



# The WoofGang Wag Rag



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Free

## *Building Trust*

Trust is a much overlooked quality of our relationships with our dogs. Just as we seek to build trust with our dogs, then we will unwittingly undermine it. While using some tricky maneuvers may be necessary in a pinch, relying on them in the daily routine will subtly erode the fabric of our relationships with our canine companions. Here are some pitfalls to keep an eye out for...

### **Employing Deception**

It was this technique that my clients were using to depart from their home that first prompted me to consider trust in human/canine relationships. Because their dog Snoop (name changed to protect anonymity) would charge out the door every time they would try to leave home, they had taken to lobbing a dog biscuit far across the room as they beat a hasty departure from the apartment. Rather than training Snoop to behave in a way that they'd prefer, they exploited a deception. The result was that Snoop, soon wise to them, was becoming more aroused around the door and with their leaving.

By training Snoop to go to place, teaching him a "wait" while a tasty Kong was placed in front of him, and

then releasing him to the Kong as they departed, Snoop was practicing relaxed behavior with doorway activity, while also learning to enjoy their absence, and he was mastering the art of impulse control.



### **Punishing Fear**

Fear in dogs is very often interpreted as aggression by their humans. A leashed dog will express her fear of other dogs by making an aggressive display of lunging and barking that is anything *but* the bravado it looks like to us. Punishing a fear-motivated display, by giving a leash correction, for example, only serves to make the dog more fearful, as now she has reason to fear her owner's reaction as well as the perceived danger of the other dog. And, from her perspective, the human upon whom she relies most in times of danger is intensifying the situation rather than assuaging it.

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## *Introductory Training Offer*

Get a FREE 30-minute introductory basic training session when you purchase a 4-session package. (Offer details based on location.)

Call **WoofGang** at **646.345.5116** to make an appointment.

## *Trust through Training*

Do you know what your dog is trying to tell you? Moreover, do you know what you are truly telling your dog? Training is the best way to foster the love, respect, and trust that you want in your relationship with your canine companion.

Call **WoofGang** at **646.345.5116** for help building a trusting relationship.

## *Pretty Please!*

Consider a "sit" to be your dog's way of saying "please." Before you leash her up or open the door – before virtually any activity she considers wonderful, wait until she's sitting pretty!

**WoofGang** can help. Call today!

## *About the Trainer*

Dog trainer **Laura Garber**, CPDT, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com).

## *"Do Your Business!"*

Want your dog to eliminate on command? It's easy! Look for cues that she's preparing to go, like circling or sniffing. Then use the command, like "do your business!" Softly praise her as she goes. You can even give her a tasty treat afterwards to sweeten the deal. If you do it enough times, she'll eventually "do the deed" on command!

## Building Trust (cont.)

When treating fear, use a combination of *desensitizing* (DS: reframing the stimulus in a way that no longer elicits fear) and *counter-conditioning* (CC: changing the emotional response) your dog to the fearful stimulus. (Go to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com) to check out *Harnessing the Power of Pavlov* for help in treating fear.)

### Ignoring the Message

Dogs have few ways of expressing themselves. A dog is begging the listener to hear his plight when he hides under furniture in an attempt to evade being caught or rolls over on his back, in a position of passive submission called a “tap-out”, to avoid certain handling. When we insist on our course of action, we not only communicate to him that we’re not respecting his message, but we also increase the probability that he might bite.

Just as with fear (see above), when treating discomfort about certain handling, DS/CC is a powerful one-two punch. The goal is to change your dog’s emotional mind about such handling so that he comes to actually enjoy it!

### The Snatch and Grab

Of course there are times when we must snatch things out of our dogs’ mouths. But repeatedly and unceremoniously taking things away from your dog that she finds valuable without offering reward in return will soon erode her trust in you to share fairly.

By teaching your dog to drop things on command, you will establish her trust that you are a good sharer. If she’s got hold of something, say “Drop it!” and then hold a treat to her nose. When she drops the toy, give her the treat and take the toy. Then offer her the toy back. The key is to do so many repetitions with articles that you immediately return to her that she comes to think “drop it” is a win-

win situation: She gets a treat for doing it and she gets the toy back. Why *wouldn’t* she trust you the next time you ask her to relinquish her mouthful?!

### Forced Atonement

Most upsetting is the one so often employed in popular dog training media these days – putting a dog on his side in a prone position for what we deem a misbehavior. Beyond it’s being an extreme example of punishing fear (see above), this is a very dangerous technique. For the human, there is a very high risk of getting bitten. For the dog, should there be an actual danger imminent (like dogs who may pounce upon him at the dog run), he is at terrible risk. But, finally and most alarmingly, from the dog’s perspective, the message is that his human will throw him *to the lions* for such displays of emotional content.

As with all the rest, change your dog’s emotional mind about the object of his fear through DS/CC. Teach him to trust that you will keep him from harm. If you don’t know how to resolve things on your own, seek out the help of a certified canine behavior specialist.

Do you know what your dog is trying to tell you? Moreover, do you know what you are truly telling your dog? Make sure that your actions truly foster the love, respect, and trust that you want in your relationship with your canine companion.

For this article in its entirety, log on to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com).



## Ask Woofie...

*Woofie*, I have two friends who have done clicker training with their dogs and have found it to be very successful and shortened training time. What are your thoughts on it? I did some research on it and it definitely appeals to me. Audra

**Hiya, Audra!** The clicker, which is a little device that produces a distinctive clicking sound when pressed, can be very helpful, particularly when training complex behaviors. However, for basic training, I prefer to use a happy "yes!" to mark the very moment that the dog performs the correct behavior (like putting her butt on the ground when I ask her to sit), rather than a click of the clicker. While it's exactly the same principle, there are several reasons I prefer to do it this way.

First, holding a clicker, along with the leash, treats, etc., can be clumsy and unwieldy. Further, I know that I always have my voice with me; not so the clicker. Finally, and more importantly, I want my dog to be in love with the sound of my voice, more so than the sound of the clicker. When she hears me say a happy "yes!" she knows that I'm pleased with her!

Hope this helps!... *Woofie*



Manio is gray-blue with golden hazel eyes. Though on the larger side, he’s a very mellow boy. He’s looking for someone with a kind heart and an easy-going personality – someone who takes life as it comes, just like he does! Visit him at the Liberty Humane Society.