



BE YOUR PUP'S **TEACHER**

WHY IS MY PUP PULLING ON THE LEAD?

Raising your puppy can be challenging and there is so much for your pup to learn. From toilet training to lead walking there can often be a lot of pressure to achieve results in a very short space of time. The good news is that there is no rush! Learning takes time and a steady, more consistent pace can provide more effective and long-lasting results.

Let's take loose lead walking as an example.

DO YOU OFTEN FIND YOURSELF SAYING..?

- He walks nicely in class but always pulls when we leave the house.
- He just won't listen when other dogs are about.
- He isn't interested in food when on a walk.

DO YOU OFTEN FIND YOURSELF FEELING..?

- Frustrated that she only comes back when there is no distraction.
- Confused at why she can't walk nicely when we go out as a family.
- Fed up that your training seems to have stopped progressing.

These are all very familiar situations, so before you continue your training, ask yourself the question:

WHY IS MY DOG PULLING IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Assess the situation so you can highlight and be aware of any areas your dog is struggling with. When asking your dog to do something they are unable to achieve, not only is it unfair on them, but it may also be detrimental to your dog's health and wellbeing.

THIS IS WHERE YOU THINK **TEACHER!**



	Think	Ask yourself?
T	raining	How many times have we practiced this behaviour?
E	motional arousal?	How is my dog behaving? E.g. Is my dog barking or whining? Jumping or lunging?
A	nxiety or fear?	What is my dog's body language telling me? E.g. Is his tail tucked? Are his ears back?
C	onsistency?	Am I always using the same cue or hand signal?
H	ealth	Is my dog limping? Has he slowed down or is he reluctant to walk?
E	nvironment	Has my dog been to this location before? Is the environment new or too much for my dog to cope with?
R	ealistic expectations?	Am I expecting too much too quickly?

It is important to look at the whole picture when working on a training plan. Therefore, if you approach a trainer for an issue that you thought may only require training, don't be surprised if they suggest that a behaviour programme may be more appropriate for your situation.

**REMEMBER – BEHAVIOUR IS A SYMPTOM,
NOT THE PROBLEM.**

If you can get to the cause of the problem, the behaviour will likely change.

For some dogs, implementing a basic training plan will be enough, however for many there will be multiple factors to consider when working through the exercises. If you are not making progress, then break the exercises down into bite-sized steps and remember to help your dog work through their emotions as you go.

Health issues and pain can be a big factor when it comes to behaviour or training issues and can often get overlooked. If you are asked to take your dog to the vet for a full health check prior to a session, it is important to do so. Your behaviour consultant or trainer wants the best for you and your dog and if they feel some of the behaviours your dog is exhibiting could be caused by medical issues, then it is important to try and rule these out first.



YOUR DOG MAY NOT LOOK LIKE THEY HAVE A HEALTH ISSUE, BUT THEIR BEHAVIOUR MAY BE SAYING OTHERWISE

In addition to your dog's health, I would like you to consider the 3 D's when training:

- **DISTANCE**
- **DISTRACTION**
- **DURATION**

When teaching new behaviours, consider the **distance** your dog is away from you when offering the behaviour, the **distractions** around your dog at the time of training and the **duration** you are asking your dog to maintain the behaviour.

Once you have taught your dog what the cue word means, you are ready to:

- **PROOF**
- **PRACTICE**
- **PERFECT**

In training the word "**proofing**" is used to mean practicing in multiple environments and situations until your dog generalises the desired behaviour and can do it around distractions in any location. If you have only practiced at home and in the training class, then it is likely the behaviour will still require additional practice.



Learning takes time and patience, and a quick fix is not always possible. It is easy to rush the training, and this is when frustration can kick in and both you and your dog may struggle.

LET'S COMPARE YOUR DOGS' TRAINING TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

Puppy courses are the equivalent of nursery and preschool. It is here that you start to introduce your pup to new experiences and begin to build the foundations. Your pup starts to socialise and find their feet, but has a long way to go before they are able to deal fully with everyday situations.

You cannot expect a child to leave preschool and go straight to university without working their way through the school and college system.



The same is true for dogs. They need our help and support to build on their experiences as they go through life. A puppy fresh out of puppy class, may have learnt some basic skills, but without consistency, gradual introductions, new experiences and practice, they may not be able to perform these skills in the day-to-day environment. I am not saying to treat dogs and children in the same way, but I am saying that their education is similar due to the steps they need to take to learn and proof skills and behaviours.

As a caregiver it is your job to recognise both yours and your dog's abilities and set yourselves up to succeed. Through the learning stages you may need to use management or alternatively you may need to make changes to your routines or environment if your dog is not yet able to cope within certain situations.

If you are struggling or finding behaviours a challenge, then do not be afraid to ask for help.

Get in touch with a force free, reward based & ethical trainer who will help you understand your dog and help put a plan in place to overcome the issues.

REMEMBER, IF YOU ARE TOLD THERE IS A QUICK FIX, THEN QUESTION THE METHODS USED!

Changing behaviours or learning new skills cannot be done in one session alone.

As you can see, there is a lot more to training than just learning a few techniques. I focused on lead walking as an example in this article; however, the techniques are relevant to all areas of your dog's life.

Therefore, if your dog is not listening, or is struggling with a behaviour, remember to think

TEACHER!

T raining
E motional Arousal
A nxiety or fear
C onsistency
H ealth
E nvironment
R ealistic expectations.



Once you consider these factors and support your dog through the learning process, together you will achieve so much more.

BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP AND WORK AS A TEAM

If you would like some assistance with your training or are concerned about any behaviour issues and would like to find out how I can assist you, please feel free to get in touch at Jules@talktothehound.net

Alternatively, visit my website more information www.talktothehound.net

TALK TO THE HOUND

DOG TRAINING & BEHAVIOUR
SEPARATION ANXIETY SPECIALIST

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The logo for 'Talk to the Hound' features a circular emblem with a brown background. Inside the circle is a white speech bubble containing the text 'TALK TO THE HOUND' in black, bold, sans-serif font. Below the speech bubble is a stylized black and white illustration of a dog's head, possibly a Weimaraner, looking to the right. Below the emblem, the text 'DOG TRAINING & BEHAVIOUR' and 'SEPARATION ANXIETY SPECIALIST' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the website 'www.talktothehound.net' and the phone number '07909 851800' are listed in white.