

PROTOCOL FOR GENERALIZED DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOGS WITH BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

The following instructions/suggestions will help any dogs with a behavioral concern, regardless of a diagnosis.

Foundation for Understanding Behavioral Concerns

The vast majority of canine behavioral problems either include normal behaviors that humans don't like or 'don't understand, or anxiety-related concerns that comprise true behavioral diagnoses. The foundation for treating any canine behavioral concern relies on:

- understanding "normal,"
- identifying risk,
- communicating well with your dog,
- reading your dog's signals well, and
- meeting your dog's needs.

This handout will likely be accompanied by more specific instructions that will explain and make suggestions for how to best intervene for your dog's particular diagnosis. That said, all dogs—even lovely but bratty puppies—can benefit from some set of *baseline instructions* like those provided here.

What Behavior Modification Is and Is Not

Throughout these instructions we are going to use the phrase "behavior modification" (a.k.a. behavior mod) a lot. It's important that you understand what is meant by this term as used here.

Behavior mod is *not*:

- a learn-to-earn program,
- a nothing-in-life-is-free (NILIF) program,
- a sit-stay program,
- training,
- training by compulsion,
- abuse,
- discipline,
- a leadership program,
- a reconditioning program,
- doggie boot camp, or
- punishment (please do not even think of trying this).

True behavior modification is a *humane rule structure* that allows dogs to replace one set of rules that encourages reaction, with another set that allows the animal to relax and to take his cues from the contextual environment. True behavior modification involves clear signaling and learned trust from both participants, and reliability from humans.

Behavior modification is nothing more than the process of altering an animal's behavior. The classic response to having "behavior mod" recommended as part of a treatment plan is to say "I don't have time for that."

What is not generally understood is that *we engage in behavior modification either actively or passively every hour of the day and in everything we do*. The basic tenets of behavior modification treatment are not complex, and are put into action whether or not we consciously acknowledge or recognize that this is so. You are often unconsciously and accidentally employing principles associated with learning and behavior

mod, and may be inadvertently doing an excellent job of reinforcing exactly the behaviors about which you are most distressed! This is especially easy for those of us who are very busy.

Learning occurs all the time, and we can shape the direction, rate and complexity of the learning process with conscious effort. This does **not** mean that you "must" engage in complex active behavior mod. It **does** mean that you can use small, relatively passive techniques to effect huge changes.

What Scares Us

People are also afraid of the terms used in behavior mod: desensitization (DS), counter-conditioning (CC), conditioned stimulus, et cetera. For those who do not use these terms daily they are jargon, but we can change our pets' behaviors without using these labels while still making use of the important concepts. The key to clear communication is to lose the jargon and concentrate on content.

Potential Problems for Changing Behavior

The problem with changing any behavior is threefold:

1. Inertia is a powerful force.
2. It can be difficult to break behaviors down into elements that require change.
3. Understanding how to change basic components can be difficult.

The difficulty lies in understanding exactly what is called for in the behavior modification technique of choice and in the timing of your response to the dog's behavior and communicatory gestures.

Before you can change your pet's behavior—or your own, with respect to your pet—you will need to recognize:

1. what normal signaling is,
2. what signals are associated with the behaviors you wish to change, and
3. what signals precede point 2.

In any situation there are three environments available for intervention that have the potential to be modified:

- The physical environment
- The behavioral environment
- The pharmacological environment

These environments are not independent. The key to understanding how dogs learn is to appreciate the complexity of interaction between these environments, and the importance of factors affecting temporal and intensity changes and interactions within these environments. If you wish to learn more about the pharmacological environment, please see the **Protocol for Using Behavioral Medication Successfully**.

Keys to Success

Keys to successful implementation of behavior modification include the following:

1. You are able to stop using any behaviors or behavioral sequences that promote, trigger, cause, encourage, or

correlate with any of the behaviors in the dog or cat that you wish to change.

