

**Puppy & Dog Training with John Wade**

Embracing Science and Common Sense

# THE FIVE MOST COMMON American Bulldog MISTAKES



How To Avoid Them  
And End Up With Your Dream Dog

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# THE FIVE MOST COMMON AMERICAN BULLDOG MISTAKES

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HOW TO AVOID THEM AND END UP WITH  
YOUR DREAM DOG

JOHN WADE



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*“Intellectuals solve problems. Geniuses prevent them.” - Albert  
Einstein*



*To all of the American Bulldog specific rescue volunteers that see so many  
American Bulldogs as a result of breeders and dog owners being unaware of  
the impact that the contents found in this booklet have on the temperament,  
training and ultimately future of their dogs.*



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## WHO SHOULD READ THIS

### **R**ecommended Reading For:

- Anyone interested in owning a American Bulldog.
- Anyone with a American Bulldog over 18 months of age wondering why it's out of control.
- Anyone with a American Bulldog under 18 months of age wishing to avoid 'out of control' later in life.
- Anyone with a American Bulldog over 18 months of age wondering why it's out of control.
- American Bulldog breeders (as a resource for puppy inquiries and buyers).
- American Bulldog specific rescues wishing to provide guidance to homes they send their dogs, also further contributing to ensuring the American Bulldogs they re-home do well in life.
- Veterinarians with American Bulldog puppy owning clients wishing to provide additional best paw forward guidance.



Good Luck,

John 'Ask The Dog Guy' Wade

**Embracing Science and Common Sense**

## AVOIDING THE FIVE MAIN PITFALLS

### Realities and Myths

**S**ome breeds of dogs are mini-vans, and others are Ferraris. The American Bulldog is no mini-van. The males slightly more intense sometimes, but male or female, the breed should almost be considered more of a hobby than a pet. In the right hands, they are fantastic dogs. In the wrong hands, they can become much more so like guns with brains.

That said, most of the myths regarding the American Bulldog are just that, myths. They aren't 'stubborn.' They don't take years before they "settle down." They don't "only listen to men." They can come when called, stay and heel - No Matter What. You don't need treats (or 'Might Is Right') to train them, etc.

Rather than any inherent failure in the overall breed's genetic proclivities, the things they typically have negative 'reputations' for have far more to do with these two factors:

1. How careful their breeders have been with the genetics they

are working with before they selected a breeding pair as well as how they handled the puppies up until they were sold.

2. Whether the puppies find themselves in a mini-van vs. a Ferrari capable home.

Raising and training a tremendous American Bulldog is a bit like realism painting. If you want to end up with an image that best represents what you have in your mind's eye, you need to paint with all the colors, not just the ones you like or are convenient. Trust me when I say, the American Bulldog is often one of those breeds that needs a few more colors in the palette.

As a result, they do far better with well-informed, diligent teachers. Regardless of the level of our intellect and potential, we (all higher order social species) have teachers when we're growing up so that we learn how to exert self-control when our 'urges' are triggered. We are also diligently supervised from birth to adulthood. Not to wreck our freedom but to wreck our freedom to make mistakes. The American Bulldog is one of those breeds that needs and benefits from much guidance as it matures lest it loses its way.

This booklet is intended to provide some direction so you can ensure that direction for your American Bulldog and so your American Bulldog can grow up to fulfill his or her potential, be a fantastic canine companion and always be an excellent ambassador of its breed.

Problems develop (and this booklet shows you how to avoid these common pitfalls) when:

1. Dog owners are exposed during their puppy's mouthing period to the popular but incorrect advice on how to respond. (Hint, it does not redirect with a treat or a toy, nor is it clocking the dog.)
2. Dogs are exposed to one of the many fraudulent puppy socialization classes as opposed to implementing a

legitimate socialization strategy during the dog's critical imprinting period. It's called critical for a reason.

3. The reality of significant puppy cuteness (baby schema) distracts some puppy owners from developing a useful (and necessary) teacher/student or parent/child relationship. In many cases, this leads the dog into believing the relationship they have with their owner is more as roommates or them as the 'golden grandchild' making it far more difficult to guide them without bribery (or threats) when it becomes necessary, and it will become necessary. The good news is you don't have to love your dog less, but they do need to know and be reminded from time to time as to who is living in whose home.
4. Training ideologies such as 'Might Is Right' but more commonly the highly flawed 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' are used as opposed to legitimate behavior modification science. The first is fear/intimidation based, the second is dependent on addicting a dog to treats. Train by aiming at the tummy of the only species bred to love humans, and you're missing the best part of having a dog.
5. There is a failure to consider and plan for what and when the dog is exposed to known negative behavior influencers between puppyhood and adulthood when the owner is unavailable to formally guide the dog.

There is a failure to consider and plan for what and when the dog is exposed to known negative behavior influencers between puppyhood and adulthood when the owner is unavailable to formally guide the dog.

In this booklet, you will learn to protect your American Bulldog from these common early relationship and training pitfalls that often result in the loss of the inclusive lifestyle most people envision and hope for when they decide to include a dog in their lives.

## THE PUPPY SOCIALIZATION TRAP

**M**ost people have encountered one of those happy around everything dogs. They have fantastic, trustworthy and reliable temperaments. They are stable around babies, children, adults and the elderly. Loud sounds like thunder, fireworks do not disturb them. They are capable of being left alone without succumbing to separation anxiety.

These are the bomb-proof dogs. When it's real, this is not a byproduct of training. It's a byproduct of two things. Genetics and what a breeder and the first owner expose the puppy to between three and twelve weeks of age.

Genetics can be one of the greatest gifts (or burdens) in life as it impacts so much of who we are and what we become. It's not a different story for dogs. Careful breeding practices can positively impact a dog's physical and behavioral characteristics, and poor breeding can make pure-bred dogs only poor-bred dogs. It is, however, an area that once a dog is conceived, we have no control over.

Where breeders and companion dog owners can provide their dogs

with a phenomenally positive life advantage impact is when they pay meticulous attention to a small window of opportunity inside their dog's development. This is often called the critical socialization imprinting period.

If a breeder and first owner do nothing else, handling this period correctly is the greatest gift either will ever give their dog or themselves. If they make the effort, they will create stability. If they do not, they exponentially increase the likelihood of fear aggression, anxiety, storm reactivity and other temperament related behaviors. Additionally, obedience will always be far more challenging to teach the dog and for the dog to retain in varied environments. The negative impact of not taking this seriously on the dog and the dog's family is always far-reaching.

Dogs not correctly imprinted are far more likely to be returned to the breeder, surrendered to a rescue, or euthanized.

If you read nothing else in this booklet - READ THIS CHAPTER and act upon what you learn.

