



PET PATHS®

PETential Paths L.L.C.

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Happy Spring 2009!

Pet Paths has been on hiatus, and now we're back and ready to bring you more interesting tidbits of TTouch information and other related articles and news of events! We hope you will let us know if there is anything else you would like to see in the newsletter, because, after all, it is for YOU!



Pebbles, Executive Editor

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Tips & Tails



When you TTouch another being, you also benefit from the process. You also become balanced emotionally, mentally and physically. (More on this in a future issue.)

While doing the TTouch Circles, the pauses between touches are important, because they allow the body time to process the information you are giving through your hands. Remember, in TTouch there is no rush in doing the work ... and be sure to breathe!

Dominance Over Your Dog in Training is Simply a Myth

Morgan Spector, a dog trainer, has written a very academic paper on the subject of whether or not it is necessary to dominate your dog in the act of training him or her. The overwhelming conclusion is that it is not, and those who think it is could be doing themselves and the animal a disservice. Spector has plenty of facts to back up his conclusion, and I will attempt here to spell them out in non-academic language.

He starts with the realization that he thinks dogs know that we aren't dogs and that they aren't people. This epiphany gives credibility to his future deductions regarding how dogs communicate, and why they react to certain types of behavioral training. He even says that it is "rare that any two species find ways to communicate." Even "rare to find true communication within a

species." We are "prisoners of inadequate language."



There are distinguishing differences between dominance. One is intraspecific aggression, which is for the well-being within the species for its overall survival. Two is Interspecific aggression, when one competes for resources between species (in this case, canines and humans), and the actual survival of the other species is at stake. In other words, on the one hand the dog competes with other animals for food, water, attention. On the other hand, when it comes up against the trainer, the question is who is in control?

Spector believes dogs handle this instinctively, not intellectually. What this means is that when a person acts violently toward an animal, it does not view this like a confrontation with another animal; rather, it looks on the act as coming from the

enemy, a predator. If a trainer/owner has daily interaction with the dog, there is certainly a soothing of the damage that has been done, but it inevitably will poison the relationship.

The author attributes the idea of a pack mentality between dogs and humans requiring Alpha position dominance to Col. Konrad Most, who has written *Training Dogs: A Manual*. Most articulated his theory as far back as 1910 saying that physical force is necessary in establishing the order of hierarchy between man and the animal. The man must be instantly victorious. If the dog does rebel, "severe compulsion is essential."

In some cases, the dog's relationship with humans is complex enough to produce a self-protective aggression under certain situations that could be interpreted wrong.

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Moving with your pets



By now everyone knows the effect the economy is having on families and their pets. Somewhere I heard the term, "a husband and wife are closest to divorce when they make a move."

Well, we have made three and, although they were frustrating, we are still happily married. But even with that background, just think how stressful it can be for the pets.

As Sally Anderson said in an MSNRealEstate.com article, "...animals don't have a clue why strangers are removing the furniture." As an example, we recently sold some furniture from the living room in preparation for a future move.

Our three cats slinked around the empty area for days trying to figure out where everything had gone. (I used TTouch to calm them, which is recommended for before, during, and after a move.)

The author shows you how to prepare to make your move. First, plan far enough ahead to avoid last minute panic. That makes "THE" day a little more relaxed. Second, if air travel is involved, get in touch with your airline at least a month in advance re. regulations, and try to make it a non-stop flight. Three, visit the vet two weeks before moving for the pet records, vaccination and health certificates. Four, establish a routine and keep it. Five, set aside a place for pets during the move

and identify it well for friends and movers. Six, make sure your pets' identification is on them and secure.

If travelling by car, you will need large enough carriers that will accommodate food and water, and, of course, a litter box for cats. Stops every two hours should be planned for your dog, and never leave animals alone in the car under any circumstances.

In her piece, Anderson has a travel checklist, pointers for dogs and cats carried together, and also separately. With the right preparation, you, the kids, and your pets can have a safe and low-stress move.

See the entire article:

<http://realestate.msn.com/article.aspx?cp-documentid=13108351>

PETential Paths L.L.C.