2. You commit to clear signaling and a humane and possible set of rules by which you can interact with the cat or dog.
3. The signals in (2) have a canine or feline equivalent so that the dog or cat can understand and have the mental space to understand what you want.
 - For example, "sitting" in dogs and cats is a "stop" behavior. For dogs this is a deferential behavior that passes the job of giving the next signal back to the individual who encouraged the "sit." If you ask your dog to "sit," when he does so, he is now giving you the responsibility to provide him with the next useful piece of information.
4. The behavior mod—which is a true rule structure—should signal to the dog or cat what she can expect to happen next or it should teach her that she can look to you for all cues about the appropriateness of her behavior whenever she is concerned.
5. The reward structure—which is another rule structure—should be clearly defined and appropriately reinforced at all times. You will need to understand at the gut level that we teach best by rewarding every instance of appropriate behavior and that we retain what we have learned best by rewarding intermittently. You also need to understand that intermittent is **not** synonymous with "seldom."
6. Unless you wish to teach the dog or cat to fear you or that you are not trustworthy, **you MUST stop all punishment, shrieking, yelling, throwing things, et cetera, no matter how good it sometimes feels (for and to you—the dog and cat have a different opinion).**

Important Points About Behavior Mod That Should Go Without Saying, But Don't

The following important points regarding behavior modification exercises are those which are most frequently misunderstood by clients and vets, alike.

1. Behavior modification exercises are **not**, repeat **not**, obedience exercises.
 - First, although sitting is part of obedience training, the goal of these programs is not just to have your dog sit, but to **relax** and be receptive to changing his behavior while doing so. It is critical that you understand and appreciate this difference. Dogs who are stressed or anxious cannot successfully learn a more appropriate behavior and they certainly cannot associate that behavior with having fun or with good things happening.
 - Second, behavior modification is about changing the way the dog thinks about interactions by rewarding the physical cues associated with the underlying physiological state. Obedience training, while sharing many similarities with behavior modification, differs in the premise, interactive reward structure, goal, and outcome. Most of the dogs that undergo behavior modification have been through some form of training and most know how to sit. For a dog to do this successfully in a class (or even a show) situation, the dog does not have to be relaxed. For behavior mod to work as well as it can the dog *must* be relaxed.
2. **Relaxation is key here**—the sitting and staying is merely a facilitator for the relaxation response. There is no sense to having your dog sit and stay if he is panting, salivating,

his pupils are dilated, his ears are back, and he is clearly distressed. What on earth is your dog learning? It's simple: Your dog is learning to be more distressed—while sitting—and also teaching himself to become refractory to complex learning because of arousal of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. This is why old-fashioned, outmoded, and simplistic "sit-stay" programs so often fail: the dog sits, but is still distressed. *Good news: now that you understand this you can prevent such distress!*

3. You may have trouble with appropriate timing of rewards and "corrections." "Corrections" should be restricted to walking away from the dog or a quick, soft vocal signal that tells the dog he is behaving undesirably. The point of the "correction" is to interrupt the dog—not to "get even." Anyone who wants to "get even" may be at risk for potentially—albeit accidentally—exhibiting abusive behaviors that will make any dog worse.

Dogs read nonvocal or body language far better than do most humans. It is easy for them to "subvert" the exercise and "shape" your behavior. Problem dogs have been doing this already, and such behaviors are not malicious. They are, however, behaviors that logically are exhibited by a confused, uncertain animal in an attempt to gain information about what can be expected—and what their response should be—within that context. Because we often attribute uncharitable "motivations" to our pets, someone from outside of the relationship needs to be able to comment on timing problems and to help us with our posture, tone, or quickness of praise or reward. Most of us are quite good at learning to do this, but may need help. Ask your veterinarian for help if you are unsure you are doing this correctly. There are trained and certified dog trainers and veterinary professionals who can help you and will only use humane and positive methods to do so.

4. What happens if behavior mod doesn't seem to be helping? If you are not seeing an improvement, or are having an actual problem, one or more of the following is true:
 - You are pushing the dog too hard, too fast (very common in today's hi-tech, faster-is-better world).
 - You are giving confusing signals.
 - Your timing is wrong.

This is hard work—it is not magic. Make a video of you working with your dog and see if you can spot the problem. More often than not you will see something that you could improve. Seek help along the way. Certified Professional Dog Trainers (CPDT; www.ccpdt.org) often have a good demonstration dog and may be uniquely equipped to teach the practical implementation of behavior modification (contact the Association of Pet Dog Trainers [APDT]; www.apdt.com). One new organization, the Pet Professional Guild (www.petprofessionalguild.com), is devoted to completely force-free training.

A Few Words About Rewards

Most commonly used behavior modification programs employ praise and food treats or other rewards. The higher the quality of the treat—from the dog's viewpoint—the better will be the dog's response. A dog who might work for American cheese while on the property, might need dried liver when out in traffic. **No one goes to hell for using food treats**, but to hear people's reactions, you'd be certain this was the case.