### **Critical Socialization IS NOT Puppy Socialization Classes**

Critical socialization imprinting is sadly one of the most misunderstood untapped areas for the positive shaping a dog's future temperament and subsequent behavior, and as a result, considerable unnecessary grief occurs for many American Bulldog owners and their dogs.

Ironically the most grievous dispensers of these errors are well-meaning but ill-informed dog breeders, dog trainers, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and rescues. Ignorance and misinformation concerning "puppy socialization" have for decades been leading companion dog owners away from true social imprinting and into entirely preventable temperament issues in their dogs.

A further and enormous irony is that the impact of social imprinting

during a dog's critical socialization period on its temperament is one of the very few areas in canine behavior that has received considerable scientific research attention.

Back in the 1950-60's behavior geneticist and comparative psychologist Dr. John Paul Scott and behavior geneticist and biologist Dr. John L. Fuller discovered that between approximately three and twelve weeks of age puppies exposed to a wide range of nuanced sensory experiences would become far better prepared for their future lives.<sup>1</sup>

The enormous irony is because in spite of the clarity of what they discovered almost every puppy socialization class offered in North America not only ignores the science but potentially both, directly and indirectly, cause considerable harm. Mostly they've ignored the science in favor of a questionable income stream. They've muddied the waters for companion dog owners as to what constitutes beneficial socialization, and many dogs end up missing the benefits or suffering because of clumsy application.

### **Critical Socialization/Imprinting Period**

Here is some of what we absolutely know about a dog's critical socialization period.

- It begins at 3 weeks of age and ends at 12 weeks of age. (There is the potential for a +/- 1-week variance.)
- Dog to dog socialization runs from 3 - 6 weeks of age. (Again with a slight +/- variance.)
- There is a fear imprint stage that runs from 8 - 10 weeks of age (Again with the potential for a slight +/- variance.)
- The more full the range of sights, sounds, smells and textures a pup is exposed to during its critical imprinting period the more stable its temperament will be around those things and the more resilient it will be later in life if it encounters something outside of that range of experience.
- When the critical socialization period is over - it is over. No

amount of training or “socialization” will impact the dog in the same way as positive exposure during its critical socialization period. (That is not to say that training can’t help by providing another focus but that is not the same thing as being relaxed and accepting.)

### **Avoid Group Class Puppy “Socialization”**

Compare the absolutes mentioned above with the typical take on socialization as is offered in puppy socialization classes.

- Historically, most dogs do not attend these classes until after the imprinting window has closed as typically veterinarians advise that puppies access to public venues and other dogs are restricted until they have completed all immunizations. As a result, if a puppy is over twelve weeks of age, they are not truly “social imprinting” usefully as the critical imprinting period has already past.
- Recently, many of these classes have begun the unethical practice of “rewriting” the science to suit the income stream potential. They are telling companion dog owners they have up to sixteen weeks of age to socialize meaningfully. Scott and Fuller’s work was evident that the imprinting occurs between 3 - 12 weeks of age with a +/- 1-week variance. My own over two decades of experience working with dogs full times confirms this.
- Because immunizations are not complete until after this period, trainers have begun to mislead companion dog owners by implying that a dog’s socialization imprint period is open for an additional month (16 weeks so they can include them in classes.
- Usually, the nature of these classes is only exposure to other puppies. However, since the dog to dog social skills imprinting phase is already completed at six weeks of age, there isn’t the potential for useful social skill development.



However, there is an enormous potential for adverse social skill development.

- If for some reason the puppy is accepted into the class between the 8 - 10 week period (fear imprint period) and they encounter another pup disparate in size, enthusiasm and/or temperament and they have one or more negative experiences they will be imprinted for life with regard to their perspective regarding unfamiliar dogs. *It is important to remember that a puppy socialization class is very far removed from what nature intended for this critical period of their lives. First, they are supervised typically by a mother much more skilled at heading off trouble than those often found overseeing these classes. Second, they wake up, play, eat, sleep with each other day after day. This provides perspective when there's a negative experience with each other. The classes are separated typically by one-week intervals with only an hour together.*
- Some dogs leave these classes imprinted into believing that unfamiliar dogs they meet in the future will be bullies to them. Others leave imprinted into thinking that other unfamiliar dogs they meet in the future will be as subordinate as was their smaller in size and/or attitude, socialization class counterparts. Things can unravel quite rapidly when such an ill-informed adult American Bulldog happens upon an unfamiliar dog.
- As these classes are typically advertised as puppy socialization classes, they end up leading companion dog owners astray. Well-meaning companion dog owners are led to believe they are fulfilling their socialization obligations to their puppy's temperament. When rather than exposure to other dogs what they should be imprinting their puppies on is, infants, crawling children, toddlers, eight-year-old males, senior citizens, simulate thunder and much much more right up until the end of the critical imprint period (12 weeks of age). This is a dangerous error for any dog, but particularly one with working dog genetics of a American Bulldog as

combining the genetics of protection/guarding with a lack of confidence and/or fear is just asking for trouble. Fortunately entirely preventable.as they tend to cross paths with more people.

### **Puppy Socialization Classes Have Only Three Potential Outcomes and They Are ‘Luck’ Based**

1. No notable impact on dog-to-dog socialization as that period is well past (3 - 6 weeks of age - See Scott and Fuller’s extensive research.<sup>1)</sup>
2. The belief that they may be bullied by dogs they are unfamiliar with.
3. The belief that they can get away with bullying dogs they are unfamiliar.

### **Instead - Critical Socialization/Imprinting Period Must Do**

The truth of the matter is that if your dog is under 12 weeks of age no one on the planet is better suited to take full advantage of your dog’s imprint period than its breeder and owner. If you want a confident, bomb-proof puppy, you will be very busy ensuring it has multiple positive exposures to a wide range of nuanced sensory experiences.

As such, if you want the best for your dog, it would typically be best to avoid anything advertised as a puppy socialization class. Not only may you miss the actual socialization boat, but you may also end up doing more harm than good.

I highly recommend first to read my [Socialize Your Puppy For Everything ebook](#). There’s a link in the resource section at the end of this guide. You will find that it’s an excellent investment in your dog.

## Breeders

One of the more disturbing revelations experienced by dog owners that read Socialize Your Puppy For Everything ebook as people that consider themselves experienced good breeders is how much is left to chance. The book helps people looking for a breeder to distinguish between who is in it just for the money (greeders), who are just puppy mills with better living conditions with the breeders that truly know what they're doing.

I always advise that when looking for a breeder, look for one that clearly understands critical socialization and has it well under way before the pups are ready to leave. Their efforts or lack thereof will impact the futures of the puppies they breed. While the puppies are still in their care, they should be rigorously implementing the sort of strategies found in the Socialize Your Puppy For Everything ebook.

