

### 1. Bridge Words

When training, you need to have a way to help your dog understand that he is getting a reward for doing what you tell him to do. A bridge word works in this manner, it is a word that is used to bridge the gap between your dog doing the correct command and him getting a treat. The bridge word can be any word in your vocabulary, but it is suggested that it not be a word that you use often. "Good," or "Yes," are good words to use. I will use "Good!" as my bridge word in this training session. When the bridge word is used correctly it lets your dog know that he has done what you wanted. This requires good timing and an understanding of when to use it. The bridge word should be given the instant your dog performs the desired act CORRECTLY. In order to keep the bridge word effective for dogs beginning training, the treat must be given immediately after the bridge word. You can think of it as a promise, if you break your promises your bridge word will lose power. Try to hold three to five pieces of food and practice saying "Good!" when he does something right, do this about five times a day during the week.

### 2. Attention/Focus

*You must have your dog's attention before you can teach them anything.* When your dog looks up at you without you having to saying anything is called "Attention/Focus".

There are six steps in teaching attention/focus:

- 1) Try to find a treat or toy which makes your dog very excited. There will be a better chance of your dog paying attention to you when you have this treat or toy. If your dog doesn't seem interested then try waving the treat or toy in front of your dog's face to get them excited.
- 2) You should help your dog make eye contact several times a day by tracing a line between his face and yours with the toy or treat. Get your dog focused on the treat/toy and then make them follow the toy/treat to your face. As soon as their eyes meet yours say the **bridge word** ("Good!"/treat) and give lots of praise.
- 3) Practice this by rewarding your dog anytime they give you their attention with eye contact. Strategically place some jars or bags of treats around the house, they don't have to be special treats, dog food works just as well. Places like the kitchen, bedrooms, living room are good places to leave the containers. If at anytime while you are in one of these rooms and your dog looks up at you, say the **bridge word** ("Good!"/treat) the second it happens and give one of the many treats available. By playing this silent game with your dog, your dog should start to increase their interest in paying attention to you.
- 4) Play the "focus" game. Have a treat (or toy) in your hand while you're sitting in a chair. You want your dog to pay attention to your face/eyes, but at first your dog will keep looking at your hand. Eventually he will look up at you after a minute or two of wondering, "What is going on, why you aren't giving me the treat?" Give your bridge word and reward with a treat the second your dog looks at your face. Very soon your dog will start to realize that they get a treat when they look up at your face, when this happens you can begin saying "Fido, Focus".
- 5) The "Focus" game can also be played while standing up by having your hand with the treat stretched out to your side. Your dog will start looking at your hand and eventually look at your face in frustration. Give your bridge word and treat.
- 6) As you will see the more excited you get the more your dog will pay attention to you, so practice using your voice in higher pitches and see what he does.

### 3. Name Recognition

A very important part of attention/focus is the name recognition. While training your dog always say the dog's name before saying the command (i.e. "Fido Come"). Your dog will learn to always look at you when their name is called, waiting for you to give the command. Try calling your dog when they aren't looking at you. If they show any signs that they heard you, even a flicker of his eyes toward you, say your bridge word and treat. Repeat this several times at random in each training session. You want your dog to succeed so there shouldn't be many distractions during training.

#### 4. Sit

*Step 1:* Hold your lure (usually a treat) in your right hand with your palm up – lure is under your thumb. While your dog is in the standing position, hold the lure directly in front of your dog's nose. Once they are focused on the lure, move your hand holding the lure back over their head between their ears. Like a magnet their nose should follow the lure. Your dog's balance will shift as their head goes backwards. As soon as your dog's hips touch the ground give the bridge word and treat.

→ Do this for five times per session. Don't start adding the "sit" command until your dog is sitting 9 out of 10 times per session with just the lure.

*Step 2:* Once your dog can consistently sit for 9 out of 10 times, then you can begin adding the command "sit" immediately before you lure your dog into the sit position. Call your dog's name, give the "sit" command, and then lure your dog into position. Once they are seated make sure to use the bridge word and treat. Work with this 5 times in each training session.

#### 5. Leave It (step one)

Every dog needs to learn the "Leave it" command in order to keep them from grabbing unwanted objects or chasing after animals, such as squirrels. To learn this command, place an object, such as a milkbone (something minor) on the floor under your foot. Hide a really good treat in your hand, (piece of hotdog). Let your dog see the milk bone and sniff, scratch, and lick to try to get at it. When your dog stops, for even a second, use your bridge word and reward immediately. Keep doing this until your dog looks up at you or just backs away and leaves it. Once they are leaving it about 9 out of 10 times, then you can start to say "Fido, Leave It" as they go after the milkbone.

#### 6. Hand Feed

Hand feed your dog as many meals as you can. This will get them used to taking food from your hand and will teach them to associate hands with good things. Your dog needs to learn that you are in control and good things come from you. Food is a survival instinct for dogs and it is important that your dog understands that food comes from you. Humans and canines both understand that those who control the resources are in charge. When food is left down for your dog to eat, your dog believes that they own the food and that is no way to establish leadership. The only exception to this is if you work long hours and cannot get home to feed your dog. This is not only a leadership lesson, but also a good practice to have your dog sit for you, say your bridge word, and give him some of his meal. This also helps with dogs who grab at food. Screech "ouch" just as you did with puppies that were play biting, don't give any food until they stop grabbing, and then give the food again. Make sure your dog only gets the food from your hand when they are gentle.

*\*note: another reason for not leaving food down all the time is you can't determine if your dog is not feeling well. If your dog normally gobbles down their food and one day walks away from the bowl you will know that something is wrong.*

#### 7. Massaging your Dog

Your dog should feel comfortable with you touching their feet, ears, teeth, rubbing their belly, scratching their rump and etc. If your dog finds any of these things annoying, go slow, but persist. You should also be able to tug on their ears and tail – gently of course, but you never know when someone else might be a little rougher with your pup.

\*Be sure to read the hand out regarding "Calming Signals"

If you have any questions you can e-mail me at [DoggyDynasty@gmail.com](mailto:DoggyDynasty@gmail.com) or call 908-7454.