

DAILY DOGA INSPIRATIONS / *Mindfully Living and Learning with Dogs!*

Authentic or Manipulating

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When I was growing up in downtown Lowell, MA, we lived in a small 4-room apartment in what they called a “Boarding House.” Across the street was the Giant Store. It was huge to an eight year old and my favorite “go to” place with fish, turtles, gerbils, small pocket pets, parakeets, clothes, groceries and toys. It reminds me of warehouses today sans the pets (Costco, BJ’s, Sam’s). It was one-stop-shopping that was convenient for a mom working full-time, raising a kid on her own, and without a car or driver’s license.

One day I was bored and asked my mother if I could go to the Giant Store. She gave me a time and said, “Be back in 30 minutes”. I got excited when I saw a pair of pajamas. The sales clerk said, “Do you like those?” “Oh yes”, I responded. She said, “Then go ask your mother if you can have them.” “Okay”.

I walked out the door, crossed the street, and went to find my mother WITH THE PJ’S. She asked, “What are you doing with those? Did someone buy them for you?” I innocently said, “No, the clerk said to go ask you if I could have them.” *What mom’s go through.*

Authentic or manipulating? For an eight year old this was authentic. I went to Catholic school and I knew the difference between right and wrong. I did what I was told for at least a couple of more years. Intentionally, I was not stealing PJ’s. My mom grabbed me by the hand and we marched back to the Giant Store. After apologizing, my mom paid for the PJ’s. In silence, we walked home. After having a drink (of water), my mom said, “Let’s talk about what just happened. You walked out of a store and didn’t pay for your stuff. What were you thinking? Next time, Tell her your mother is at home.” I said, “But I didn’t want her to think you didn’t care about me.” *“Go to your room, think about what just happened, and don’t come out until supper.” “Okay”. I went to my room with my dog and my pajamas!*

“SUPPER.” I joined the rest of the family in our small kitchen *in my new pajamas*. I will never forget the look on my mother’s face, hands on hips, shaking her head - and smiling from ear-to-ear. She said, “Those are nice, eat some dinner, brush your teeth, and go to bed.” Nothing more had to be said. In my child-like mind I was being manipulating to get something I wanted – a bit of a wise-kid. I was also protecting my mother, as a parent who sent her 8-year old shopping on her own. I became an entrepreneur that day, but learned later, that there are better ways to get attention (and pajamas).

Fast forward and we grow up into a world where people can be authentic or manipulating. Our dogs are very authentic in their behaviors, mostly the ones we shape. They can be manipulating too. It happens quickly when puppies turn into adolescents (about 8 months – 3 years old). We call and they give us a look and continue strutting their stuff in the other direction. We are boring. Solution: Become more interesting and challenging giving the dog a job to do.

Knowing the difference between authentic and manipulating can make our lives easier at work, with family and friends - and with our dogs. With technology we can be bamboozled on line too so use the same techniques of listening to your intuition, pausing and breathing before deciding!

How can you tell the difference between authenticity and manipulation?

There's a thin line between authenticity and manipulation. Both influence others. A good way to define this is, again, your gut feeling, and viewing it as leadership.

Manipulators and Leaders:

1. Recognize and compliment the strengths of others (positive reinforcement / Good Dog!)
2. Tap into the emotions of others with clarifying questions ...
3. Exhibit vision, passion, generosity, kindness, and make plans
4. Create excitement for the buy-in (the hook)
5. Understand that people want to matter and need to be appreciated (recognized)
6. Identify and get to know the enemies (great manipulators)
7. Help people come to their own conclusions (motivation / encouragement / coaching)
8. Have a passion to make a difference
9. Help others succeed (or believe they are succeeding)
10. Reward desired behaviors with humans, dogs, (other species)

The differences between authentic leaders and manipulators are *authenticity, transparency, and generosity*. Good leaders can manipulate in a "good way". The difference is in how we feel.

Authenticity

Leaders love; manipulators are selfish. They seldom care about how you feel. The bottom line matters.

Doing what you love establishes authenticity

Love, empathy and kindness define the values you bring to work, friendships and others.

Transparency

Manipulators lurk in the shadows with secret agendas *while leaders expose themselves by walking in the light*. Leaders are open, honest, make mistakes and admit it. Transparency (being honest) establishes trust.

Generosity

Manipulators serve themselves at the expense of others. On the other hand, leaders serve others and teach what needs to be learned in an understanding way. They leverage their skills *and* the skills of others for the benefit of the whole.

There's a thin line between authenticity and manipulation. How we live, lead and teach others (any species) defines which side of the line you stand, and you may find yourself on both sides through a lifetime. Being aware of this is the path towards authentic leadership!