Also, they won't let you leave with a puppy without having related very specific moving forward recommendations for you. It's an excellent sign of a better than average breeder.

<sup>1</sup> Scott, J. P. "Critical Periods in the Development of Social Behavior in Puppies." *Psychosomatic Medicine* 20, no. 1 (January 1958): 42.

## THE CUTENESS TRAP

**B**abies are cute - right? But have you ever wondered why babies look so cute? Why not just miniature adults?

The distinguished ethologist Konrad Lorenz theorized that the universal appeal of the facial and body features of infants and children is an evolutionary biological program that exists to trigger a desire in us to care for the infant or child. As you are no doubt aware this is triggered even when that child is not our own. He referred to this “cuteness” period in our physical development as ‘baby schema’ (Kindchenschema)<sup>1</sup>.

These same offspring triggers occur in other animals for the same reasons and produce similar results.

### **Even Tigers Cubs Are Cute**

The incredible power and influence of the ‘baby schema’ is illustrated in its interspecies crossover.<sup>2</sup> The cuteness that triggers the need to nurture in a tiger looking at her cub will also trigger an ‘Aw isn’t that cute!’ from a human being. Considering, that tigers are

predators known to prey on humans, you get a sense as to just how powerful an evolutionary tool is 'baby schema.'

The irony for American Bulldog dogs and many similar breeds is that when the baby schema (cuteness trap) is triggered in their mothers, she structures her parenting approach not by the cuteness but on the skills that cute puppy will require to survive and thrive as an adult. One of those lessons is, cute will only get you so far in life. Another, is cute or not, sometimes, I'm not asking you, I'm telling you and get used to it now because there others coming after me that don't care how cute you are - or were.

A mother dog does not forget what her cute puppy will grow into and she parents with not just the present in mind but the future. Whereas humans often let the cuteness lull them into a false sense of security and fritter away the timeline in which their dog will be the most malleable. The dog grows up without learning how to exercise their "suck it up" muscle and acquires an inflated sense of its place in the home, neighborhood and the world in general. This parenting style byproduct may sound familiar to anyone that has spent time with children raised with the "everyone gets a trophy" mindset. It sounds good on the surface, but it is what happens when young minds are at their most flexible and resilient that prepares them for later life's realities.

### **Love Is Not Enough**

Raising a stable and responsive American Bulldog requires much more than nurturing. Proper ownership must be accompanied by frequent daily reminders as to who is the teacher and who is the student. Also, as they mature, the expectations as to obedience need to be more in keeping with what they (or any dog) is capable rather than the dismal treat based trick levels required to earn a pass in many 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog training classes.

Perhaps the best metaphor to distinguish between how a mother dog

and a human respond either to or in spite of the ‘baby schema’ is that with a mother dog:puppy it is traditional parent/child, whereas with many human:puppy it is more grandparent:grandchild.

As one might expect, over the long term the differences in these two approaches to the relationship are bound to produce very different results from the perspective of shaping a child or a dog regarding fulfilling potential and maximizing the odds of future success.

### **Don’t Love Less Though**

This emphasizing of relationship and having high-level obedience goals by no means is intended to suggest that American Bulldog owners should not cuddle and love their dogs. It is to say, that fulfilling the nurturing component is not enough to protect your dog and prepare it for lifelong success.

Sometimes we forget that for many, if not most humans, love for a puppy or irrespective of ‘Baby Schema’ for a dog or dogs, in general, is effortless. Building a longterm relationship that is also founded on respect is another matter. It requires work. More work with some breeds than others and the American Bulldog can be one of those “more work” breeds. As a result, loving, cuddling and nurturing must be paired with the continuous reinforcing of clarity regarding the relationship and the pursuit of high-level obedience compliance.

<sup>1</sup> Glocker, M. L., Langleben, D. D., Ruparel, K., Loughead, J. W., Gur, R. C., & Sachser, N. (2009). Baby Schema in Infant Faces Induces Cuteness Perception and Motivation for Caretaking in Adults. *Ethology: Formerly Zeitschrift Fur Tierpsychologie*, 115(3), 257–263. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1439-0310.2008.01603.x>

<sup>2</sup> Borgi, M., & Cirulli, F. (2016). Pet Face: Mechanisms Underlying Human-Animal Relationships. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 298. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00298>

## THE BEHAVIOR TRAP

**A**ll too often the relationship and training decisions made for puppies with breed specific genetics (guarding, prey, retrieve, herding, etc) are made not only by how puppies look but by how they behave from birth to the first year to eighteen months of their lives.

To the untrained eye there often doesn't appear to be much difference in the way a American Bulldog puppy and a Golden or Labrador puppy behaves but there is a reason for the lines being blurred at this point in their development and therein lies the "Behavior Trap."

Owners that proceed with a "how bad can it get" approach regarding the relationship and obedience decisions based on a American Bulldog's behavior during puppy and adolescent periods may not end up with serious behavior issues.

I very much doubt it but perhaps at worst, guests will be joyously jumped and slobbered on, and worst case scenario the dogs won't be as welcome at as many family events as they otherwise might. Not the end of the world but not ideal.

All too often the end result is far fewer outings with their owners.

This can be problematic with many American Bulldogs, so it's better to start shaping early.

For many American Bulldogs though, starting at about eighteen months of age as they enter adulthood many owners find that the previous unbridled joyous greeting incrementally escalates into overzealous barking, difficulty walking comfortably, no recall, territorial aggression, leash aggression, etc.

The American Bulldog is capable of far better.

### **Governor**

A governor is a mechanical device used by some employers on company vehicles that prevent a vehicle from going beyond a certain speed. Many people are unaware that it is a biological reality that young dogs have what amounts to a built-in 'governor' that temporarily tamps down many of the breed's stronger characteristics. This 'governor' remains in place until they reach young adulthood.

The signs of what they will become are more often than not there to observe by the very experienced. However, much of the genetic potential and personality characteristics are sufficiently diluted that people less experienced with the breed type often miss the cues that signal that the dog they own is exceptional and as such requires special handling during its formative period.

More often than not the more severe aspects the genetic code for a dog like a American Bulldog don't rear up and become problematic until the dog's body becomes more powerful.

### **First Signs of Trouble**

Some companion dog owners may observe genetically triggered issues between 6 - 9 months. However, many unwisely still give these budding signs less weight than they should.



On average it isn't until a dog arrives between young adulthood (18 months) and full maturity (3 years of age) where an event occurs, and it becomes evident that their cute puppy has grown up and become an unwieldy handful. In some breeds, it may just be extreme albeit friendly unruliness and in others serious aggression.

