

Daily Doga *Inspirations for you and your dog*

Socialization and Manners (S&M) *can save a dog's life and change yours!*
Giggle! Humor is good; think what you want.

Have you ever been standing in a line and some bleeping !#erk steps in front of you? What did you do or feel? Did you think, “this person has no manners and I’d like to shove my carriage up their butt?” Maybe you said, “Hey, excuse me, but there is a line bub -- *or worse.*” When working in Corporate, this person from another country stepped in front of me, in line, at lunch, in the cafeteria. I was young, bold and remember saying something like, “what the hey, there is line and it’s back there.” I stepped in front, and then the next, and the next person, did too. HE got the message. Was it right, wrong, who knows? When in Rome do as the Romans, but he was in Lowell and that was rude.

Let’s explore dog-to-dog interactions without torturing or blaming ourselves. Is it any different? We know it happens. Some dog on a flexi-lead launches into your dog’s face, while the owner obviously smiles, ignores or spills her ice coffee and starts swearing at the dog. A dog shows up that has not been at a park before, and peaceful play turns into atomic warfare. We don’t have “time” to redirect. We are in the middle of a tense situation. At this time, we have a choice to fuel the rage or take a deep breath and teach a lesson, or let it go. Same with dogs. Most dogs do not want conflict. They engage in conflict because they do not know dog manners!

No-one knows what culture or kind of socialization skills a person or dog has. What may be okay for some, may be very different for others. There is a difference between culture and clueless. We can be aware of and responsible for ourselves and dogs.

Along with awareness centered training (ACT), the single most life saving important thing is S&M, socialization and manners. It is gratifying to know that even a little goes a long way in teaching dogs how to navigate their way with other dogs in a variety of situations.

We know it is never just about the dog, techniques, tools or a score. Dogs can experience sensory overload just like us! They find more pleasure rolling in dead fish than showing off a new harness. The short-lived new color and leash is our bliss, or the marketing company’s revenue. Dogs would enjoy walking butt naked with us, but we’d get arrested!

Let's not flog ourselves if we don't have the latest and greatest, or done it RIGHT and NOW. Begin where you are by subtly introducing a variety of sights, sounds and smells.

Every puppy is different. Every adopted dog comes with a history of associations. These may be good or not. You really don't know, so let it go. Nothing has to be proven. No-one has to be right or wrong. Stories are networked, but are they true? All you have is what's in front of you.

Set an intention that is kind to your dog and you! Have a Puppy Pawty inviting a few people over to ring the door bell, ask for a sit, and offer a treat. Have boundaries for everyone not just the dog. No, it is not okay to stand over my dog and pound her head.

Walking meditation is a good way to relax yourself while introducing your pup to the big, exciting world. I've been training dogs and people for many years. 90% of the time, what is described as "crazy, stupid, aggressive, barking too much and lunging" is simply boredom and needing more S&M. *Giggle! Humor is good; think what you want.*

Begin with your dog, where you are, to develop an increased awareness, confidence and enhanced communication skills that will reflect in all of your relationships. You'll learn to feel the rhythm, when you connect with your dog; it's like dancing with a partner you've practiced with for years.

The following recommendations are what I use with my dogs and me.

[Through a Dog's Ear Series](#)

[Canine Desensitization Series](#): Made with [Joshua Leeds](#) and [Lisa Spector](#), [Victoria Stilwell](#) – It's me or the Dogs) City Sounds, Thunder and Fireworks are beautifully arranged with mild, moderate and intense, so you aren't flooding, you are incrementally introducing your puppy / dog to sounds.

[Calming Signals](#): The Body Language of Dogs by Turid Rugaas

[Lilli Chin's Boogie Body Language Charts](#): A fun rendition of Turid's Calming Signals.

Be mindful that how you react to your dog's reactions makes a difference. Keep your emotions and explosions in check by taking in a deep breath, pause, and exhale.

You are the most important person in your dog's life! Extras will help, but spending quality time, in increments of even 10-minutes a few times a day, will sufficiently and lovingly socialize your dog with the manners they need with humans or other dogs.

Enjoy the Journey.