

## Want a better relationship with your pup? Remind don't Correct

Often when I get called in to help with a dog issue, one of the factors in both the problem and solution is the relationship between the dog and humans. The humans may be misinterpreting the dog's signals, or the dog may have increased their reactions to be heard, or a variety of other behaviors that come down to the need for a better relationship.

I recommend people improve the relationship with their dogs by building trust; learning their dogs' language, getting to know their cues and behaviors, being more patient, and improving their management techniques.

The majority of people manage their dogs 95% of the time; they train them 5%. We manage our dogs by having fenced-in areas, using no-pull harnesses, and giving them slow-feeding toys. Management tools include practically anything we use on our best friends. Some positive some negative – the question is, which are you using?

For example, prong collars. Some individuals think these collars are benign or are only negative when they want them to be, but that's not the case. Prong collars, those collars with teeth angled into a dog's neck, operate on the pinch principle; pinching a dog as a way to get them to stop doing something. This method of dog intimidation – it can't really be called training - went out of favor two decades ago when we finally accepted that positive reinforcement works significantly better than negative.

It's true these collars give you an immediate response, how could they not? But consider what else these collars do: they put pain into the relationship with your best friend, they make your pup distrust you because as soon as they don't listen, you hurt them. But they also correct dogs *constantly*, anytime they reach toward a smell, person, dog, itch - often when you're not even aware.

If you're looking to build a relationship with your dog, you cannot do that by throwing random pain into the mix - it makes you seem unpredictable and something to be cautious of rather than love unconditionally. Especially when dealing with fearful pups!

Also, these collars don't teach; they control - your dog won't learn to walk politely next to you or leave a dog or person alone. Instead they learn to respect the collar and are great when it's on but completely unruly when it's not – you haven't taught your dog anything except to respect a painful, piece of metal rather than you.

Build the relationship with your pup by reminding them of what you want them to do, rather than correcting them for exploring the world and being dogs. Remind don't Correct your Best Friends!!

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