

Mickey Schaufman:

It is my mission - my passion - to let people know that dog training doesn't have to be punitive. That's really old school, folks! You can have the dog you've always wanted, by using positive reinforcement!



I'm originally from Minnesota, where the winters are really cold, and we say "pop" instead of "soda". I got my first dog when I was six. He was a mean little Chihuahua named Skipper, and he bit me on a regular basis. My parents didn't keep him. After Skipper we were dogless for a few years, but for pretty much the rest of my life I have had four-legged companions. In the 70's my husband and I got into Weimaraners, and were introduced to the world of conformation showing. I also decided to try obedience training with my much-loved "Sassy" and placed first in our first-time ever obedience class.

Back then (in the olden days), compulsion training was really the only thing that was offered. This form of training is the "jerk and release" method. That was just what you did. When it came time to teach the retrieve, I was told that I would have to use an ear pinch to get her to pick up a dumbbell. I refused. I've had quite a few dogs in my lifetime, and have done obedience with many of them... but it was always the same old method, and it didn't make me happy. I thought there had to be a better way.

Then in the 90's we moved to the DFW area (Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex) with our son and three dogs. I started working in the veterinary field and loved every minute of it.

I joined a local training club, and heard about something called "clicker training". I was very curious. I was told it was a positive method of dog training.

At the time I had a harlequin Great Dane named Tessa, that was extremely fearful. She was so fearful that I was afraid she would bite someone. We started taking classes, and my scary, and scared dog started to come around.

It took a little time, but it truly transformed her into a confident and steady girl. Eventually we were able to compete in obedience, agility, and Rally-O trials. She did great in competition and we had a blast!! Among the titles she achieved are: Canine Good Citizen, Companion Dog, Open Agility Dog, Open Agility Jumper, and Rally Excellent. She even took a High in Trial at a Great Dane Specialty Show. She is still with me today, and is the matriarch of our current pack of four dogs.



Dog training is a process, just like child rearing. The same basic principles apply. Think about the rules you would like your dog to live by. Be fair and consistent in enforcing those rules, and you'll generally get a well-behaved dog.

It's true that the dog training of today focuses on kinder, gentler methods, but that doesn't mean that we accept bad behavior from our canine companions. It just means that the method is different - better - MUCH better!

Clicker training is not the ONLY method I use, but it is my PRIMARY method. I've been clicker training professionally since 2002, and continue to be amazed at the results obtained with it. Feel free to contact me at fourpawstrainer@yahoo.com with any questions.