Nature never intended deliberate parenting to wait until the cuteness period expires. With some breeds, this leads to comparatively minor problems with obedience and unruliness. It can be quite another story with a American Bulldog.

Failure to lay an early rock-solid foundation with a maturing dog is one of the primary contributing factors to problems down the road. To make matters worse without the foundation as mentioned above, many owners find this late in the game, it very difficult to change the behavior of their now very capable in body, mind, and willpower, confident, American Bulldog.

You can take this to the bank. Not beginning relationship clarity and legitimate obedience training from the very beginning with any dog will more often than not eventually become problematic.

## **Consequences**

Changing the behavior of some individual dogs is more accessible than others. Some breeds, some dogs set the bar far higher as to who is worthy of listening to and who is not, who is the teacher and who is the student. In recent years, for most dogs, compliance standards for their owners have become based on treats rather than love and respect earned.

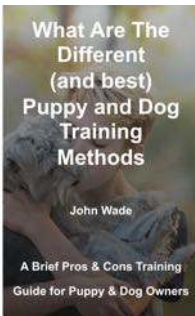
This is a mistake. It may provide an illusion of control but even with a \$50.00 bill in hand, it only takes one \$100.00 bill to appear, and you learn what your 'relationship' has been based on is inherently flawed in the real world.

Instead, it is highly advisable that owners begin formally working

with their dogs at a higher standard from the very beginnings of their relationship. It bears repeating, they will be learning, whether you are teaching or not. Brutality or treats will not get you the dog you want. Relationship and balanced training started early will.

When teacher/student relationship building and training is left until mid-range or serious problems, rear their head, many American Bulldog owners will find that they do not have what it takes to reverse the things once there has been an occurrence of an incident that cannot be ignored.

## THE PUPPY AND DOG TRAINING METHOD TRAP



*(This is an area covered much more thoroughly in my free booklet 'What Are The Different (and best) Puppy and Dog Training Methods')*

### Training Choices

- All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free
- Might Is Right
- Partially Balanced
- Fully Balanced

Most companion dog owners aren't looking for Lassie or a soulless robotic companion. They typically want a dog that merely is civilized

in and outside of the home. A dog that can be relied on when asked to exert self-control regardless of distractions. They typically would prefer to end up not needing special treats or devices.

They want a dog that heels stay and come - no matter what, as the payoff is the option to bring their dog along to everything to the corner store to day trips to vacations. They want their dog to be a warm ambassador whenever guests come to visit, and they want the day to day rhythm of household goings-on not to be further complicated just because there's a dog as part of the household.

It is one of the companion dog world's best-kept secrets that the majority of those training dogs are not as qualified and knowledgeable as a companion dog owner might think (and need) and they and their dogs are more often than not being shortchanged. As such, it's best to be careful and learn a little before selecting the method of training and a trainer.

The dog training industry is entirely unregulated and as a result has become pseudo-science, philosophy, ideology, "guru" and supplementary income stream driven rather than steered by actual science. Sadly this is much more the norm than the exception.

Companion dog owners that care to dig a bit will discover that the career path for most dog trainers was a move from an unhappy unskilled labor position to printing "professional" dog trainer on a business card. Very few have post-secondary education and fewer still education that included scientific method and critical thinking.

Also, dog training experience quoted is rarely based on time formally training dogs but is instead measured by when they first owned or lived with a dog. Therefore years experience can be very misleading.

Education, if any, is almost always based on a few hours in courses, books read or the opinions of others, quite often as ill-qualified but with some expertise in self-styled, occasionally charismatic guru-marketing techniques.

One of the reasons that companion dog training has taken such a sharp turn from reality is that on average most dog trainers have no more than a high-school education and some, not even that. As of yet, I have not met a dog trainer with a post-secondary degree in a discipline that included the characteristics of what is sometimes colloquially referred to as a 'hard' science that subscribed to 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' or 'Might Is Right' companion dog training.

Lacking a post-secondary education is not the end of the world, as with adequate intellect and self-discipline anyone can learn to apply critical thought, avoid common cognitive biases and learn to distinguish between real science and virtue signaling pseudo-science. However, the reality is that in the unregulated and uneducated world of companion dog training this is very much the exception rather than the rule and 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' and 'Might Is Right' dog training dogma are the norm.

### **Still, It's Not Rocket Science**

Considering that most companion dog owners want nothing more than a dog that will come, heel and stay and how few succeed in achieving those reasonable goals, there is either a problem with companion dog owners, companion dogs or - companion dog training. It is most assuredly the latter.

The reality is that the standards for what constitutes a class pass or a trained dog have been dropping resulting in far too many companion dogs that are permanently almost living under house arrest. Many others without a proper relationship and obedience foundation go on to develop behavior problems. At best, due to the failings of what currently more often than not constitutes companion dog training, far too many companion dog owners find that their outings are dependent on the leverage of the dog training equipment they are told to use and, or the palatability of treats.

The following overview of various approaches to companion dog training is by no means complete, but it will give American Bulldog dog owners some helpful direction concerning what to avoid and finding the best possible dog training for their American Bulldog.

## APPROACH TO PUPPY MOUTHING, NIPPING AND BITING OFTEN SETS THE STAGE

*(Note: I was torn between including this chapter with the following as they are interconnected. However, because most companion dog owners first introduction to training is triggered by this behavior in their puppies and because of the negative impact of what has come to pass as the correct strategy I have given it a chapter of its own.)*

**A** companion dog owner's first exposure to the popular but flawed dog training dogma of 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' typically occurs when they are looking for answers to address a puppy's mouthing, nipping and biting.

In recent years, almost every bit of information companion dog owners receive on the topic of puppy mouthing nipping and biting is wrong, has little or no impact and worse (and ironically) us a significant contributor to future difficulties with many dogs.

### Case 'Study'

I was once given a case study to review by an 'All Positive/Purely Posi-

tive/Force-Free' dog trainer intended for use to prove her worth in a dog trainers certification process.

The dog was a Golden Retriever around ten weeks of age and the dog owner a single woman. The woman was covered in scabs from the puppy mouthing nipping and biting. Her clothing was also very much paying the price as well.

The 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' trainer's recommendations were:

- Redirect the puppy mouthing, nipping and biting the human target by offering a chew toy.
- Reward the puppy when it's not mouthing nipping and biting with a treat.
- Ignoring the puppy when mouthing, nipping and biting.

If ignoring failed, recommendations included:

- Folding one's arms to one's chest
- Standing, turning one's back and retreating if necessary
- Crying out in feigned (or not so feigned) pain and retreating if necessary
- Applying timeouts (crated)

## **Results**

The dog trainer reported that using these 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' strategies, the puppy's alligator propensity subsided after approximately 30 days.

## **Did That Really Happen And Is That All That Happened?**

I had and have for any dog trainer recommending these strategies two questions.



