trainers call this "charging up the clicker". It's also called "creating a conditioned reinforcer". The click sound becomes a signal for an upcoming reinforcement. As a shorthand, some clicker trainers will say that the click = the treat.

Operant Conditioning

Classical conditioning forms an association between two stimuli. Operant conditioning forms an association between a behavior and a consequence. (It is also called response-stimulus or RS conditioning because it forms an association between the animal's response [behavior] and the stimulus that follows [consequence])

Four Possible Consequences

There are four possible consequences to any behavior. They are:

- Something Good can start or be presented;
- Something Good can end or be taken away;
- Something Bad can start or be presented;
- Something Bad can end or be taken away.

Consequences have to be immediate, or clearly linked to the behavior. With verbal humans, we can explain the connection between the consequence and the behavior, even if they are separated in time. For example, you might tell a friend that you'll buy dinner for them since they helped you move, or a parent might explain that the child can't go to summer camp because of her bad grades. With very young children, humans who don't have verbal skills, and animals, you can't explain the connection between the consequence and the behavior. For the animal, the consequence has to be immediate. The way to work around this is to use a bridge (see above).

Technical Terms

The technical term for "an event started" or "an item presented" is positive, since it's something that's added to the animal's environment.

The technical term for "an event ended" or "an item taken away" is negative, since it's something that's subtracted from the animal's environment.

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Anything that increases a behavior - makes it occur more frequently, makes it stronger, or makes it more likely to occur - is termed a reinforcer. Often, an animal (or person) will perceive "starting Something Good" or "ending Something Bad" as something worth pursuing, and they will repeat the behaviors that seem to cause these consequences. These consequences will increase the behaviors that lead to them, so they are reinforcers. These are consequences the animal will work to attain, so they strengthen the behavior.

Anything that decreases a behavior - makes it occur less frequently, makes it weaker, or makes it less likely to occur - is termed a punisher. Often, an animal (or person) will perceive "ending Something Good" or "starting Something Bad" as something worth avoiding, and they will not repeat the behaviors that seem to cause these consequences. These consequences will decrease the behaviors that lead to them, so they are punishers.

Applying these terms to the Four Possible Consequences, you get:

- Something Good can start or be presented, so behavior increases = Positive Reinforcement (R+)
- Something Good can end or be taken away, so behavior decreases = Negative Punishment (P-)
- Something Bad can start or be presented, so behavior decreases = Positive Punishment (P+)
- Something Bad can end or be taken away, so behavior increases = Negative Reinforcement (R-)

or:

	Reinforcement (behavior increases)	Punishment (behavior decreases)
Positive (something added)	Positive Reinforcement Something added increases behavior	Positive Punishment Something added decreases behavior
Negative (something removed)	Negative Reinforcement Something removed increases behavior	Negative Punishment Something removed decreases behavior

Remember that these definitions are based on their actual effect on the behavior in question: they must reduce or strengthen the behavior to be considered a consequence and be defined as a punishment or reinforcement. Pleasures meant as rewards but that do not strengthen a behavior are indulgences, not reinforcement; aversives meant as a behavior weakener but which do not weaken a behavior are abuse, not punishment.

Positive Reinforcement

This is possibly the easiest, most effective consequence for a trainer to control (and easy to understand, too!). Positive reinforcement means starting or adding Something Good, something the animal likes or enjoys. Because the animal wants to gain that Good Thing again, it will repeat the behavior that seems to cause that consequence.

Examples of positive reinforcement:

The dolphin gets a fish for doing a trick. The worker gets a paycheck for working. The dog gets a piece of liver for returning when called. The cat gets comfort for sleeping on the bed. The wolf gets a meal for hunting the deer. The child gets dessert for eating her vegetables. The dog gets attention from his people when he barks. The elephant seal gets a chance to mate for fighting off rivals. The child gets ice cream for begging incessantly. The toddler gets picked up and comforted for screaming. The dog gets to play in the park for pulling her owner there. The snacker gets a candy bar for putting money in the machine.

