

# Choosing A Dog Trainer

*Be Assured It Will Take Effort On Your Part.*

The pet training industry is rife with people willing to scare and hurt your dog into what they will call obedience. Vets, behaviourists & qualified trainers have stories of dogs they've had to rehabilitate after punishing training methods have traumatized or injured them. Dogs are still shocked, rolled, pinched, jabbed, choked, hung, kicked and poked in the name of training. Cesar is famous for it and world-renowned animal behaviourists are loudly denouncing such aversive 'training' as unnecessary, out-dated and cruel. The time is now for humane treatment for all animals.

Don't use a trainer who is vague about their methods and certainly not one who prides himself or herself on the old school dominance theory. Select a trainer who embraces reward-based methods and avoid those who use pain, fear & intimidation. World-renowned experts such as Anders Hallgren, Karen Overall, Victoria Stilwell, Karen Pryor, Jean Donaldson, Kathy Sdao, and the list goes on, agree positive scientifically proven reinforcement techniques are effective and humane. The benefits of interacting with rewards, kindness and patience go far beyond just teaching your pets new behaviours to also motivating them to reason and problem solve. Teaching your pets with patience and positive reinforcement builds in them a strong sense of trust in you and other humans. It is difficult to find anyone who doesn't think trust is one of the most crucial and necessary attributes to a strong supportive and caring relationship.

We are told everyday it can be productive to fail; it is part of the process of learning. Failing is a stepping-stone to success. Imagine how stunted an animal's desire to learn new things would be if we shocked, pinched or punched them anytime they tried, but got it wrong. Puppies and elderly or ailing dogs can take much longer to process new information. Would that lead to more undeserved punishment? You bet it would.

If a trainer talks about dominance and the need to put a dog in its place, this trainer is also likely to use physical force, pain and intimidation. If your trainer insists your dog has a problem that you don't think is a problem, don't be bullied into training. Some people's idea of a well-behaved dog is a dog too afraid to express themselves. A trainer may not be necessary for normal canine behaviours that often resolve themselves with a little time and maturity. Be wary of trainers who have hijacked the term 'positive reinforcement' yet are prepared to use painful collars and physical force when their competency and patience falter. The word 'balanced' in the dog training world has been distorted to mean, "Yes, I will use shocks, choking, pain, force and intimidation". It's nonsense that these aversive methods don't have physical and psychological consequences. You will hear all kinds of justifications and myths for using force and painful collars but these arguments don't hold up when seen through a scientific or moral lens. Dogs are not things. They are sentient beings and as with people, behaviour problems can be complex. 'Cures' can't be guaranteed. If you are promised a miracle, quick fix or 100% guarantee, be worried for your dog.

What makes a great trainer is not easily definable but two elements are crucial, respect for the sentience of animals and safe training methods that do not have negative side effects. The dog training industry is unregulated leaving the door open for anyone to pronounce himself or herself a trainer. Of course, higher education is no assurance of the capacity to feel empathy. A person's ability to empathize and relate should be a must for anyone having access to your pets. Please ask a trainer about their personal views, training methodology, background, education, experience and affiliations. Be on high alert for key words that reveal out-dated methods like those described above. To ensure your pet is treated skilfully & humanely, we recommend you do not leave your pet to be trained without you.

The Ban Shock Collar Team