1. In a real-world context, if the puppy's mouthing, nipping and biting had been directed towards its mother how long would it have taken to "extinguish" the behavior? 30 days? Or, one day, 3 at the most?
2. If the dog's owner, instead of being a single person with one or more young children would they be able to last 30 days? If not what are their options? (In many cases the puppy would have ended up returned to the breeder or surrendered to a shelter.)

### **What Is The Mouthing, Nipping, Biting Mission?**

What the trainer above attributed to successfully extinguishing after 30 days was no evidence at all that the approach worked. Experienced trainers know that in companion dog homes almost all puppies outgrow the mouthing, nipping and biting in that general timeline (30 days) as typically the 'mission' has been accomplished.

Why is it that puppies get a set of razor-sharp teeth coming in around the time they become reasonably mobile which by no coincidence is followed by being informed by their mothers that if they don't lighten up on the jaw pressure - nursing is over? These teeth are kept for only a few months until they are replaced by adult teeth. Nothing in their natural diet seems to suggest the need for tiny daggers. When they start eating solids and provided by mothers, it's pre-consumed and regurgitated for consumption. Humans generally soften the kibble as they make the transition. Why sharp and why so early in life?

Let's start with considering how evolutionary biology might play a role. Nature has a purpose for everything. Is it possible that those teeth are razors so that when nursing and playing with their mother and litter mates, they can't fail but to get a reaction that will assist in their future development? Is it not possible that the feedback they receive plays a significant role in:

- Establishing a teacher/student hierarchy?

## **Who Will Be The Teacher and Who Will Be The Student**

### **Mothers**

Most mother dogs will put up with a lot, but when those teeth come in, and a pup latches onto a nipple the puppies are introduced to their first hard “No!” It is usually the first time they experience another side of their mother’s personality and likely by no small coincidence the beginnings of weaning.

There are no known cases of a mother dog sitting a puppy down and encouraging them to use their words and share their feelings. There is no redirection, there are no timeouts, there are no false cries of pain and retreats, etc. She disciplines them in no uncertain terms with her tone and body language and physically if that proves insufficient motivation.

### **Litter-mates**

When a pup’s uninhibited oral attention is directed towards a litter mate there will be one of two lessons that will be used to shape future relationships:

When a pup’s uninhibited oral attention is directed towards a litter mate there will be one of two lessons that will be used to shape future relationships:

1. Ouch!, and similar to mother dog’s response - retaliation (unpleasant consequence)
2. Ouch!, and retreat ('All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free') - Thank you for the lesson as to who will be the teacher and who will be the student in our future dealings.

## **Consequences For Companion Dogs And Their Owners**

What 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog trainers are recommending to companion puppy owners not only has little or no

impact on most puppies concerning bite-inhibition, it unfortunately additionally conveys to their puppy that it is the puppy that is the teacher and they (the owner) that is the student.

With the natural order upended companion dog owners find they have puppies without natural motivation to learn from them and 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' companion dog trainers set them on the path of having to "buy" their dog's attention with treats to get them to do anything. Without authority, they have nothing left, and so they pursue the illusory dealer/addict relationship rather than an authentic teacher/student relationship.

Since the 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' recommendations have become more commonplace there have been some inevitable consequences:

- True obedience (Come, Stay, Heel - No Matter What) is becoming a thing of the past.
- What used to be referred to the teaching of tricks is now being framed by 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' as obedience.
- Tools are used that mask force (head halters and harnesses) giving the illusion that the dog is trained (and exerting self-control due to training.)
- Dogs are more likely to be subject to "house arrest" lifestyles. (True exercise and positive mentally stimulating experience are less frequent than they should be.)
- Stress. The dog thinks they're the teacher, but so does the companion dog owner and so they butt heads frequently and entirely unnecessarily. Companion dog owners feel like they're working uphill all the time (because they are). Some dogs act out with destructive behavior, house soiling. Others, escalate and aggression becomes a problem.
- Some owners, desperate, end up resorting 'Might Is Right' strategies.
- Higher susceptibility to developing behaviors that result in

the return to the breeder, surrender to a rescue, rehoming, abandonment, and euthanasia.

- Dogs that are loved but too often not liked.

### **What Should A Companion Dog Owner With A Puppy Do Instead?**

Companion dog owners looking for sound guidance on how to prepare their puppies for a full life may find it challenging. There are four approaches to companion dog training (with arguably some overlap) typically available.

They are:

- 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free'
- 'Might Is Right'
- Partially Balanced
- Fully Balanced

## THE 'ALL POSITIVE/PURELY POSITIVE/FORCE-FREE' TRAP

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' is treat driven. Sometimes toys are used. Tempting a food motivated dog with a treat to attain compliance has convinced many an aspiring dog trainer that they have dog training all figured out. However, with sufficient \$50.00 bills, you would be surprised what you might be able to get the treat holding trainer to do for you. All well and good until someone arrives with a stack of \$100.00 bill.

Companion dog owners often complain that their dogs end up listening only if they have treats available and even then will ignore them if something they value more is in competition with a treat. Such as a squirrel, another dog, etc. They also find that toting around a constant supply of treats is impractical.

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' counter that once the conditioned response is in place the treat or toy reward is no longer required. If so, something is seriously wrong with the approach as the number of companion dog owners and dog trainers that have enjoyed success where treats aren't required is so small as to be statistically insignificant (or significant depending on how you are looking at the problem.)

Treat training may convince a dog trainer that they are a trainer but more often than not it gets in the way of their education as most grow no further. If treats are to play a role (they are entirely unnecessary), they should be used in a minor and minimal manner.

In the context of companion dog obedience training if correctly used with other aspects of behavior modifications they have their uses. However, many companion dog trainers do not use them at all. I personally use them as distractions as opposed to rewarding. I feel that aiming at a dog's stomach misses the best part of a dog. As far as I know, the dog is the only species selectively bred to love a human being. Tapping into that energy is much more potent than the "relationship" illusion created by becoming a treat dispenser.

However, that is not to say that treats can't play a role somewhere in a dog's life and stimulation. In the context of trick training, scent detection development and shaping towards complex tasks they are beneficial.

**'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog trainers typically use treats in the following contexts.**

**Treat**

The most familiar and most uncomplicated use of treats is to give a dog a treat when it does something you want. Or is doing something that will lead to what you want. Mostly, you convey to the dog that if he or she wants the treat, they have to do something. That something typically starts off with a piece of the bigger picture, and you shape things along until you get the complete behavior.

Some dog owners find that they end up with a dog where the relationship is more addict/dealer than teacher-student and weaning the addict from the drug proves difficult.

