

**Teaching Dogs Practical Life Skills
A Step by Step Practical Guide & Workbook**

What to Teach ~ How to Teach It
When to Teach It



By Meesh Masters of
The Dog's Point of View
Force Free Teaching with Empathy, Compassion & Understanding

*Photography By
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Disclaimer

Everything written and explained within this book has been designed to teach using Force Free and positive reward based methods. Nothing within these explanations or exercises should distress or cause your dog to become anxious in any way. If you notice your dog becoming agitated or distressed, stop immediately and reassess how you're applying the exercises, and if you have followed the process without rushing or expecting too much from your dog too quickly. If you're in any doubt, please consult a force free professional.

If your dog already has existing behavioural issues such as reactivity or any form of aggressive or guarding tendencies, I recommend you consult a force free professional to help you in the early stages, to make sure both you and your dog learn in the best way possible for you both. There is a list of recommended professional bodies to source your force free trainer from at the back of the book.

Success with these exercises is absolutely achievable, as has been proven by their application with both in person and online teaching clients. I cannot, however, make any guarantee's for you and your dog, without being able to work with you personally and oversee the application of your teaching & your dog's learning processes.

Dedication



*To all the dogs I've had the great privilege of sharing my life with
To all the dogs and their families I've had the great privilege of working with
I owe you all so much*

*Each and every one of you have made me a better student,
a better teacher and a better person.
May we all meet again one day.*

With Thanks To...

*My Son for his love and belief in me always
My family and close friends, for their unfailing support & encouragement
All the amazing trainers and specialists I've had the great privilege to learn from*

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FOREWORD

As you can imagine, being someone who is passionate about helping dogs and their families live happy, enjoyable and problem free lives together, my ultimate goal is to be able to help as many people as possible.

The number one reason why dogs are dumped, abandoned or surrendered to rescue shelters is due to behaviour problems, and the sad fact is, that most of these dogs were simply dogs being dogs doing what dogs do. They didn't do anything 'wrong' per se, but their behaviour was inappropriate for the human environment they were living in, and things got bad enough that their family felt they could no longer deal with it.

From working with my clients, and the feedback I've had from them, I wanted to provide easy to understand and workable solutions, that don't require a scientific degree in canine psychology to understand (that's my passion not yours.) If I can help and support people and their dogs as they work through their problems to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, then I could literally be saving lives. Once in the rescue system, many dogs sadly end up with more emotional and behavioural issues and therefore greater difficulty finding forever homes.

As much as my aim is to make solutions easy to understand and apply, that doesn't mean there's no work involved, of course there is. As with any relationship, you have to work at it, you have to be committed to it, and you have to bring your patience and compassion into it. Hopefully, if I can simplify the process for you, by explaining how to see things from the Dog's point of view, and then provide you with the information and tools you need to be able to confidently teach your dog, then it will reduce confusion and create successful outcomes for you both.

This book is obviously not a be all and end all teaching guide, that would be a very big book! What I hope I have put together here, is a structured way to approach some everyday practical life skills for dogs and puppies that, when taught and practised, can help you and your dog enjoy a deeper understanding of each other. By helping you develop a strong bond, and find a way to effectively communicate with each other, the end result is you get a well behaved dog, your dog gets to enjoy more freedom and you both get to have more fun.

Where emotionally based problem behaviours are concerned, things like fearfulness, guarding or reactivity, there's obviously a lot more to deal with. However, many of the exercises in this book are required, and indeed form the foundation for the emotional rebalancing techniques that will solve these problems.

Knowledge is confidence. When both you and your dog know exactly what to do and when, your behaviour becomes confident and your communications clear, which means your dogs behaviour will be consistent, instead of acting on impulse or reacting from a lack of better choices available to them.

It's Not 'Just' a Dog

We are not our dogs masters... we don't own a dog... we are in a relationship with our Dogs.

And as with any relationship we enter into, there has to be understanding, clear communication, compromise at times, boundaries, empathy and of course trust and mutual respect. Imagine what a human relationship would look like without those things?

Now don't go thinking for one second I'm saying dogs are like humans, or dogs are small furry people, thankfully they really are not! However, something that's becoming more and more mainstream these days in the world of teaching dogs and behavioural understanding, is that dogs are far more complex than we previously understood.

*'Your Dog is a Thinking, Feeling, Emotional Being
Just Like You... But Different'*

By realising how much the world, situations, experiences, family dynamics, genetics, stress, ill health, pain, environmental change and a whole host of other day to day living experiences can affect our dogs far more than we knew, it makes it easier to see how problems can arise. It enables us to do what's needed to ensure we educate, acclimatise, habituate and empathise to help our dogs feel relaxed, confident and safe living in the human world with us.

By helping pet dog guardians realise why this happens, or why their dog did that, I hear time and time again things like, 'ohhhhh right, that makes perfect sense now'. With that understanding, they find it easier to make slight changes to what they do, which in turn has a totally different impact on what their dog does. Many clients report they don't feel like they're 'training' but more like they have improved their ability to communicate with their dog, which of course means their dog understands them better.

Although the exercises we use to 'train' our dogs, including those here in this book, are described and viewed as 'dog training', for me, it's not really about 'training' at all. It's about what and how we communicate and interact with our dogs day in day out within the construct of our daily lives together, which is the key foundation to any successful relationship.

You wouldn't dream of having a child without being prepared to spend many years providing them with the social skills, education and emotional well being to grow into a confident, well adjusted human being, and the same is true of welcoming a dog into your home. Whether you choose a puppy, a rescue dog, a purebred pedigree or a mongrel, be prepared for at least 18 months to 2 years of education and then ongoing maintenance of those skills. Yes, it will require you to spend some time focused on teaching, but not as much as you might think, and the effort you put into those first couple of years, no matter what age your dog is, will pay dividends back tenfold in the life you get to share together thereafter.