The approach to behavior modification discussed here does **not** use hand signals or clickers. Clickers are unforgiving with respect to timing, and to ask you to read a problem pet's signals, monitor them constantly, teach them to sit and relax, and incorporate the clicker system into behavior mod, are not kind to you, and can further confuse the dog. If you are already masterful in the use of clicker training, you *can, but do not have to, use them* in these programs.

Hand signals are commonly used in obedience and can be useful for dogs and for us, but behavioral patients need every bit of help that they can get. Once the dogs master the programs, they will have no problems coupling the learned vocal cues to visual ones. Until then, these dogs should work in calm, quiet circumstances, without distraction, for vocal cues, and a consistent reward structure. Dogs can learn all the words for the "commands," signals, or requests that they will need for these programs.

Most importantly, hand signals at this stage will only ask the dog to distract their attention from the behavior modification process, and, for very aggressive dogs, such signals will put the person using them at risk. **Without exception, dangling body parts in front of an aggressive dog is not recommended, and will make the animal more anxious.** In a worst-case scenario, hand signals can be seen by the dog as threats.

Basic Instructions

1. Have all dogs in the household—regardless of whether they have problems—practice the passive behavior modification program, **Protocol for Deference**. Ask all dogs to sit for everything so that they are calm, focused on you, and so that you can reward this excellent, calm behavior.

Try to reward your dog when he has his ears up, is looking at you, and is not panting. This is the first step in teaching a dog to calm and take a deep breath.

2. Teach your dog to breathe deeply as part of becoming calmer (see the **Protocol for Teaching Your Dog to Take a Deep Breath and Use Other Biofeedback Methods as Part of Relaxation**).
3. Your dog will learn everything faster if the same set of rules is applied to *all dogs in the household* and if he can model many of his behaviors on a dog who is not anxious or problematic. Recent research shows that dogs are very good at observational learning.

Any program that can help treat a behavioral problem, can be used to prevent behavior problems. The earlier all dogs are taught rule structures that allow them to have their needs met in a humane partnership, the better.

4. Remember that developmental stages and social maturity matter. Dogs are physically immature until they are about 6 to 9 months of age and socially, "emotionally," and "intellectually" immature until approximately 12 to 18 months of age when social maturity *begins*. Changes in brain neurochemistry are associated with such changes in other species and these changes are likely in dogs. Additionally, changes in social interactions, signals, relationships, and ways of thinking accompany this change. Households are affected by the changes that go with social maturity. This may mean that more than one dog

is undergoing social maturation at the same time in the household and that other canine, feline, and human relationships may not be unaffected. If household dogs learn to be calm together by using this program it will bode well for them as the youngsters pass through social maturity.

5. You will make the most progress if you work with the first part of the active behavior modification program: **Protocol for Relaxation: Behavior Modification Protocol Tier 1**. Before you can do this successfully you will need to ensure you and your dog can accomplish the **Protocol for Teaching Your Dog to Take a Deep Breath and Use Other Biofeedback Methods as Part of Relaxation**. The video *Humane Behavioral Care for Dogs: Problem Prevention and Treatment* shows you how to use these protocols.
6. Please note: The early parts of the behavior modification protocols are very easy to mess up. **GO SLOWLY**. The single biggest mistake that humans make in working with true behavior modification in dogs is that they move through the process too rapidly without paying attention to the dog's signals about whether he is calm or scared. Pretend that all dogs have special needs and go slowly; there is no cost to this, but a huge cost in confusion and anxiety on the dog's part and frustration on the human's part to going too fast.
7. Increase your dog's aerobic exercise. Tired dogs are happy dogs and they have ecstatic people! Think of the needs of your dog in terms of breed, age, and individual "temperament" or "personality." Young border collies from working lines are not good candidates for couch potato status. Meet the needs you identify in your dog. Suggestions for increasing your dog's exercise include leash walks, running with your dog, and playing with toys indoors and out. See the **Protocol for Choosing Toys for Your Pet** for some ideas.
8. Intellectual stimulation, clear and kind rules, and opportunities for dogs to know that they can succeed and will be rewarded for succeeding are important. As dogs begin to improve, become more attentive, and are calmer, clicker training for tricks or sports like agility can be terrific. Again, this is a place where humans tend to push their dogs too fast, too soon, so please be careful. And if you decide to engage in these activities, please ensure that you have discussed the dog's problems and needs with the organizer or instructor. Your dog may not be suitable for the class you had in mind, and it may not be suitable for him. Many dog clubs run smaller or quieter classes for needier dogs. Please be realistic; to not be realistic may be injurious to your dog, and your dog's well-being has to be your first concern.
9. You can also exercise your dog's brain whenever he is left alone, or when you cannot otherwise pay active attention to him (e.g., you are having a dinner party). Food puzzles like Roll-a-Treat Balls, Kongs, and Planet toys are just some of the growing number of food toys that will let the dog exercise his or her dexterity and cognitive skills and be rewarded immediately. Please remember, such toys are not substitutes for true behavioral treatment, and they will not fix dogs who are distressed when left alone. Distressed dogs cannot eat, but as they improve, if the treat is good enough they will begin to go after it.

