

Leadership & Your Dog – Week 2



Getting the best results

Calm and clear direction
Respecting feelings – stand in
FRONT of your dog if necessary
Understanding how to read your
dog (Calming Signals)



Avoid

Leash “pops”
Intimidation
Pushing / tapping / etc



Why the difference? Aversive
actions make it more stressful →
increase reactivity

Getting the attention you need – Week 2



Check ins

Mobile
and
stationary



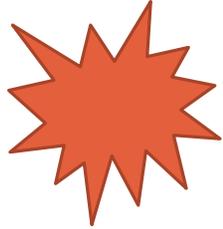
A Good Sit

Concepts for marker
training

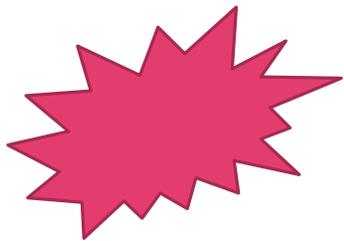
- Luring
- Capturing
- Shaping

Calming Signals:

- <http://en.turid-rugaas.no/calming-signals---the-art-of-survival.html>



Week 2 – What do I do if...?



- ▶ Quick scatter feeding
 - ▶ Use this if a trigger is going to pass by and you need to distract your dog
- ▶ Turn and walk the other way
 - ▶ Use this if a trigger cannot be avoided and it is too strong for your dog to handle right now

Week 3: Training a reactive dog SHOULD NOT LOOK LIKE you're training a reactive dog!

By the time your dog goes over threshold there is not much you can do to turn it into a positive learning experience.

Do:

- ✓ Plan ahead
- ✓ **Set up situations for your dog to succeed in**
- ✓ Help him or her establish a calm and happy response
- ✓ Learn from mistakes and set up situations better the next time

Pattern Games

- ▶ SCATTER
- ▶ 1-2-3
- ▶ Ping-Pong

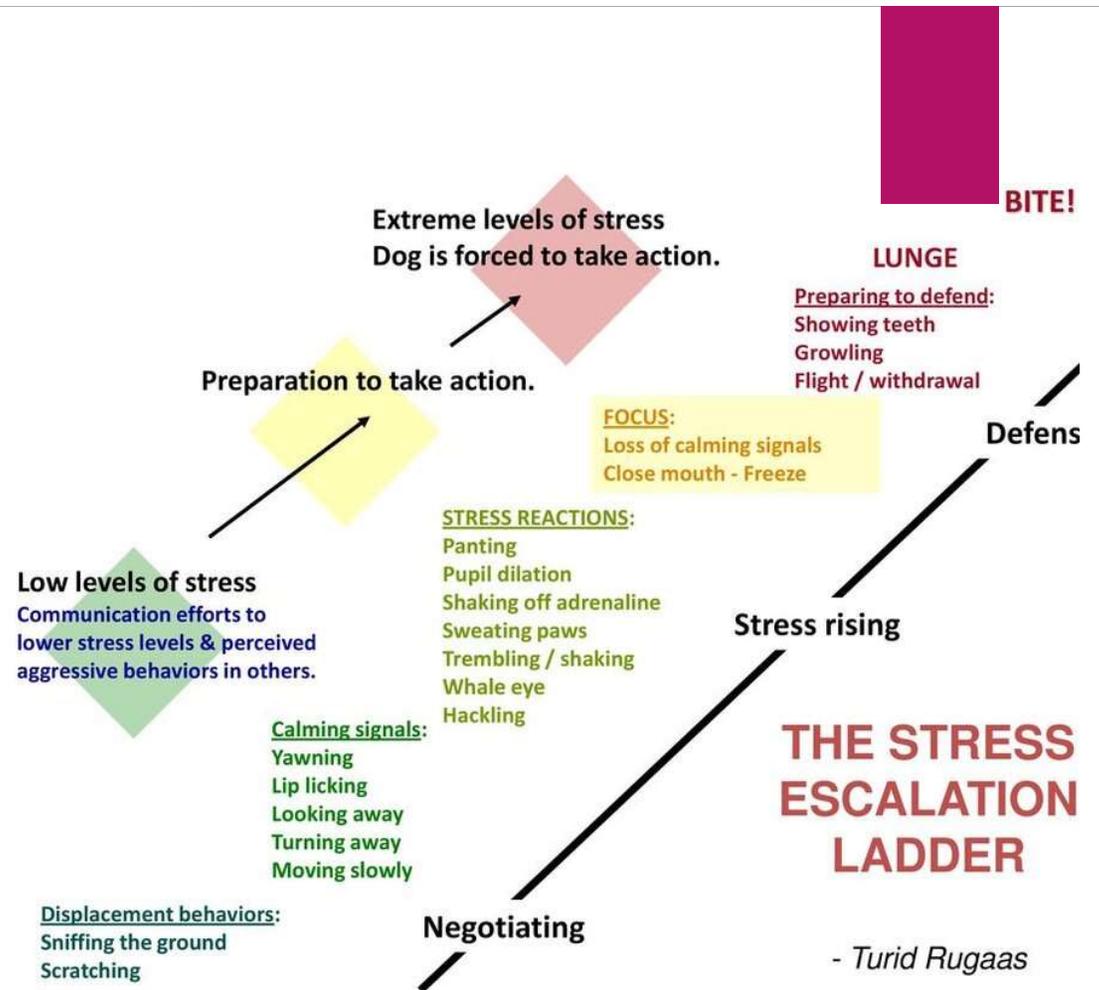
Goals of pattern games:

- ▶ Return to “normal”, equilibrium
- ▶ Deals with unexpected stimulus
- ▶ Normalize changes in the environment

Week 3: Look at That!

▶ Desensitization to triggers and distractions

▶ The goal is: keeping the reaction limited to "calming signals"



Week 3: Look at THAT!

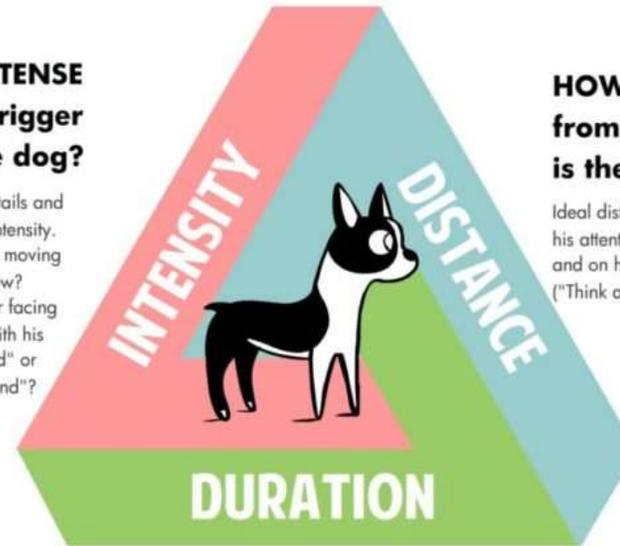
- ▶ “Looking at” the trigger with a positive interaction = trigger means positive things
- ▶ However, for now, go slowly! We can go faster later on IF we go slow now



Week 4: Triggers

HOW INTENSE is the trigger for the dog?

Consider details and
adjust the intensity.
Is the trigger moving
fast/slow?
Is the trigger facing
the dog with his
"blunt end" or
"pointy end"?



HOW FAR AWAY from the dog is the trigger?

Ideal distance: the dog can split
his attention between the trigger
and on his handler
("Think and Learn" zone)

FOR HOW LONG will the dog be asked to deal with the trigger?

Ideal duration: depends on intensity and distance.
When in doubt, keep it brief, listen to what your dog tells you.

Trigger is TOO INTENSE = increase distance + shorten duration

Trigger is TOO CLOSE = decrease intensity + shorten duration

Dealing with Trigger for TOO LONG = increase distance + decrease intensity

via Suzanne Clothier article on "Understanding Thresholds":
www.suzanneclothier.com/the-articles/understanding-thresholds-its-more-under-or-over

