

😊 Behavior SKILL-building: How to Turn ~~Reactive!~~ Into Relaxed 😊

April 2022 - Lynne Swanson, DVM - HSUS EXPO

A dog's behavior, moment-by-moment, reflects his **NATURE**, something that is built into his DNA. His culture is canine culture. The social cues and social rules he follows are first and foremost canine, and his body language is canine. He may be familiar with human culture, and he may know what certain human cues mean, but at his best and at his worst, and regardless of breed, he is still, first and foremost, a dog.

A dog's behavior also reflects his **NURTURE**, that is his socialization and training. It reflects his **STATE-OF-MIND** and his **ENERGY LEVEL**, **ASSOCIATIONS** that he's making and **ROUTINES** that he is familiar with. Knowing this is important when you want to prevent reactivity or turn a reactive dog into a relaxed one.

To understand why a lot of dogs get reactive (and how easy it can be to set them up for relaxation and success, instead), it pays understand **8 simple but quite practical canine truths**.

- (1) Dogs prefer to be around relaxed individuals (especially dogs encountering new situations).
- (2) Dogs (like little kids) do their best when they're following good decisionmakers, and the best decisionmakers exhibit the "5 C's."
- (3) Dogs like (and they need) to move. Movement helps dogs 'move on' physically, psychologically and socially.
- (4) Dogs communicate via PPME, that is: posture, position, movement and energy (both in quantity and quality). And - *this is really important* - they interpret our posture, the positions we take, how we move (or fail to move) and the energy we project in the context of their species (and not ours).
- (5) Dogs have very different social rules and social cues than we do.
- (6) Dogs often know the picture in our mind even better than we do (and they respond accordingly).
- (7) Dogs pull away from tension. Tension and frustration (no matter how justified) will work against you 100% of the time.
- (8) Dogs enjoy being members of a good team.

All 8 of these very practical truths can be capitalized upon, to bring out any dog's (and any handler's) best, and honoring them is pivotal when it comes to preventing and defusing reactivity.

The 5 C's of good communication with canines are:

CALM (not rooted in extra emotion or excitement)

CLEAR (following Golden Rule #1 and Golden Rule #2)

CONFIDENT (not unsure, insecure or hesitant)

CONSISTENT (not one way one day and another way the next)

CANINE-INTUITIVE (reflective of K9 culture, K9 social rules and K9 social cues, not simply human ones)

Golden Rule #1: Reward what you want to see again.

Golden Rule #2: Stop rewarding what you don't want!

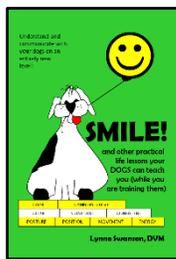
Honorary Golden Rule: Honor differences between species.

This seminar discusses 12 common situations where certain dogs get reactive, with many videos included. In every case, the keys to bringing out a dog's more relaxed side - as opposed to his reactive side - reflect these **8 simple truths**, the **5 C's** and my **Golden Rules**. The situations are

- * When people approach dogs
- * When dogs are passed between people
- * When dogs are picked up
- * Skittish dogs & K9 curmudgeons
- * When visitors arrive
- * When new people enter dog spaces
- * Owner-protective dogs
- * While out on walks
- * Introductions to other dogs
- * Reactive hand-held dogs
- * Dogs who need personal space
- * Kennels and crating

To learn more about these situations and other circumstances where dogs respond in ways you don't want (submissive urinaters and cage sharks, for example), the following resources are super-valuable:

😊 **BOOK:** "SMILE! and other practical life lessons your dogs can teach you (while you are training them)" by Lynne Swanson, DVM

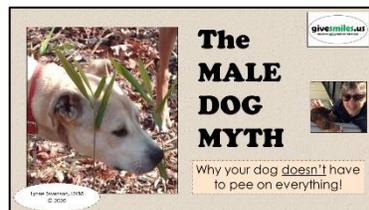
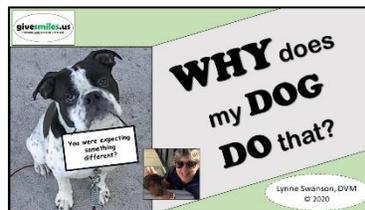


\$18.00 from Safe Harbor Farm K9 (all proceeds support good dog projects)

Rescue & shelter discount: \$11/copy when ten or more are purchased for staff, volunteer & foster training, fundraising or resale to adopters

Read the **Table of Contents** and **first 2 chapters** at www.givesmiles.us
Order on this website or via 252 422-0943 (ask for Jan)

😊 **YOU TUBE VIDEOS:** View on the givesmiles.us YouTube channel. Type 'givesmiles.us' in YouTube's search bar, then click on the handsome Doberman to find.
Videos include:



* 'Communicating with Canines' seminar (an excellent staff & volunteer training video!)
** These 2 videos include information referenced at today's seminar

EMBRACE YOUR LEARNING CURVE AND NEVER STOP LEARNING ABOUT OTHER SPECIES!