These types of toys can also be used outside of the house to keep the dogs focused on you and to reward them for not worrying. Think of a toy that the dog really loves as a “security blanket,” which, if carried on walks, not only shifts his focus but tells him that the world is a safer place.

Float toys in kiddie pools so that dogs can keep cool and play at the same time.

10. Please remember that most canine behavioral concerns are routed in anxiety. The key to fixing this is to anticipate where the dog may be uncertain and give her instructions that preempt her uncertainty. That’s what behavior mod does for dogs—when done well it provides them with a humane set of rules with reasonable expectations. By using food treats, we also make use of the biofeedback aspect. The following patterns may help you to understand your dog.
 - Many dogs need to control their world as a way of addressing the uncertainty and anxiety in their world. When they cannot get instructions from context they may use “challenges” to provoke the environment and decide whether the person is a risk. If you can begin to think about when the dog will not have a choice, you’ll be able to avoid any problems.
 - Some dogs can only function when the rules are clear; their world is all black and white. Our job is to teach them that shades of gray are okay.
 - Remember that frank aggression with many dogs is a last resort, but “last resort” is defined by the dog’s definition of last resort. You may think the dog responded too quickly and so be tempted to use punishment. Please think carefully about this. *Punishment will only make the dog worse because the dog is already anxious, which is why she responded so quickly.* If the dog is now scared or hurt, she will make the association with her already worried mindset and become worse.
 - Please remember that the dogs are taking their cues from you. Think of it this way: If every event for them is about a set of rules that determine whether they react and you are anxious, your signal indicates that you are concerned. Does your signal that you are worried help to make them more anxious or less anxious? More anxious.
 - Please also remember that every time a dog with concerns acts inappropriately, the dog gets worse, and that worsening leaves the dog more uncertain.
11. Please remember that although the breed shapes the behavior—both appropriate and not—no dog is “aggressive” or “reactive” because he is a certain breed. Even when behavioral diagnoses and pathology run in family lines, not all members of the breed are affected by the pathology, so it would be wrong and inappropriate to label the problem a result of the breed, or a breed-associated trait. That said, when dogs with anxiety disorders show their anxiety, the anxiety tends to take the form of the behaviors for which they were selected. For example, you may see some of the classic herding and nipping behaviors in some herding dogs when they have some problem aggressions.
12. Anxiety disorders are about apprehension of future events or reactions and the behaviors we see are vigilance and scanning, increased or decreased locomotor activity

(e.g., pacing), and autonomic hyper-reactivity (e.g., panting, salivating, increased heart rate, et cetera). Watch for behaviors like yawning, licking, scratching, increased vigilance and scanning, increased attentiveness and following, salivation, et cetera. These behaviors tell you that the dog is uncertain. Learn to read dog signaling. For example, dogs who snort will invariably do what you want them to do although they really don’t want to do it. Please note that uncertainty and anxiety have nothing to do with love or needing love, or the behaviors that you may see as loving. Once these types of dogs improve, you will truly see how relaxed they can be when loving you—they will be less needy. Please do not interpret this as less loving. It’s not. It’s a healthier form of loving.

13. All dogs with behavioral concerns should be removed from provocative situations. Anticipating such situations is good, avoiding them is better. Remember that if you have videotaped and watched your dog and provided an accurate history, you will be able to identify all the circumstances in which he will react.

The key to working with these situations is to always make sure that the dog is focused on you and calm before you ask the dog to do something. You should be giving your dog verbal signals that he can be calm and look to you, but remember that dogs need space to listen to you. A frantic dog cannot pay attention.

In the beginning, when it is unlikely your verbal cues will get the dog to attend to you, don’t talk to your dog if he is not stopped. Sitting is a stop signal in dogs, and unless your dog has the mental space to listen, he can only fail.