**Clicker (Click And Treat)**

Clicker training is a tool I enjoy using in developing a dog's scent

detection skills and teaching of tricks or specialized complex behaviors.

It is a tool I encourage some dog owners to use as a life-long way to stimulate their dogs' mind in the context of teaching tricks during their spare time. Food-driven dogs enjoy it and when used in this limited context does not undermine real obedience.

In a nutshell, the handler clicks and tosses a treat to the dog. This goes on until the dog hears the “click” and looks for a treat. When this expectation is firmly entrenched, the handler waits for the slightest piece of the desired behavior and clicks the moment the portion occurs and toss the treat. The handler/trainer waits for it to happen again, click and throw. At some point, the dog realizes that it's not the click that triggers the treat it is something in their behavior that is triggering the treat's appearance and the curious dog begins to experiment.

It is indeed a wondrous thing to see a dog connect these dots and then start to experiment with different things to see what will get the clicker to engage, letting them know they've succeeded which is confirmed by the treat.

With a little patience and a fair amount of time, it is fantastic what a food driven dog can learn. If you've seen Shamu the killer whale perform in an aquarium, you are witnessing what clicker training can accomplish in a highly controlled setting.

The reason that I do not recommend this approach as a reliable means to teach life skills was demonstrated when Shamu abandoned years of training mid-show/trick to attack and in spite of his trainers best efforts, drowned a pelican that landed in the aquarium he was performing. A few years later he killed a trainer.

### **Not Science In The Context of Companion Dog Life Skill Training**

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' training is almost always inac-

curately promoted and marketed as the only humane and science-based method available.

On the surface, to those without familiarity with what constitutes actual science (most dog trainers), some of 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' claims seem reasonable enough.

However, when looked at in the light of actual science, logic or critical thought and even simple common sense it becomes apparent that 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog trainers have a slightly loose grip with regard to what constitutes science, not to mention the day to day environments in which companion dog owners must work with their dog.

How many of us (or the offspring of any higher order social species) would survive to adulthood if our parents, mentors, and teachers were restricted to the philosophy of 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free'?

As the 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' words imply, there is no room in the approach for physical or emotional chastisement. I am not referring to harsh physical corrections. Even the concept of "No" no matter how subtle, is, in spite of all the scientific evidence to the contrary, not only considered as "unscientific" but as wholly unnecessary and even cruel and inhumane amongst some of the 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' disciples.

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog trainers often categorize anyone that incorporates in their training equipment that gives a physical advantage to the handler as evidence of a 'Might Is Right' dog trainer. Many 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog trainers campaign to have books, I mean tools they do not approve of (and don't understand) legally banned.

Many of them instead recommend cervical vertebrae pressuring head halters which dogs almost universally loathe or harnesses that either pinch or solve the pressure experienced by the dog owner but transfer it to the dog's joints. We will in the next decade very likely



see a significant increase in early onset arthritis in harness wearing dogs. Again, not so much the tools, but the tool use.

It should be noted that concerning the literal meaning of 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' and its application in real life context (home and neighborhood learning environments), searches of the most turned to science journal databases such as PubMed, Science-Direct, and Elsevier result in absolutely no supportive research.

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' companion dog trainers would lose their scientific disorientation by reading the tsunami of research available in the fields of ethology, evolution, evolutionary psychology, sociobiology, anthropology, etc. They would then better understand how they have been misled by pseudo-scientists.

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' results occur when the following controls are in place. I am unaware of any research where without these variables (real world/life settings instead) results were duplicated.

- ◆ Food Motivation - the original research was based on starving the subjects to 75% of healthy body weight.
- ◆ Distraction Control/Elimination - minor and major distracting sounds, smells, sights, etc. entirely controlled.
- ◆ Scientist/trainers highly trained and experienced in the use of operant conditioning.
- ◆ Consideration regarding time invested in shaping behavior from its smallest component. (Lives that revolve around the animal/dog/Orca etc as compared to that of the average companion dog owner lifestyle.)

Highly controlled environments such as a maze or other experiment environs set up in a scientist's laboratory, the aquarium containing the Orca or the paddock containing the Grizzly Bear or Rhinoceros are not comparable to even the goings on of a companion dog

owner's home let alone the distractions encountered outside the home.



*A typical message or veiled suggestion disseminated by 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' ideologists is that if an approach is not 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' it is then 'Might Is Right.' As you will read in the Fully Balanced section to come, there are ways of sending a dog a message that does not involve physical abuse.*



Obviously, this is not the training environment and advantages enjoyed by the average companion dog owner. As a result, companion dog owners find that their investment of time and money in this type of training an expense rather than an investment. Results are weak and the conditioned responses highly susceptible to collapse around everyday distractions.

As distasteful as saying, “No!”, (Note: No ≠ pain/beatings/abuse etc.) to a dog may be to an 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' companion dog trainer, the reality is that evolution has selected a method for higher order social species, and that method occasionally includes something every youngster needs to learn from a young age, and that is, “I’m not asking you, I’m telling you.”

## THE 'MIGHT IS RIGHT' TRAP

**M**ight Is Right' dog training leans heavily but not necessarily entirely on leash/collar physical corrections to make a dog aware that he or she has erred.

While conveying the concept of 'No' to a dog does not require pain those that embrace 'Might Is Right' companion dog training, feel otherwise and readily use physical corrections as the foundation to their approach in training dogs.

It is undeniable that pain is a powerful influencer on behavior. For example, a hand on a hot stove burner sends a powerful and lasting message vs. cautionary advisement from a teacher or parent.

However, painful experiences are typically the result of not being taught or failing to heed lessons taught. The parent/teacher role in nature exists to help avoid painful life experiences not utilize pain to teach lessons.

'Might Is Right' dog trainers that turn primarily to alpha rolls (pin to the ground), or use a leash and collar to physically punish a dog and get overly caught up in being, Alpha, Pack Leader, and Dominant

have things backward. They begin with what a mother dog uses as a last resort.

'Might Is Right' dog training has its roots in training where the dogs subjected were carefully bred to for work. Their ability to bounce back from the harsh methods is evidence of the strength of the breeding program more than the validity of the approach. Some dogs found in companion dog settings may have the ability to bounce back and still enjoy their work and lives without shutting down, but many do not.

### **How to Spot A 'Might Is Right' Companion Dog Trainer**

Most 'Might Is Right' dog trainers also reward a dog for compliance and as a result describe themselves as balanced dog trainers. However, their definition of balanced training is not one I share. Here are a few ways to tell the difference.

#### **Tool Use**

It is likely a trainer is 'Might Is Right' when they exclusively or almost exclusively use high leverage equipment (prong/pinch, slip/choke, e-collar, etc.) with each if not all dogs they train.