Secondary Positive Reinforcers and Bridges

A primary positive reinforcer is something that the animal does not have to learn to like. It comes naturally, no experience necessary. Primary R+s usually include food, water, often include sex (the chance to mate), the chance to engage in instinctive behaviors, and for social animals, the chance to interact with others.

A secondary positive reinforcer is something that the animal has to learn to like. The learning can be accomplished through Classical Conditioning or through some other method. A paycheck is a secondary reinforcer - just try writing a check to reward a young child for potty training!

Animal trainers will often create a special secondary reinforcer they call a bridge. A bridge is a stimulus that has been associated with a primary reinforcer through classical conditioning. This process creates a conditioned positive reinforcer, often called a conditioned reinforcer or CR for short. Animals that have learned a bridge react to it almost as they would to the reward that follows (animals that have learned what clicker training is all about may sometimes prefer the CR that tells them they got it right over the actual "reward").

Schedules of Reinforcement and Extinction

A schedule of reinforcement determines how often a behavior is going to result in a reward. There are five kinds: fixed interval, variable interval, fixed ratio, variable ratio, and random.

A fixed interval means that a reward will occur after a fixed amount of time. For example, every five minutes. Paychecks work on this schedule - every two weeks I got one.

A variable interval schedule means that reinforcers will be distributed after a varying amount of time. Sometimes it will be five minutes, sometimes three, sometimes seven, sometimes one. My e-mail account works on this system - at varying intervals I get new mail (for me, email is generally a Good Thing!).

A fixed ratio means that if a behavior is performed X number of times, there will be one reinforcement on the Xth performance. For a fixed ratio of 1:3, every third behavior will be rewarded. This type of ratio tends to lead to lousy performance with some animals and people, since they know that the first two performances will not be rewarded, and the third one will be no matter what. Some assembly-line production systems work on this schedule - the worker gets paid for every 10 widgets she makes. A fixed ratio of 1:1 means that every correct performance of a behavior will be rewarded.

A variable ratio schedule means that reinforcers are distributed based on the average number of correct behaviors. A variable

ratio of 1:3 means that on average, one out of every three behaviors will be rewarded. It might be the first. It might be the third. It might even be the fourth, as long as it averages out to one in three. This is often referred to as a variable schedule of reinforcement or VSR (in other words, it's often assumed that when someone writes "VSR" they are referring to a variable ratio schedule of reinforcement).

With a random schedule, there is no correlation between the animal's behavior and the consequence. This is how Fate works.

If reinforcement fails to occur after a behavior that has been reinforced in the past, the behavior might extinguish. This process is called extinction. A variable ratio schedule of reinforcement makes the behavior less vulnerable to extinction. If you're not expecting to gain a reward every time you accomplish a behavior, you are not likely to stop the first few times your action fails to generate the desired consequence. This is the principle that slot machines are based on. "OK, I didn't win this time, but next time I'm almost sure to win!"

When a behavior that has been strongly reinforced in the past no longer gains a reinforcement, you might experience what's called an extinction burst. This is when the animal performs the behavior over and over again, in a burst of activity. Extinction bursts are something for trainers to watch out for!

Recently Bob Bailey has cautioned against needlessly using variable schedules. Most useful behaviors, he points out, will get some sort of reinforcement every time. You might not always click and treat your dog for sitting on cue, but you will always reward it with some recognition and praise ("Good dog!"). If there is some circumstances where you will be unable to deliver any reinforcement (during a long sequence of behaviors, or when the animal is out of contact), then you will need to build a buffer against extinction with a VSR. Otherwise, don't bother.

Cautions in using positive reinforcement

If the animal is acting out of fear, you may be rewarding the fear response. This can happen when you coddle a shy dog.

The timing must be good. If the animal did a great "stay" and you reward after the release, you are rewarding getting up.

The reward has to be sufficient to motivate a repetition. Mild praise won't be enough for some animals. Others require the richest of food rewards, etc.

Reinforcements can become associated with the person giving them. If the animal realizes that he can't get any rewards without you present, he will not be motivated to act.

Animals can get satiated with the reward you're offering when they've had enough, and it will no longer be motivating.