If the dog cannot attend to you, don’t scream, shout, throw things, or whack the dog—just walk away. This technique works because it gives the dog a choice—he can offer another behavior that you may prefer. If you struggle with a dog, that dog only has one choice and that’s to react. By leaving, you allow the dog to come to you to ask for information. This is why it is so important to work with your dogs in controlled, non-provocative circumstances first. Dogs need to learn that they can seek information from humans when they are uncertain. We focus a lot on giving information to the dogs. We need to step back and also allow them to request information, if we are going to meet their needs.

14. Once your dog is working well with you in comfortable, non-provocative circumstances, you can start to walk and work with the dog in more provocative ones. The dog should always be on a lead and a harness or head collar, if possible, whenever you even have a hint that the dog could worry.

When you anticipate that the dog might react, ask her to “look” and chat her up. Dogs take their cues from your tone of voice and the words with which they have learned to make associations. For anxious dogs you should be supplying almost continuous commentary so that they can learn that you will give them cues that tell them when they should worry and that this is almost never. Furthermore, by talking to your dog, you can frequently and instantly reward good behavior.

Use your dog's name—her name may be the first cue that allows her to sift through the noise of the crowd and focus on you. When people tell you that they have been told in obedience training that they shouldn't use the dog's name, gently explain to them that sporting contests are very different than building a helpful relationship. And if no one plays the national anthem when you walk your dog, you are not at a sporting event and you can use your dog's name—preferably, early and often—if your dog has not learned to tune it out. Don't worry that others on the street will think you are crazy for talking nonstop to your dog; it's not their well-being that's the issue.

15. Any time you are not going to be able to keep a direct eye on a dog that has behavioral concerns and there is any change to his rule structure, you must protect the dog by not allowing him to be part of the interaction. Dogs can be very comfortable in crates, behind locked doors, out of the way of traffic, et cetera. If you are having unpredictable guests—and the more worried you are about your dog, the more unpredictable your guests will seem—lock the dog in a room. Affix a latch at the very top of the door so that someone cannot accidentally open the door, and so that they have to think about what they are doing. Also, put a sign on the door that reminds people not to disturb the dog. This sounds like overkill, but it's not.
16. Many people carry on about how important it is to not allow your dog to be pushy (or "dominant"). This is another entrenched myth having to do with unclear terms and murkier understanding. Please remember that it is okay for a dog to be a pushy and assertive dog if he is also well mannered.

This isn't about having "dominion" over the dog. It's about signaling clearly to the dog and being reliable so that they learn to take their clues about the appropriateness of their behaviors from you. Changing your pet's behavior is not about getting more control or dominion over them; it is about making them want to elicit certain behaviors from you. This requires that you be calm and clear in your signals.

Problem pets have special needs, and although they can be difficult to manage, the vast majority of such pets improve. You can only address their individual needs if you let go of the useless and dangerous concepts of "dominance," "submission," "pack," and "alpha." Canine behaviors, like ours, are context dependent. This means that what works in some situations for some individuals won't be an option for others. Forcing the behaviors into unrealistic categories will get in the way of seeing the behaviors as they truly are and improving them. For more information on these issues, please see the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) Dominance Position Statement (www.avsonline.org/avsonline/images/stories/Position_Statements/dominance%20statement.pdf) and the Dog Welfare Campaign position statement (www.dogwelfarecampaign.org/why-not-dominance.php).

Please try to avoid all circumstances known to be provocative to your pet. This may mean a change in your lifestyle, but meanwhile you are not inadvertently

reinforcing an inappropriate behavior that your pet is exhibiting.

