



Fetching Facts & Noseworthy Notes February 2015

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Upcoming Classes

Spring 2015

Puppy Class:

Wednesday Mar 11 – Apr 15
Wednesday May 6 – June 10

Doggy Manners:

Wednesday Mar 11 – Apr 15
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Treats are a Training Tool

While reward based training is becoming more main stream, it is often difficult for people to understand WHY food is used for training dogs. Plain and simple – it works. It works and has worked for decades with mice, whales, dolphins, monkeys and even human children (be good at the store and Mommy will let you pick out a candy bar!) But there is often resistance for using a food reward for dogs.

There actually is science behind using food to motivate animals – dogs included. Instead of boring you with studies and statistics, let's address a few of the questions dog trainers receive and provide real life situations of food as a successful reward.

❗ *Shouldn't my dog want to please me?* Well, yes your dog does want to make you happy! But you need to establish a relationship first. Your dog needs to understand what you want from him and what the right answers are so he can please you. After all, we all want to make our loved ones happy!

❗ *Isn't food a bribe?* No. Depending on where you are at in your training process, food is a bridge, a motivator, and a reward. It is a bridge in the beginning when your dog does not know what "come" means. The food helps the dog's brain connect your verbal cue with the behavior. As he is learning, the food motivates him to continue to try for the answer that gets him the prize. And, once your dog is fully trained, a treat is a great way to show appreciation for him being a good dog and coming to you instead of chasing a bunny in the yard!

❗ *Will I always need to walk around with a pocket full of treats?* No. Your dog will learn the rules and how to behave properly through a solid training program. A good training program will allow you to phase out the use of treats as a bridge or motivator. Then the treat becomes just that – a treat or a thank you. Once your dog is trained, you will be able to say "let's go get a treat" and believe me, he will know where you keep them!

When does food work in real life?

❗ **Training:** teaching your dog "sit" means put your bottom on the ground. Your dog does not know what "sit" is until you teach him. Your dog hears the word "sit," performs the action, and is rewarded with a treat. Food helps a dog's brain bridge the gap between the word and the behavior.

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Q'S VIEWS



"LIKE" my FB Page!
@Quincy Joe Simpson

Those of you that follow my Facebook page know a bit about my challenge with Mr. Teeter. See, Q loves going to his agility classes, but there is an evil teeter there. It moves funny when I walk on it! For a long time, I did not want anything to do with that nasty teeter. But I am slowly learning it may not be quite as bad as I first anticipated...

My Momma brings to class this can with squirty cheese in it! If there is one thing I will face Mr. Teeter for, it is squirty cheese! Now the teeter is not so bad and I am starting to like it. Squirty cheese is helpful that way.

Now mind you, I do not get things like that all the time. The squirty cheese is for super hard scary stuff only! Eating a healthy diet, with reasonable amounts of treats such as cheese, chicken, and carrots is what keeps Q a healthy dog. I know for sure my vet would not want me eating only squirty cheese; and he is a very smart guy! So it is just fine to use special treats as long as you do not over do it!

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- 🐾 **Proofing and New Situations:** Dogs do not generalize easily. Meaning, they will understand "sit" means to put their bottom on the floor in the kitchen right in front of you – if that is the only place you teach "sit." For a dog to have a solid behavior response, it needs to be trained and then practiced in several different locations with various distractions. This process is referred to as proofing a behavior; meaning it will work anywhere, anytime. The key to successful proofing is to phase treats away from "easy" situations and use them more generously in new and challenging situations. For example, if a dog sits readily for his dinner at home, that does not mean he will sit readily at the park surrounded by new people and smells. Any time you face a new situation with your dog, bring along the treats to motivate him to listen and focus on what you are asking him to do. When distractions are high, and especially if they are new, treats will help your dog focus on the behavior you desire.
- 🐾 **Appreciation:** Just as the word itself indicates, a food reward or treat eventually becomes just that – a show of appreciation or a thank you to your dog for doing as you asked. How often did you hear as a child: *Eat your veggies and you will get dessert?! Translate that to: Sit calmly to greet these strangers and you will get a cookie. Come when I call you and you will get a piece of cheese.* Not so different at all... A thank you for cooperation!

A solid training program and good communication with your dog sets you both up for success. Food is a wonderful tool to create the dialogue needed for success!

KIRB'S BLURB



One of my jobs is to help my Momma with some of her clients. Sometimes the client dogs are afraid of other dogs. I can totally relate to that because I used to be scared of a lot of things! Momma helped me understand the world is not so scary and can even be really fun. So I am now helping other dogs learn the same thing.

I work really hard and show the other dogs how nice I can walk on my leash, and that I am not scary at all. After all that work, I really love it when my Grandpa (he usually works with me since Momma is with the client dog) gives me cookies! He always tells me what a good boy I am and gives me cookies for showing off my skills!

While I do not need the cookies to do my job, after all I am a professional; it sure feels wonderful to be appreciated with one of my favorite things! Cookies!!