Reinforcers increase behavior. If you don't want your animal actively trying out new behaviors ("throwing behaviors at the trainer"), don't use positive reinforcement. Use a positive reinforcement to train an animal to do something.

Negative Punishment

Negative punishment is reducing behavior by taking away something Good. If the animal was enjoying or depending on something Good she will work to avoid it getting taken away. They are

less likely to repeat a behavior that results in the loss of a Good Thing. This type of consequence is a little harder to control.

Examples

The child has his crayons taken away for fighting with his sister. The window looking into the other monkey's enclosure is shut when the first monkey bites the trainer. "This car isn't getting any closer to Disneyland while you kids are fighting!" The dog is put on leash and taken from the park for coming to the owner when the owner called (this causes the unintentional result of the dog being less likely to respond to the recall). The teenager is grounded for misbehavior. The dolphin trainer walks away with the fish bucket when the dolphin acts aggressive. "I'm not talking to you after what you did!" Xena The Warrior Princess cuts off the air of an opponent who refuses to tell her what she wants.

Secondary Negative Punishers

Trainers seldom go to the trouble of associating a particular cue with negative punishment. It's sometimes called a "delta", from SD or discriminative stimulus. Some dog owners make the mistake of calling their dogs in the park and then using the negative punishment of taking the dog away from the fun. "Fido, come!" then becomes a conditioned negative punisher. My mom conditioned a similar CP- as "Time to go!"

Positive Punishment

Positive punishment is something that is applied to reduce a behavior. The term "positive" often confuses people, because in common terms "positive" means something good, upbeat, happy, pleasant, rewarding. Remember, this is technical terminology we're using, though, so here "positive" means "added" or "started". Also keep in mind that in these terms, it is not the animal that is "punished" (treated badly to pay for some moral wrong), but the behavior that is "punished" (in other words, reduced). Positive punishment, when applied correctly, is the most effective way to stop unwanted behaviors. Its main flaw is that it does not teach specific alternative behaviors.

Examples

Our society seems to have a great fondness for positive punishment, in spite of all the problems associated with it (see below). The peeing on the rug (by a puppy) is punished with a swat of the newspaper. A dog's barking is punished with a startling squirt of citronella. The driver's speeding results in a ticket and a fine. The baby's hand is burned when she touches the hot stove. Walking straight through low doorways is punished with a bonk on the head. In all of these cases, the consequence (the positive punishment) reduces the behavior's future occurrences.

Secondary Positive Punishers

Because a positive punisher, like other consequences, must follow a behavior immediately or be clearly connected to the behavior to be effective, a secondary positive punisher is very important. (This is especially true if the punisher is going to be something highly aversive or painful). Many dog trainers actively condition the word "No!" with some punisher, to form an association between the word and the consequence. The conditioned punisher (CP+) is an important part of training with Operant Conditioning.

Cautions in using Positive Punishment

Behaviors are usually motivated by the expectation for some reward, and even with a punishment, the motivation of the reward is often still there. For example, a predator must face some consid-

erable risk and pain in order to catch food. A wild dog must run over rough ground and through bushes, and face the hooves, claws, teeth, and/or horns of their prey animals. They might be painfully injured in their pursuit. In spite of this, they continue to pursue prey. In this case, the motivation and the reward far outweigh the punishments, even when they are dramatic.

The timing of a positive punishment must be exquisite. It must correspond exactly with the behavior for it to have an effect. (If a conditioned punisher is used, the CP+ must occur precisely with the behavior). If you catch your dog chewing on the furniture and you hit him when he comes to you, you are suppressing coming to you. The dog will not make the connection between the punishment and the chewing (no matter how much you point at the furniture).

The aversive must be sufficient to stop the behavior in its tracks - and must be greater than the reward. The more experience the animal has with a rewarding consequence for the behavior, the greater the aversive has to be to stop or decrease the behavior. If you start with a small aversive (mild electric shock or a stern talking-to) and build up to a greater one (strong shock or full-on yelling), your trainee may become adjusted to the aversive and it will not have any greater effect.

Punishments may become associated with the person supplying them. The dog who was hit after chewing on the furniture may still chew on the furniture, but he certainly won't do it when you're around!