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Mouth TTouches Affect Emotions and Learning

Why are Mouth TTouches so effective? Emotions and the learning process are governed by the limbic system. The mouth is directly connected to the limbic system, so when you touch your animal's mouth, you can influence the limbic system to effectively change undesirable emotions such as fear, nervousness, stress, or hyperactivity. This TTouch is also effective for preparing your pet to accept teeth brushing and dental exams, as well as for behaviors such as licking and barking.

Gentle, slow TTouches along the mouth will help to release tension and calm the animal. Supporting one side of the mouth with one hand, use the other hand on the opposite side of the mouth to do the TTouches the full length of the mouth, from beneath the nose and back to the "end of the smile." Repeat on the other side. Doing this daily for a few minutes at a time will do much to help your pet., and s/he may even encourage you to do it more often!



We're on the Web!
www.PETentialPaths.com

"I think how we treat our animals reflects how we treat each other. It's very important that we have a president who is mindful of the cruelty that is perpetrated on animals." - Presidential Candidate Barack Obama 2008

EVENTS

April 25-26, 2009: Canine Thunder Event ... 10 AM—6 PM ... to raise donations and awareness for Power Paws Assistance Dogs, a non-profit organization. <http://www.caninethunder.org/>

May 9-10, 2009: 2-day Dog TTouch Workshop ... 10 AM—4 PM at Top Notch Canines, Phoenix, AZ - \$200 per dog/handler team - to register: Sage Lewis: 612-817-4473 - sage@dancingporcupine.com

More events are in the planning stages, including workshops and demos! Let us know if you want to host a workshop or free demo at your place!

Safer Use of The Canine Head Collar

Haltis, Gentle Leaders, Snoot Loops, Black Dogs ... these are a few names of head collars we put on our dogs' muzzles to help control them. Did I say "control"? Well, in TTouch, instead of controlling, we call it "directing." And that is why we like to use the head collar, to direct the dog away from or toward a spot we wish them to go.



We recommend using the head collar in conjunction with a flat collar or a harness, connecting each end of the leash to both, using a leash with snaps on both ends*. Why? Because 1) this uses "two points of contact," giving your dog more information and direction, 2) this method keeps the dog in balance and ready to learn, and 3) this is a lot safer than just using the head collar alone, since there is a chance of the dog bolting and having his neck injured in the process.

A balanced, comfortable dog learns easier, so why not try it?.

*You can use a long leash with only one snap if you push the handle through the collar loop and thread the other end through and then attach the snap end to the head collar's loop.

Dominance

(Continued from page 1)

One example of how this might occur is when a prey animal defends itself against a predator. And the enemy in this case could very well be the human exerting the physical force in attempting to train the dog. Remember, we are dealing with instincts, not intellectual understanding.

It is necessary to understand that dominance is a set of behaviors that can be identified, thus, modified. An excellent illustration is the success of the Tellington TTouch method in controlling excessive barking and chewing, jumping up and other aggressive behavior,

extreme fear or shyness, and the list goes on.

There are also fallacies in the dominance theory. First is to simply assume the issue is a canine pack mentality. Second is to just "classify" the dog as dominate. Third, to consider the dominance as psychological rather than behavioral based on environment.

In closing the paper, Spector gives alternatives in the training process based on dominance. First, dogs are not human. We cannot interact with them as if we are dogs. We are outsiders, although we are the loving owners to whom the animals return this love. But it is the human insensitivity to the animal's social signals that can cause the problem. When two dogs meet one another and one averts its eyes, that's good manners

plus being a calming signal. Should two humans meet with one averting the other's eyes it could be interpreted as shifty. So it is natural for the human to stare right at the dog, which is antagonistic to the animal.

Second, the author is in agreement with a TTouch belief that, although there may be some value in attempting to determine the source of behavior, the outcome is often speculative and may not be of much use in determining how to correct the behavior in question.

Spector feels that the model for a good relationship is symbiosis, not dominance. The definition of symbiosis is "the intimate living together of two kinds of organisms, especially if such association is of mutual advantage." When you consider the mutual benefit you derive from just having your dog with you as a companion, it is hard to understand why anyone would want to exert dominance under any circumstances, except for

an emergency.

What is needed is a "training bargain" in which the human and the dog each get what they want. In this kind of relationship, dominance becomes irrelevant. And all this applies not only to professional trainers, but to the average pet owner as well. The author believes that most pet owners agree with this philosophy, and so do I.

Remember, R-E-S-P-E-C-T is what it's all about!