Week 4: Engage/Disengage

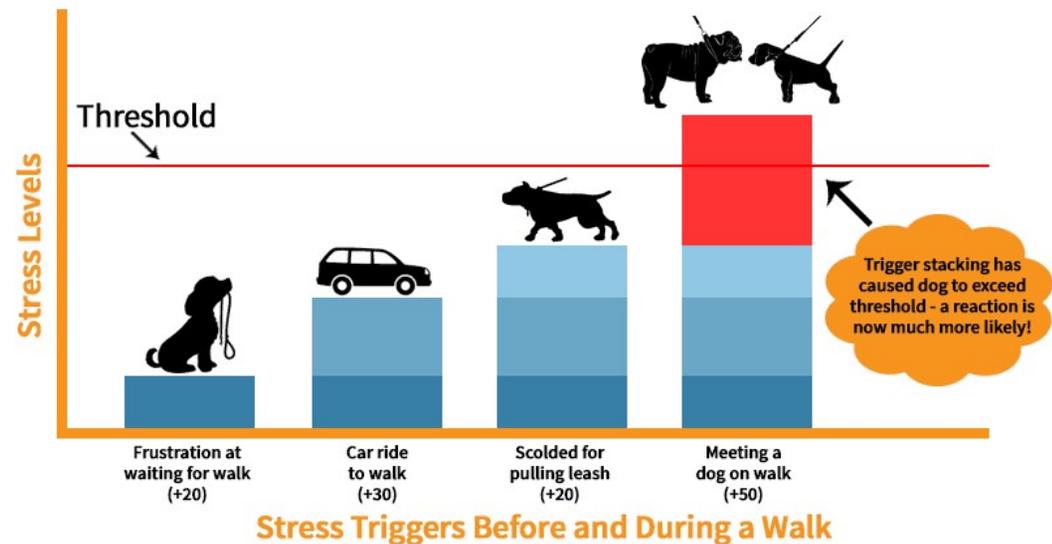


- ▶ “Engage / Disengage”
 - ▶ **Engage** = “Look at THAT!”, **Disengage** = willingly looking away from a distraction or a trigger
 - ▶ Works to **change your dog’s opinion about their triggers and teach them to dismiss them ON THEIR OWN.**
 - ▶ Opinions change **over time and with exposure**
 - ▶ Practice “Engage/Look at THAT!” and “Disengage” separately at first, for 2-3 sessions

Week 4: Disengage

- ▶ For “Look at that!” we:
 - ▶ Direct the dog where to look
 - ▶ **Reward the dog for looking at the target**
- ▶ For disengage we:
 - ▶ Wait for the dog to re-engage with us
 - ▶ **Reward the dog for the CHOICE to look back at us**

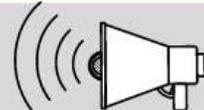
Reminder: try to avoid TRIGGER STACKING!





REACTIVITY MISUNDERSTOOD

WHAT IS A REACTIVE DOG REALLY TRYING TO COMMUNICATE ?



REACTIVE DOGS ARE NOT TRYING TO GIVE US A HARD TIME ! THEY ARE HAVING A HARD TIME COPING WITH THE SITUATION THEY ARE IN

WHAT A REACTIVE DOG IS TRYING TO COMMUNICATE

I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU HOW I FEEL

I NEED UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORT

I'M FEELING NERVOUS / ANXIOUS / SCARED & DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO

I'M OVER EXCITED / OVER TIRED & STRUGGLING TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS

I NEED YOU TO TAKE ME AWAY FROM THIS SITUATION, I'M NOT COPING

I NEED MORE SPACE

I'M FEELING OVERWHELMED

I HAVEN'T BEEN TAUGHT WHAT ELSE TO DO

I'M HAVE PAIN / I'M FEELING SORE & IRRITABLE

WHAT A REACTIVE DOG IS **NOT** TRYING TO COMMUNICATE

I WANT TO BE DOMINANT

I'M AN AGGRESSIVE DOG

I'M STUBBORN & WON'T LISTEN

I WANT TO BE THE ALPHA

YOU CAN'T CONTROL ME

I'M FORCING MYSELF TO FACE MY FEARS

YOU'RE A BAD OWNER

I'M MANIPULATING THIS SITUATION

I REFUSE TO OBEY YOU

I HAVE NO RESPECT FOR YOU

I NEED YOU TO SHOUT AND PUNISH ME FOR BEHAVING THIS WAY

I'M A BAD, NAUGHTY, HORRIBLE DOG

REACTIVITY IS AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION TOOL THAT DOGS USE WHEN THEY'RE SCARED, ANXIOUS, OR IN PAIN - TAKE THE TIME TO UNDERSTAND YOUR DOG & NOTICE WHAT TRIGGERS THEIR BEHAVIOUR SO YOU CAN WORK ON MANAGING IT *Dogs Disclosed*

Week 5: Shifting Perspective

Week 5: Review getting your dog to “Disengage”

Having a way for your dog to disengage is key, even if it means that you have to gently intervene.