Physical punishments can cause physical damage, and mental punishments can cause mental damage. You should only apply as much of an aversive as it takes to stop the behavior. If you find you have to apply a punishment more than three times for one behavior, without any decrease in the behavior, you are not "reducing the behavior", you are harassing (or abusing) the trainee.

Punishers suppress behaviors. Use positive punishment to train an animal not to do something.

Negative Reinforcement

Negative reinforcement increases a behavior by ending or taking away Something Bad or aversive. By making the animal's circumstances better, you are rewarding it and increasing the likelihood that it will repeat the behavior that was occurring when you ended the Bad Thing.

In order to use negative reinforcement, the trainer must be able to control the Bad Thing that is being taken away. This often means that the trainer must also apply the Bad Thing. And applying a Bad Thing might reduce whatever behavior was going on when the Bad Thing was applied. And reducing a behavior by applying a Bad Thing is positive punishment. So when you start your Bad Thing that you're going to end as a negative reinforcer, you run the risk of punishing some other behavior.

One of the major results of taking away Something Bad is often relief. So another way to think of negative reinforcement is that you are providing relief to the animal but of course, this makes it an example of positive reinforcement - you are providing Something Good - relief. Confusing?

Examples

The choke collar is loosened when the dog moves closer to the

trainer. The ear pinch stops when the dog takes the dumbbell. The reins are loosened when the horse slows down. The car buzzer turns off when you put on your seatbelt. Dad continues driving towards Disneyland when the kids are quiet. "I'm not talking to you until you apologize!" The hostage is released when the ransom is paid. The torture is stopped when the victim confesses. "Why do I keep hitting my head against the wall? 'Cause it feels so good when I stop!" The baby stops crying when his mom feeds him.

Secondary Negative Reinforcers

Trainers seldom go to the trouble of associating a particular cue with negative reinforcement. You can still go ahead and do it.

Internal Reinforcers and Punishers

Trainers can not control all reinforcers and punishers, unfortunately. There are a number of environmental factors that are going to affect the animal's behavior that you have no control over, but which will still be a significant consequence for your trainee.

Some of these come from the animal's internal environment - their own reactions. Relief from stress, pain, or boredom are common reinforcers and some "self-reinforcing" behaviors are actually maintained because of this. Examples are a dog barking because it relieves boredom, or a person chewing on her fingers or smoking a cigarette because it relieves stress. Drivers speed because it is fun. Guilt is an internal punisher that some people experience.

"No Reward Markers" and "Keep Going Signals"

There's actually a fifth possible consequence to any behavior: nothing. You push the button and nothing happens. You raise your hand and the teacher doesn't call on you. You get no response to your e-mail, your proposal, or your job application. The question you then have is, did no one notice your behavior? Or was it just not worthy of a reinforcement?

To differentiate between these two possibilities, a trainer can use a no reward marker (NRM). The NRM tells the animal that its behavior will not gain it a reinforcer. A lot of dog trainers use "Nope!" "Wrong!" "Uh-uh!" or "Try again" as NRMs. For example, if you're teaching your dog to sit in response to the cue "sit" (it's not as obvious to the dog as it is to you; after all, dogs don't have the experience of verbal words being labels for actions), and the dog lies down or barks, you can give a NRM. The purpose of the NRM is to get the animal to try something different. It is not a conditioned punisher and should not be used when the dog does something you don't want it to ever do. It's for when a behavior might be correct in a different circumstance but not in this one.

Some trainers also have developed a keep going signal (KGS). This signal tells the animal that it's on the right track, that its behavior is leading to something that will gain it a reinforcer. For example, if you're teaching a dog to roll over and it will lie on its side, you can use a KGS to tell it that it's close to a behavior that will get it a reward, but not there yet.



This article with links can be found on Stacy's website at: www.wagntain.com/OC/

Purposeful Breeding

Gretchen Bernardi, Berwyck Irish Wolfhounds

When we extol the virtues of purebred dogs and, more specifically, when we explain what we are doing when we breed purebred dogs, we often use the term, "purposeful breeding." By that we usually mean producing animals that have a "purpose" in our lives, jobs that range from the most heroic to the most self-indulgent.

