

 **Daily Doga *Inspirations for you and your dog***

Go Away - I Want You

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In my new book, Awareness Centered Training – ACT, I share about dog and human relationships and joyful easy training in gentle, serious and humorous ways. Dogs bring a blend of behaviors, emotions and stories to our lives. They make us laugh, cry, infuriated, *and feel – a lot*. People may be surprised to think of dogs as teachers of behavior, but they are if you take a few moments, several times a day, to be still, observe and breathe.

Opportunities to observe nature, our pets and interpret messages come in many forms – stillness, meditating, laughing, our dog's excitement - and yes, *even barking*. We interpret the messages in different ways depending on where we are (time and transition) in life, what kind of day it is and what it means to us personally. Here is an example to interpret anyway you like, knowing that dogs do too!

Dt. Tate McSniff, the seven year old Border Terrier - *I say "the" because no one really owns Tate*. We are her guardians, care for and love her. For seven years I have observed Tate bark for a variety of reasons, excitement, have to pee, go play with the pack - and sniff out chipmunks and squirrels that she rarely catches. Occasionally, a few turtles have taught our dogs that they are boring playmates, hovering in their shells until we place them into a safer environment.

As a dog lover who enjoys behavior, I do not only care about training dogs; I want to learn from them too. Sure - I know how to stop the barking – I wait or teach "quiet". I know how to get my husband how to come home early from work or take out the garbage (a different book)! When the dogs sit quietly - even for a few precious moments of bliss - I let them out. This teaches that quiet behavior opens doors!

I let Tate bark even though, at times, I may pop a blood vessel. It gives the critters a warning and chance to escape! Her barking is their safety net. I wonder if Tate realizes that her message is "Go away, I want you". The Greyhound isn't happy - looking at Tate as if she is nuts – "you are barking the chipmunks away dummy". By the time the dogs exit the deck, the critters are under the fence, up the tree or hiding in the barn – laughing out loud (lol). Maybe the joy is simply in the chase, running with the pack and barking up a storm. It can be a good metaphor for us too. Often, we want someone or something, but not enough to actually pursue it wholeheartedly! It's okay, as long as we are aware of this.

Accomplishments take effort -- with focus, flexibility, determination and breathing.

Awareness comes in many paths for our dogs and us. Before we can be aware, we need to practice awareness centered stillness, even for a few minutes, several times a day. Simply observing our dog's behaviors can teach us about them and us - whether quiet or noisy! Enjoy the Journey.