- ▶ **“Look at that!” while moving backwards** < PRACTICE
- ▶ ****Quick short steps backward to get your dog’s attention****
- ▶ Light pressure on the leash
 - ▶ ****very light****
 - ▶ Reward dog turning to pressure

Week 5: Defensive Driving

▶ U-Turn

- ▶ Keep the dog close to you
- ▶ Put a treat in front of their nose
- ▶ Turn with them in a 180* turn, keeping the dog on the inside of the turn.
- ▶ Keeps the dog from head-to-head encounters (avoidance)

▶ “Arc-By” or “Wide Berth”

- ▶ Keep the dog close to you and on the side away from the trigger (preferable)
- ▶ Make an arc by moving at a 30*-45* angle, walking past the trigger
- ▶ Keeps the dog's attention on you by directing their path

▶ Turn to Front

- ▶ Competition sit
- ▶ Helps get attention
- ▶ Can redirect the dog to you
- ▶ Use with quick, short steps to keep the dog's attention

REMINDER: use the GOOD TREATS!

- hotdogs, meatballs, etc.

Week 5: Defensive Handling Maneuvers



CALM and RELAXED? or SHUT DOWN?

Calm, attentive, responsive



Ready for incoming signals!

Lying down, TAKING A BREAK



All cool, slow down, ok?

Ok

Soft faces and bodies, wiggly



Belly rubs!

Lying down, OFFERING belly, soft and wiggly body



This is a positive memory!

Responding to handler and environment, free and easy body movement

Frozen, unresponsive



Tucked in, staying very still

Lying down, OVERWHELMED ("Flooded")



Help. Need space

"whale eye"
Ears pinned

Tense face and body

Tense



Lying down, FORCEFULLY RESTRAINED to have belly exposed - stiff scared

Staying very STILL, guarded posture



It's useless.

Overwhelmed, unresponsive and avoidant

Week 6: Reducing Triggers

Body Language References

eileenanddogs.com/2013/11/21/shut-down-dogs-part-2/
<https://paws4udogs.wordpress.com/2013/08/12/belly-rub-redux/>
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Week 6: What to do before a walk/training

▶ BEFORE A WALK:

- ▶ Sniffing / “nosework” – finding food
 - ▶ Snuffle mat
 - ▶ Bathmat
 - ▶ Hide the food in a room and let the dog come in
- ▶ Do some training, get the dog into their “thinking brain”
- ▶ Play – tug, “personal” - fetch

▶ DURING A WALK:

You encounter a trigger and have to confront it:

1. Get your dog to a safe place
2. Start training – always easy commands, sit, down, stay, paw, watch me
3. Looking for them to stop being hypervigilant
4. Sniff walk – walk where the dog wants, “check their pee mail”

Week 6: Strategic Exposure & Review

- ▶ “Competition” Heel
 - ▶ Dog heels close to you
 - ▶ Allows you to relax knowing they are close
 - ▶ Allows dog to relax into the walk
- ▶ Touch
 - ▶ Dog touches nose to your hand, where directed
 - ▶ Helps get attention
 - ▶ Reward the dog for attention and responding to command
- ▶ Tactile tugs
 - ▶ Very short, gentle
 - ▶ Helps get attention
 - ▶ Reward the dog for turning to you and responding to leash pressure

When is my
dog ready
to drop the
treats?

Short answer: When your dog is not reacting to their triggers.

Two strategies for “the bark-and-treat-bark”-

- Delay the time between the click and the treat, starting briefly and then adding on a couple of seconds
- Do 2 behaviors – pair a “trigger behavior” (Look at that, waiting for them to disengage, etc.) with another incompatible, moving behavior (sit, paw, some command where the dog must initiate an action)
- Start “Chaining” behaviors together – add additional behaviors

HEEL

- ▶ First, anytime the dog is in a “loose heel” position
 - ▶ Practice without a leash
 - ▶ Then, let the dog drag a leash
 - ▶ Then, practice picking the leash up (these two steps go quickly)
 - ▶ Then, practice outside, holding the leash in a familiar area
 - ▶ Then practice in a walking area low distractions moving to eventual high distraction
 - ▶ These are all done in a “loose heel” position
- ▶ Then, you are going to start refining your criteria
 - ▶ What gets a treat? Only when the dog is in a closer heel position
 - ▶ What gets a treat after that? Only when the dog's head happens in the right position