



Fetching Facts & Noseworthy Notes September 2015

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Happy Graduates!



Libby



Moose



Violet



Wilbur



Charlevoix



Riley

Conflicting Emotions: Excited and Fearful Daisy's Story

Daisy is an adorable, loving yellow Labrador rescued by her mom Sara last year. The first part of Daisy's life she was neglected and did not receive much socialization. In her new happy home, the real world she was experiencing – car rides, walks, softball games, and new friends – was overwhelming for Daisy.

Daisy's nature is to be a sweet, loving girl. All the new experiences were exciting! But her limited social life as a puppy also made these new experiences uncomfortable and scary for Daisy. She really wanted to meet new people and go places, but she would get overwhelmed quickly and was not sure what to do. She expressed her confusion by barking.

Having conflicting emotions is challenging for both dogs and humans! Typically, humans experience this conflict at times of major life changes: marriage, a new job, graduating from college, and so on. We are looking forward to new things in life, but are at the same time fearful of what the change will bring. For dogs like Daisy, she feels this conflict with every unfamiliar experience.

Changing an emotional response takes time and carefully chosen steps in the training process. Daisy had some basic behaviors on cue which allowed us to immediately start working on her conflicted feelings. Our first task was to teach Daisy to look at a trigger distraction, remain calm, then look back to her mom and receive reinforcement for a good choice.

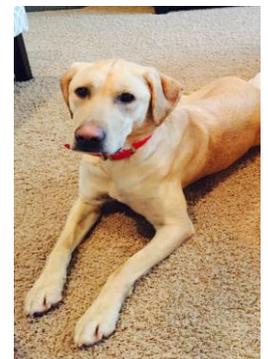
During this phase of the training, the trigger is far enough away to not be scary, but close enough for Daisy to be aware of it. This teaches Daisy two things:

- 🐾 If she is not sure what to do, look to mom for guidance.
- 🐾 The scary thing now predicts a yummy treat!

We worked at Daisy's pace; gradually getting closer to distractions.

One of her triggers was unfamiliar people, especially men. Once Daisy was able to be within a few feet of an unfamiliar man,

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Daisy posing pretty for the camera!

Q'S VIEWS



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@Quincy Joe Simpson

Q loves being social! I like to go to the dog park, go on walks, and be out and about meeting new people. I loved all the attention and taking fan photos at my movie premier last month. It was awesome!

But sometimes, a Q gets tired. Like after the big premier day. The next day Momma took me to *another* event. I was so tired and had too much the day before, so I forgot many of my manners. Q had to go for a time out; I was happy to go.

Momma says she made a mistake; and that Q experienced "trigger stacking." That is fancy trainer speak for too much stimulation in too short of a time. Trigger stacking causes a dog to shut down or respond poorly. So if your normally well behaved dog (like Q!) struggles in a new situation, it may be just too much. Break it down into smaller experiences; making sure to do so when your dog is not too tired, so he can successfully understand how to behave!

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we put another new behavior in place for her. Daisy learned to "go say hi" and then "walk away." This process allowed Daisy to meet a new person – which she was excited to do – and walk away before she became conflicted or afraid. At first, her greeting was very short and the man was not permitted to pet her or make eye contact. The interactions occurred on Daisy's terms and comfort level.

Soon, Daisy was able to approach calmly and sit and enjoy being petted. However, it was important to show Daisy how to greet all new people using this greeting method. As of right now, Daisy likes to approach and walk away a couple of times, then approach for petting. She has learned it is safe to receive petting from new people, but she needs to gather information and confidence first. While she is still in the learning process, Daisy is now able to happily meet a new person with much less emotional conflict.

Having a routine to follow gives a dog confidence. Dogs like patterns and routines; making learning what TO DO in a given situation much more useful for the dog than being punished or scolded. Showing Daisy how to handle the situation through a training process has allowed her to understand what TO DO both when saying hi and when she is done greeting. This has eliminated her barking at unfamiliar people because she has learned she has two correct choices:

- 🐾 Ignore the person and focus on her mom if she does not want to say Hi
- 🐾 Use her new greeting of Say Hi and Walk Away; returning for petting is up to her

The next important step for Daisy is continued opportunities to use her greeting skills. When a dog learns how to overcome an emotional struggle, continued training to solidify the proper behavior is essential to long term success. As the saying goes, "Use it or lose it!" With continued positive experiences, Daisy's emotional conflict will be a distant memory!

KIRB'S BLURB



Kirby is now "the dog" Momma relies on for working with other dogs! This past summer, I got to help at her class at the dog park. I was the meet and greet dog for the training exercises. Kirby is very good at on and off leash meet and greets!

But I was not always so confident... I used to be really scared of other dogs! Especially when I was on my leash walks. My Momma and I worked together for a long time to help me be more confident. And when I say a long time, I mean years! Kirby did not just wake up one day "cured" of his fears!

Teaching a dog to no longer be afraid is a time consuming task because all dogs learn at their own pace. So what took me years, might take only months for another dog. And, during that time, backslides can and do occur. When a back slide happens, take it back a step or two and slow the training down.

Hang in there and stick to the training process! Kirby is proof - it does work!