*Abraham Maslow, the American psychologist, best known for creating Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has also attributed to him the concept of 'Maslow's Hammer.' Abraham Kaplan, the American philosopher, explained this law. "Give a small boy a hammer, and he will find that everything he encounters needs a pounding."*

### **However - Being Clear Regarding Dog Training Tools**

It is not the use of these dog training tools that make someone a 'Might Is Right' dog trainer. There are countless examples where

when combined with the right expertise these sorts of tools had had a positive impact when all else failed. Whether the tool is a dog training collar, a veterinary surgeon's scalpel, nutrition, pharmaceuticals, etc. the issue is not the tool but the potential for foolish use of a tool.

### **Appeal to Nature**

'Might Is Right' dog trainers typically attempt to justify what they do by using the appeal to nature logical fallacy. They are correct that physicality between dogs such as a mother and her puppy does occur and as such is "natural." However, also natural is that in the context of learning, this level of physicality is the exception and not the rule. Physical corrections are not a method. Physical corrections are what mother dogs resort to when all else fails.

They are as much a reminder of "If you were paying better attention to my tone and body language..." as they are a means to discourage future repetition of, "I wasn't asking you, I was telling you."

The human equivalent might be, "We've had this conversation. You know I wasn't asking you, I was telling you. Now, unplug the X-box or, You're grounded, etc."

Just as 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' was never intended for the rearing of young in natural, real-world environments, nor has 'Might Is Right' ever been found as foundational in nature as a means of teaching life skills in the context of parenting.

As a result, trainers using such methods should also be avoided.

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Kaplan (1964). *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co. p. 28.

## PARTIALLY BALANCED

**F**ar more preferable to 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' or 'Might Is Right' companion dog training but not as preferred as Fully Balanced Training is Partially Balanced Training.

I have found that Partially Balanced Dog Trainers are trainers that are evolving in the right direction but who may not yet have access to information that would make them Fully Balanced companion dog trainers.

These are companion dog trainers that have come to realize that a leash and collar's purpose and usage should not cross the line from being able to keep a dog from physically controlling their owner and as a means for acquiring a dog's attention over into usage that causes pain and abnormal fear or anxiety in a dog.

They understand that when the term balanced is used, it does not merely refer to a willingness to encourage and discourage a behavior clearly. Fully Balanced Training is much more than that.

Nor does it infer that both positive and negatives are used evenly. A Fully Balanced Trainer or a Partially Balanced Trainer would never

be 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free,' they would be ALMOST ALWAYS 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' with only a slight dash of I'm not asking you I'm telling you thrown into the mix.

They do not subscribe to a one size fits all approach. Instead, each dog, regardless of breed is assessed as an individual and the path (including tool/collar selection) is made from data as opposed to philosophy.

This is the bare minimum for consideration as a Partially Balanced companion dog trainer. When a Fully Balanced Companion Dog Trainer is unavailable in your area, given a choice between an 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' or 'Might Is Right' trainer the Partially Balanced Trainer is more often than not, hands down the best choice.

## FULLY BALANCED COMPANION DOG TRAINING

**F**ully Balanced Companion Dog Training draws on broadly accepted behavior science that can be applied to the setting in which the companion dog and companion dog owners coexist. Fully balanced refers to the logical application of science.

For animals like wolves, apes, orcas, etc. the study of their behavior in their typical environment is called ethology. Because dogs are domesticated and co-habit with humans in urban and rural, working and non-working contexts the concept of ethology does not quite apply in the same way.

Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training does draw on commonalities amongst higher order social species as observed by ethologists. These species include the domesticated dog's cousins the wolf but with a critical eye as there are many stark differences. However, there are fascinating and useful similarities as well.

Ethology is by no means the only science Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training draws. Additional scientific disciplines heavily contribute. Evolution, evolutionary psychology, sociobiology, anthropology to name a few.



Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training is very similar to painting a picture. Without all the requisite colors the picture is often frustratingly unclear.

Fully Balanced Trainers understand that many things impact a dog's behavior. Some of these things we have control over and some we do not (genetics). Either way, because they influence behavior, Fully Balanced Companion Dog Trainers give consideration to each aspect and weigh their importance on a case by case basis so they can provide better guidance.

For example, whereas we can't change the genetics of a guarding breed and therefore their predisposition to guard, a Fully Balanced Companion Dog Trainer will advise an owner of these breeds that unsupervised window watching time will almost always eventually overstimulate the dog. In time many issues arise related to leash aggression, loose leash walking, nuisance barking, aggressively friendly or territorial at the door, etc.

Fully Balanced Companion Dog Trainer understand that some breeds are Ferraris, some are mini-vans. Some dog owners are highly experienced and some less so. Some dog owners have more of themselves left over at the end of the day than others. Some dogs have baggage, and others are a blank slate. Failing to consider these and other influences quite often set both dog and dog owner up for failure.

### **Example - Relationship**

Arguably the least addressed and yet perhaps the most critical addressable companion dog training variable - because it terrifically impacts obedience success - is the actual (rather than perceived) relationship between a companion dog owner and their dog.

'Might Is Right' trainers believe in developing Alpha/Pack Leader/Dominant relationships whereas 'All Positive/Purely Posi-

tive/Force-Free' trainers cultivate what is essentially a dealer: addict (treat/treat giver) relationship.

The relationship concepts of Alpha/Pack Leader/Dominant/Subordinate/Submissive are real enough from an ethology perspective but not in the context they are often being used to justify 'Might Is Right.' Yes, mother dogs do such things, but they are an exception and not the rule.

'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' dog trainers may believe an approach that revolves around 'behavior for treat' to be morally superior but it is much more representative of the relationship between a dealer and an addict than what is found in the usual context of a teacher and a student or a parent and offspring. In any event, training that cultivates a relationship with a dog by aiming at his or her stomach is missing the best part of any dog.

Either way ('All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' or 'Might Is Right') this is far too myopic of an approach to relationship.

A companion dog is learning whether we are training or not and the goings on during non-training time profoundly impact training success. A companion dog's time alone and time with household members when not officially training cannot only undermine training but the time together when not training has considerable influence on the relationship.

Fully Balanced Training incorporates strategies that complement rather than undermine training goals. When the relationship is addressed correctly, as it is in Fully Balanced Training, training becomes far more comfortable and successful. When it is not, training will unnecessarily always be far more difficult for both dog and owner.

Consider the following human:human relationships and how the nature of these relationships impacts the effort required to influence behavior.

- Parent:Child
- Parent:Adult Child
- Classmate:Classmates
- Established Teacher:Student(s) in a classroom
- Substitute Teacher:Student(s) in a classroom
- College Roommate:College Roommate
- Professor:Graduate Student
- Employee:Employer
- Drug Addict:Supplier (Treat Use In 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free')
- Bouncer:Inebriated Bar Patron ('Might Is Right')

It should be readily apparent to anyone that some of these relationships will require far more effort to influence than others.