17. Get and use a head collar or a no-pull harness for all walks and all interactions with humans and dogs at gatherings or in any situation where people may try to get close to the dog. If you are uncertain how to use these, ask your veterinarian for help. Training videos are also available or you can call the manufacturer for help.
 - * The use of a head collar makes a real difference in how these anxious dogs behave and in how concerned you are because head collars allow you to turn the dog's head away from another dog or a human, and close the jaws, if needed.
 - * Proper use of head collars may prevent bites and will insure that any reactive dogs can be separated safely, should they get into a fight, and that worried dogs don't inadvertently provoke anything such as other humans or dogs.
 - * Head collars can also be an enormous help during visits to the veterinarian: When used correctly you will need almost no restraint, and you will never need a muzzle. The less restraint, force, and concern that we can employ in veterinary practice, the better.No-pull harnesses cannot close a dog's mouth but can allow you to turn a dog away from a worrying situation and have some leverage that helps, rather than hurts, them.
18. The single most unexploited technique for good behavior is also among the most simple: **reward your dog for any spontaneously excellent behavior—like sleeping.** Any time your dog plops his butt down tell him he's wonderful. The flip side of this is that you cannot touch, talk, or interact with the dog until his butt is on the ground and he is attending to you. Remember that sitting acts as a "stop" signal in dogs, and you don't want to inadvertently reward bratty behaviors because the dog is otherwise engaged. This isn't about discipline; it's about ensuring that you are not accidentally rewarding anxious behaviors. Sometimes attention-seeking behaviors occur because the dog just wants attention, but when we are working with problem dogs, most of these behaviors are about neediness (see **Protocol for Attention-Seeking Behavior**). When understood in this way, guiding the dog into calmer, less reactive postures before petting makes complete sense. Then, if your dog is calm and you wish to do so, you can invite him into your lap, onto the sofa, et cetera, providing that you can also invite him to get off and he can easily and happily comply.
19. Most people don't think much about how to pet a dog. But we must remember that dogs are very tactile animals and unlike animals with speech (us) they communicate a lot by touching. Not all touching is the same. Please remember that when you pet or touch your dog, long, slow strokes are better than short rapid ones. You want everything in the dog's life to be about being calm. See the **Protocol for Teaching Your Dog to Take a Deep Breath and Use Other Biofeedback Methods as Part of Relaxation** for instructions.
20. When you decide to practice the active behavior mod (**Protocol for Relaxation: Behavior Modification Tier 1**), remember to start in a physical place where your dog will not consider the environment to be provocative. If your

dog is exhibiting any of the signs of anxiety before you start (vigilance and scanning, increased heart or respiratory rate, increased or decreased locomotor activity, puffing out or licking his lips, et cetera) you will only teach her to be more reactive—not less. Subtlety is important here.

21. Please remember that **anxious behaviors are associated with uncertainty**. Dogs are uncertain about what the rules are when they do not have enough consistent guidance. Most normal dogs learn not to worry either by watching humans or other dogs and by getting their information from the context. **By definition, dogs with behavioral concerns have an impaired ability to obtain information from the pattern of context, because to do so they would have to be able to inhibit their ability to react.** By asking your dog to look to you for all of his cues, or to touch your hand as a targeting exercise, you can prevent the development of worse anxiety-related pathology. Fear and anxiety are not exactly the same things, but they are related both behaviorally and neurochemically. The main difference between these two problems is that fearful dogs withdraw and signal their willingness to withdraw, whereas anxious dogs often provoke the situation to get information. Neither of them can easily get information from context, but the purely fearful dog finds it acceptable to not have the information and assume the worst; the anxious dog provokes or pushes to get information, which is now viewed through their troubled lens. Anxiety disorders factor into the rule structure: these dogs react and provoke instead of sitting back and getting their information from context. This also explains why any compulsion-based techniques are doomed to fail. Dogs with anxiety disorders provoke the environment—not because they are nasty, but because they have only one rule structure and that rule requires that they are ever-vigilant. Their default assumption is that everything is potentially a threat and they react by learning whether it is.
22. There is a lot of debate about the effects of (a) protein levels and behaviors, (b) dietary composition and behaviors, and (c) dietary additives, preservatives, et cetera and behavior. Unfortunately, there are few data. Some dogs clearly have problems with certain foods or additives. Anything that makes you feel ill makes you more reactive, and so dogs with behavioral concerns may be witchier when they feel less than topnotch. For dogs who are not heavily exercised or worked, the composition or quality of the protein may be more important than the amount, and decreasing protein may contribute to making the dog less reactive. Fortunately, there are enough commercially prepared diets that you can do your own experiments and see if different diets have any effect on any of the above for your dog.
23. We cannot always be perfect so we need to anticipate what we can do if the dog reacts.
 - The first most important task we need to accomplish is to avoid situations where our dogs react. If we fail, we cannot react roughly to our dog's problematic behaviors.
 - The second most important thing is to interrupt these behaviors—without rewarding them—as early in the inappropriate sequence as possible.
 - The third most important thing we can do is to look for a way to reward our dog quickly for a wholly appropriate and freely offered behavior. This pattern allows learning and recovery to occur and for our dogs to improve.