

 **Daily Doga Inspirations for you and your dog**
Accepting our Dogs and Appreciating Apples
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Dogs come in a fascinating group of breeds, colors, sizes and personalities. So do apples. Stay with me there is a connection. Despite potential for so many similar traits within a breed or breed mix, people perceive dogs in many different ways dogs. Apples too!

As dogs enter our lives, as puppies or older dogs, even more perceptions and personalities enter the picture (family, friends, foster care, networking). With each connection (dog and human) we can choose to accept, like or not like. Apples too (Fuji, Granny Smith, Braeburn, Gala, Red Delicious, MacIntosh, Fancy).

Pema Chodrin shares about “training with equanimity”. She is talking about humans, but I like to think that we can teach our dogs with equanimity, a composure and fairness that we would want when learning something new. Awareness Centered Training (ACT) is a lot about creatively training in the moment. That doesn’t mean that it will always work or our dogs will do exactly what we want. It does mean that whatever they do will be exactly what we are requesting / communicating in that moment. The more we do it, the better it will get.

Remaining open to better communication and understanding will create new possibilities. Capturing those moments and creating even a few minutes, where we can train our dogs, enjoying something sweet like eating apples together, is a joy.

The other day I was rushing and starving. I needed something to eat or pass out. I glanced at a beautiful basket of apples sitting on the countertop. I *almost* bypassed the apple for junk food (potato chips), which is more common than most of us would like to admit. I know I’m making strides when I paused long enough to take a deep nose-to-navel breath and ask myself, “What will be better, an apple or potato chips, to get me through the next few hours.” Both came to mind, but I need to grow up. I talk to others about well being for their dogs, while I’m grabbing chips to energize myself.

I stopped and looked at the dogs all eagerly sitting / waiting, “Will she, won’t she?” “No, it’s not dinner time yet, but okay, let’s have a healthy snack”. “Yes, she will!” I grabbed and cored three of the juiciest apples. The dogs and I enjoyed a mini-apple-festival. The simple pleasure of sharing applies, watching them salivate, crunch, and enjoy the simple scrumptious delight, was enough to carry me through the rest of the afternoon. Plus, I trained asking for a “sit-down-gentle”.

I felt renewed and ready to multi-task, feeling the nutrients of that juicy apple, and remembering the look on the dog’s faces, eyes popping with pure pleasure, unaware that they were being trained!