In companion dog training if one considers home-time the classroom and outside-the-home-time, field trips, it's no wonder that if asked and able to answer about what they think about their owners most dogs would respond, "I won the lottery for dogs! These people are fantastic. They love me, and I love them. They are the best roommates a dog could hope for."

Dogs older than 10 weeks of age begin to realize based on their "class-room" experience that they are faster and more agile. Not long after, when asked to 'come' in a yard or when someone is at the door translates to, "If you have a minute, could you check your day-timer . . ." Rather than, the more useful, Point B, to Point A - No Matter What! The latter will pay huge dividends in future access to their owner's world, the former a dog that ends up under house arrest for much of its life.

Multiple daily interactions go on between owner and dog where compliance is more often than not, not a deal breaker. These may seem minor in the moment and they usually are but cumulatively are relationship impacting. When a companion dog owner considers how many times daily they ask but are ignored and how many work

arounds become incorporated in daily routines it becomes more apparent how relationship when not training impacts training.

If a companion dog owner cannot teach a dog to stay on a mat while they make a cup of tea when they are alone together, it becomes increasingly unlikely that the dog will stay on a mat when a guest arrives, or walks on a loose leash, or comes when called.

Most companion dog owners indeed become their dog's roommate and subsequently find without high leverage training devices, copious treats and often not even with these relationship compensators they have no influence.

Failing to address how non-training time impacts the relationship and subsequently training success is one of the reasons for the "Pack Leader/Alpha/Dominance" extremes of 'Might Is Right,' and the treat fixated 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' approaches to companion dog training. Companion dog owners using these unnatural approaches are unwittingly unnecessarily working uphill. Without addressing non-training time and its influence on a real teacher: student relationships they have to go to extremes to motivate their dogs.

The relationship is just one Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training factor. Correct Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training is 'holistic' in the traditional definition of the word.

### **Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training is Holistic**

Holistic or holism essentially considers the whole (see list below) of a situation rather than merely an aspect (how to get a dog to do or stop doing something).

Whether basic obedience or behavior problems, here are, some of the variables that Fully Balanced Companion Dog Trainers know can influence behavior and therefore might influence their approach.

1. Breed Genetics
2. Bloodlines
3. Critical Socialization Period Experiences
4. Age of Dog
5. Training Approach (Past and Present)
6. Historic Equipment Use
7. Household Makeup (current and projected)
8. Relationship Between Dog And Owner
9. Influence of Environment on Behavior and Training
10. Health (Injury/Disease/Pharmaceutical Influence)
11. Nutrition (Type/Frequency)
12. Impact of Daily Mental Stimulation
13. Impact of Physical Exercise
14. Handling Ability and Experience of Dog Owner
15. Lifestyle of Dog Owner

While it may appear otherwise, considering all the factors doesn't mean Fully Balanced Companion Dog Training is overly complicated. It is actually far more accessible for companion dog owners to implement than 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' or 'Might Is Right.'

In essence, an experienced, Fully Balanced Companion Dog Trainer will improve your chances of success in accomplishing your goals by considering all the information and tailoring advice and approach accordingly. You will find it a far more successful method that is far less stressful to both companion dog owner and dog.

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## ADDITIONAL AMERICAN BULLDOG RESOURCES

### Wade Collar's Power Steering Dog Training Collar

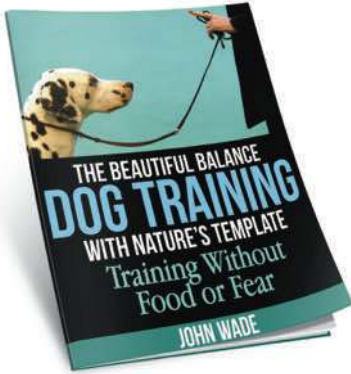


The Wade Collar's Power Steering Dog Training Collar is a straightforward, easy to put on and take off, American Bulldog-friendly, owner friendly training tool that allows increased safety and more nuanced handling and training.

It works very well because it's designed to stay up with relatively infrequent adjustment comfortably behind a American Bulldog's ears and under the jaw.

This positioning provides the American Bulldog owner with subtle control of the dog's head which translates into better control of the dog's center of balance and in effect, their body, resulting in far greater receptiveness in the dog to the tone and body language guidance directed from the dog owner to the dog. [www.wadecollars.com](http://www.wadecollars.com)

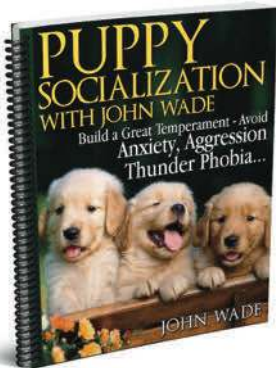
## eBook - The Beautiful Balance - Dog Training with Nature's Template



If you are a, do it yourself person, or a search amongst local trainers only turns up trainers using 'Might Is Right' or 'All Positive/Purely Positive/Force-Free' treat, treat treat training this is e-book is an excellent guide for anyone with a American Bulldog. You can learn more about its contents on the Ask The Dog Guy

website [www.askthedogguy.com](http://www.askthedogguy.com)

## eBook - Puppy Socialization with John Wade



If you don't yet have a American Bulldog - read this first. Beyond learning how to socialize your \*\*\*breed properly\*\*\* it will help you with breeder selection. If you have a American Bulldog under 12 weeks of age, read and implement if you want your American Bulldog to be fear and bombproof in modern society. [www.askthedogguy.com](http://www.askthedogguy.com)

## eBook - Healing the Heel

If only family members with the upper body strength of the Incredible Hulk can walk your American Bulldog and even that person is



starting to look like one of their arms is longer than the other - read this book. You will learn how to walk your American Bulldog, anywhere, regardless of distraction. There is more in this book than you will learn in any dog training class. [www.askthedogguy.com](http://www.askthedogguy.com)

### Telephone/Skype/FaceTime Consultations



Telephone/Skype/FaceTime consultations are very thorough, and followup notes/instructions are forwarded after each consultation. While not absolutely necessary it's best to have everyone that generally interacts with the dog on a day to day basis involved in the consultation. Phone/Skype consults on average last between 90 - 120 minutes. If you wish further details email [john@askthedogguy.com](mailto:john@askthedogguy.com)





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



John Wade is a dog trainer of 30 years. He is also the author of many dog training and behavior books and a popular speaker at professional conferences as well as seminars for companion dog owners. He is also a podcaster. He is the man behind the popular companion dog training blog for companion dog owners: [www.askthedogguy.com](http://www.askthedogguy.com)