But purposeful breeding is something more. It is the informed and carefully considered matings of complementary dogs to produce generations of dogs that have the potential to be superior to the last generation, with their quality being gauged by the standard for their breed. It is the critical assessment of the faults and virtues of the individual animals involved and the use of those individuals accordingly. This kind of purposeful breeding is described and generally required by either the bylaws or the codes of ethics of most of our parent clubs. A short, but representative list:

My own, the Irish Wolfhound Club of America: "...to encourage and promote the breeding of purebred Irish Wolfhounds and to do all possible to bring their natural qualities to perfection."

[The American Boxer Club: "...to encourage and promote quality in the breeding of Boxers and to strive to bring their natural and working qualities to perfection."]

The Basenji Club of America: "The first and foremost consideration should always be the desire to preserve and advance the breed. Every breeding should be done selectively...."

The Alaskan Malamute Club of America: "to encourage and promote the responsible breeding of purebred Alaskan Malamutes and to do all possible to bring their qualities to perfection."

The German Shepherd Dog Club of America: "Breed my own bitches only when I have a definite goal for improvement of the breed in mind."

The Borzoi Club of America: "To encourage and promote the preservation and welfare of the pure bred Borzoi and to do all possible to bring the Breed's natural qualities to perfection. The sire and the dam selected should be better than average specimens, in good health and of excellent temperament."

When fanciers—breeders, exhibitors and judges—discuss the declining quality of purebred dogs in America, one of the principal reasons given is the disappearance of the large breeding kennels, and this is always followed by "of the past." This is an interesting discussion in itself, and begs further questions. Are there not still large breeding kennels, only not so many? Were these breeding establishments large because they were successful, or were they successful because they were large? I propose that breeding kennels are successful when they engage in purposeful breeding and that we have fewer breeders today, large and small, who are engaging in that activity which is essential for long-term success.

It seems to me that more and more breeders, and by that I mean people who own bitches and have puppies, are driven by the principal of simply breeding many litters in the belief that out of all those puppies, something good is bound to show up. All responsible owners of dogs available at public stud are interested in the compatibility of the sire and dam in a breeding. I, like most others, usually ask what specific quality the breeder is hoping to achieve

with a breeding and what faults might he or she expect. I am amazed at the number of newcomers to the breed, people who consider themselves serious (which usually means they show a lot), who become mute when asked these questions. They just want puppies. No, that's not altogether true. They want puppies that will become specialty winners or easily made champions and they think the mere wanting of it, together with enough puppies, is enough to make it happen. The careful selection of foundation bitches and then the enlightened search for the appropriate stud dog seems to have gone completely out of fashion.

Excellent books with personal approaches to the art and science of breeding healthy, typical and beautiful dogs, what all of us are trying to do, are available from the past and the present; some are masterpieces. It seems very strange that in a period in which self-help books on every conceivable subject flood the book stores and the web sites, most newcomers to dog breeding never avail themselves of this resource, as it applies to breeding dogs.

We should all note what the famous German Shepherd Dog breeder, Lloyd C. Brackett, wrote about selecting sires in *Planned Breeding*: "Again, given a bitch whose pedigree is 'hit-or-miss,' with no definite breeding plan indicated in the combining of the blood of her ancestry—a bitch whose pedigree is so open that there is nothing to 'catch hold of'—the best results from any standpoint should be obtained by mating her to an inbred or linebred stud who is a pure dominant in as many desired requisites as possible."

We should take Kyle Onstott at his word when he wrote about purposeful breeding in *The New Art of Breeding Better Dogs* (dedicated to the fruitfly *Drosophila melanogaster*): "For a fine dog may well be a work of art. However, if the dog be merely the result of the unplanned, chance union of the parental gametes, the words art and artistry can hardly be applied to its production." A.N. Hartley's *The Deerhound*, a favorite of mine, gives sparse but invaluable advice: "Do not forget that faults, like weeds, are easier to keep out than they are to eradicate once they have got a hold; this latter task will need time and money, and lead to disappointment and frustration."

Raymond Oppenheimer's two great books, *McGuffin & Co.* and *After Bar Sinister*, are classics, two of the greatest dog books ever written and contain advice and suggestions for success in any breed, not just his beloved Bull Terriers. Almost every page has at least one thought-provoking statement worthy of consideration. From *After Bar Sinister*: "The fact is that any animal which is phenomenally good is only so because he carries his virtues genetically at double strength and will therefore be prepotent to a greater or lesser degree." These two books should be required reading for every aspiring breeder and judge.

And we shouldn't overlook our great breeders of today and the advice they offer us from years of successful breeding. Patricia V. Trotter's *Born to Win - Breed to Succeed* draws on her years of successful breeding, as do her frequent columns on breeding in the *Gazette*. She and others of varying degrees of breeding success offer seminars on the subject across the country.

This is not an argument for breeding less; far from it. I wish the clever breeders of today were producing far more than they are,

but issues of real estate, income and help affect everyone. This is an argument against merely producing litter after litter without skill or forethought or even a firm picture of what is being gained or missed. Neither is this an attempt to say that reading books or attending seminars will make us all good breeders, although I can't imagine it would hurt. Learning the thought process of the great breeders and hearing their presentations make every breeder think more critically about the decisions we make, analyzing our choices in more depth than the mere finding of a male to go with whatever female we have at the moment. Our energies and our resources are wasted if we are simply producing litter after litter and puppy after puppy, trying to keep the best. That's not breeding; it's producing. And, contrary to popular opinion at this moment, there are too many dogs in shelters and in our rescue programs to justify this type of approach.

I wonder why this method of breeding seems to be so prevalent

now. Certainly, some fanciers breed frequently in order to finance their dog-showing activities, but there are far easier ways to make money, as any thoughtful breeder knows. I also wonder if this massive production of puppies, hoping always that the next litter will have the show dog of the decade, does not frequently lead to the well-known problem of getting in trouble with too many dogs, as some in our fancy have done. This has led to disastrous circumstances in several high-profile cases, occurring as it sometimes does in otherwise respected members of the fancy.

It must be admitted that breeding well is a skill that some have in abundance and others don't have at all. But many more new breeders could become better at the pursuit by understanding that greatness generally does not come in one generation and, when attained, can slip away easily. Breeding strategies that are learned from great kennels can prevent mistakes and those learned by experience will help through a lifetime of breeding.

BOXER SHORTS

Submitted by Genine DeMaso, Debut Boxers

HOW DOG RULES EVOLVE

1. Dogs are never permitted in the house. The dog stays outside in a specially built wooden compartment named, for very good reason, the "dog house".
2. Okay, the dog can enter the house, but only for short visits or if his house is under renovations.
3. Okay, the dog can stay in the house on a permanent basis, provided his dog house can be sold in a yard sale to a "rookie" dog owner.
4. Inside the house, the dog is not allowed to run free and is confined to a comfortable, but secure metal cage.
5. Okay, the cage becomes part of a "two for one" deal along with the dog house in the yard sale and the dog can go wherever he pleases.
6. The dog is never allowed on the furniture.
7. Okay, the dog can get on the old furniture, but not the new furniture.
8. Okay, the dog can get up on the new furniture until it looks like the old furniture and then we'll sell the whole works and buy new furniture, upon which the dog will most definitely not be allowed.
9. The dog never sleeps on the bed..period!
10. Okay, the dog can sleep at the foot on the bed.
11. Okay, the dog can sleep alongside you, but he's not allowed under the covers.
12. Okay, the dog can sleep under the covers, but not with his head on the pillow.
13. Okay, the dog can sleep alongside you under the covers with his head on the pillow, but if he snores he's got to leave the room.
14. Okay, the dog can sleep and snore and have nightmares in bed, but he's not to come in and sleep on the couch in the TV room, where I'm now sleeping. That's just not fair.
15. The dog never gets listed on the census questionnaire as "primary resident" even if we all know it is true.



MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

The Michigan Boxer Club would like to send good wishes to the following Club members who are celebrating a birthday in April:



<u>Member Name</u>	<u>Whelped On</u>
Chris Ebersole	April 1
Margaret Ashman	April 2
Tom DeWolff	April 2
Heather Arneil	April 12
Medley Small	April 12
Judy DeWolff	April 22

Send Show Wins & Litter Announcements to

Jennifer Walker
28423 Kendallwood
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Phone: 248-489-1963
Fax: 248-489-1720

secretary@michiganboxerclub.com

SHOW WINS

Ch. Cameliard's Casting Shadows—"Molly"

Owner: Elizabeth Bistline

Breeder: Virginia Johnson, Cameliard Boxers

Handler: James & Wendy Bettis

Am/Can Ch. BJay's Traveling Man x
Am/Can Ch. Cameliard's Color Me Gone

Best of Breed

Apple Valley Kennel Club—3/11/06

Judge: Ms. Kay Radcliffe

Best of Opposite Sex

Apple Valley Kennel Club—3/12/06

Judge: Mr. Bill Whaling

Cameliard's Diamonds & Pearls—"Hannah"

Owner: Tasha Ebersole

Breeder: Virginia Johnson, Cameliard Boxers

Chris Randolph, Randolph Boxers

Handler: Genine DeMaso

Ch. Raineylane's Different Drum x
Ch. Randolph Diamonds Are Forever

Winners Bitch, Best of Winners—1 point

Belle-City Kennel Club—3/6/06

Judge: Mr. William Cunningham

Cameliard's Dust In The Wind—"Chip"

Owner: Virginia Johnson & Jeremy Myers

Breeder: Virginia Johnson, Cameliard Boxers

Chris Randolph, Randolph Boxers

Handler: Genine DeMaso

Ch. Raineylane's Different Drum x
Ch. Randolph Diamonds Are Forever

Winners Bitch, Best of Winners—1 point

Central Indiana Boxer Club—3/11/06

Judge: Mr. George Heitzman

Cameliard's Mystic Warrior—"Rocky"

Owner: Susan Boxlet & Gerald Franzen

Breeders: Virginia Johnson, Cameliard Boxers

Handler: Genine DeMaso

Am/Can Ch. BJay's Traveling Man x
Am/Can Ch. Cameliard's Color Me Gone

Winners Dog—2 points

Nashville Kennel Club—3/9/06

Judge: Mr. Stephen Hubbell

CR Silhouette Image—"Paris"

Owner: Cindy Walunas, CR Boxers

Jeanine Ross, Northview Kennels

Breeder: Rick & Cindy Walunas, CR Boxers

Handler: Genine DeMaso

Ch. Bee-Mike's One Night Stand, SOM
x Ch. Icon Silhouette

Best Senior, Best in Sweepstakes

East Tennessee Boxer Club—3/11/06

Judge: Mrs. Susan Barker

Dream Team's Hail Storm—"Haley"

Owner: Heather Arneil

Lori Renda-Francis, Dream Team Boxers

Breeder: Lori Renda-Francis, Dream Team Boxers

Handler: Heather Arneil

Ch. Nastinan's Love Me Tender
x Huffand's Graceland Dream

Winners Bitch

Detroit Kennel Club—3/19/06

Judge: Mr. John Wade

Golden Gloves Prizefighter—"Max"

Owner: Tami Lee & Judy DeWolff, Golden Gloves Boxers

Breeder: Hali Bartells

Handler: Clare Lodenstein

Ch. Golden Gloves A Cut Above x
Maiseys Amazing Grace

Winners Dog, Best of Winners—5-point Major

Central Indiana Boxer Club—2/10/06

Judge: Mr. George Murray

Trinity's Sweet Dreams of Cedarville—"Trinity"

Owner: Susan Stevens-Schultz

Breeder: Jennifer Bistline-Merda

Handler: Genine DeMaso

Ch. Jodi's Donnybrook x
Cameliard's Lil's Pandemonium

Winners Bitch—3-point Major

East Tennessee Boxer Club—3/11/06

Judge: Mr. Peter Baynes



