



The Power of Positive Dog Training

Pat Miller

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A renowned dog trainer gives you the positive training tools you need to share a lifetime of fun, companionship, and respect with your dog. Plus, you'll get: information on the importance of observing, understanding, and reacting appropriately to your dog's body language; instructions on how to phase out the use of a clicker and treats to introduce more advanced training concepts; a diary to track progress; suggestions for treats your dog will respond to; and a glossary of training terms.

The Power of Positive Dog Training Details

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From Reader Review The Power of Positive Dog Training for online ebook

Belle Beth Cooper says

Solid, but not amazing

Lots of stuff I'd read or seen in videos elsewhere, but nice to have it all in one place, with a clear progression to follow. The specific training skills section will be a handy future resource.

Smoke says

This book has excellent insight into how dog brains work and how they process things, which I have found extremely useful in training my second dog, who was far more difficult than my first. It has a premise, that positive training is more effective than other methods, which exploit fear and pain avoidance behavior to achieve the same result. This premise makes sense to me, since pleasure seeking is complex and involves more of the brain than pain avoidance. But some of the suggested methods are impractical to the point of absurdity... example from the book: your dog is afraid of tall bearded men in cowboy hats. (happens. Really.) since this fear is actually a combination of several triggers, you have to handle each one separately. First invite a tall man with whom your dog is unfamiliar to your house. Then you invite your shortest bearded friend, but remember, the dog must not know the man or it won't work. Meanwhile keep cowboy hats around your house and don them occasionally. Next invite a bearded man over and have him don a cowboy hat, and so on. Most of the techniques for dealing with issues involve using people who the dog does not know. These people must like you enough to be willing to help you train your dog, and be available when the dog needs them to be. so... yeah. However, despite all this I still found the book very useful and still refer back to it because, like I said, it does contextualize dog's thinking in a way that helps me deal with problem behaviors with my dog, and I know that it won't involve yelling or hitting or anything else I just can't bring myself to do, however effective it may or may not be. Knowing this about myself, I knew I had to find a method that effectively channels pleasure-seeking behavior and gives enough information to apply to my own improvised techniques. And it doesn't moralize or preach (I returned a dog training book because it was so sanctimonious and based in belief rather than experience or research. This one does not do that, it's pretty straightforward, though very clear about which side the writer is on.) Basically I use it as one of many sources of information regarding how to deal with dogs, one step above the friendly people at the dog park who are open about their failures. It's all useful information.

Kim says

More like a 4.5.

This book is awesome, I just wish it went into a little more depth on certain things. For example, I would have liked to know more about the different titles your dogs can earn and the different types of competitions they can enter. I would have also been interested in learning how to teach more tricks than the few that she went over. Overall though, it did a really good job of covering a huge variety of things, everything from housebreaking to aggression to clicker training. I already knew that positive dog training was the way to go,

but this did a great job going into it more in depth and explaining why.

Barb says

A lot of this was familiar to me because my dogs had the benefit of a “positive” trainer. This book not only told you how to train your dogs without punishment but why you should. It was a lot of “preaching to the choir” for me, but I did learn some new things and discovered some things I’m doing wrong. The narration was good but this is a book I wish I had a paper or kindle copy of so I could refer back to it more easily.

Chris Coccaro says

Excellent book on training you to be a good dog owner. Unfortunately buying a pet doesn't require a license (it should), but if it did this would be a requirement of that license. Some major takeaways:

- 1) Your dog lives in the moment and does not remember what it did before that you're screaming about.
 - 2) Negative reinforcement - crying out in anger at your dog, yelling or kicking, a slap on the nose - does almost nothing to stop bad behavior as the dog is never certain what exactly it did wrong. If you yell at your dog to get off the couch, he might just think its bad to be on the couch when you aren't home.
 - 3) Reward positive behavior, ignore negative behavior. This is the key to the whole method.
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Lori says

I am 100% convinced that positive dog training is not only effective, but fun for you and your dog! This is a great book for people who are not familiar with positive training, as well as for people who have some experience with it but need/want more guidance. I can't wait for the second edition to come out!

Justin Podur says

I thought this book was quite good. I have always been opposed to (and appalled by) the use of punishment in teaching and training; so, I am a natural sympathizer of the 'positive' school of thought. The training methods and ideas in this book are specific, and solid, and seem to be proven in the field too. My only question about the behaviourist framework, which I am going back and forth about, is, to what extent does behaviourist training, even the positive kind, waste the innate potentials of the animal? Behaviourists don't put much stock in these innate characteristics, believing that behaviours are what are reinforced. But a lot of great educational philosophy that I have seen that relates to humans (Alfie Kohn's Punished by Rewards is the prize example) is based on the idea that humans innately want to learn, and rewards actually harm this 'intrinsic motivation'. There are dog trainers and breeders I respect who talk about the innate motivations of dogs, and the idea of 'genetic obedience'. If these concepts are true, then taking advantage of these innate characteristics might come into conflict with some of the Skinnerian behaviourist techniques that trainers use. On the other hand, even the most anti-behaviourist educational theorists, like Kohn, say that feedback and communication are crucial in learning. So, maybe the communication or feedback between a human and

a dog consists of a piece of cheese - a reward.

Regardless of my confusion between the 'genetic obedience' and the behaviourist schools of thought, nobody with a dog should be without positive dog training techniques and nobody should be unaware of this book. It's a must-read.

Michelle says

Very informative and really helped me with my dog. There is a new edition published 2008

Paisley Green says

I've never trained a puppy by myself, so I was looking for some good resources to help me with my new Bernese puppy. This book advocates for positive reinforcement training, which uses praise and treats to reward dogs for doing well, not punish them for doing unwanted behaviors. Positive training is crucial for training a companion, not a submissive, fearful dog—especially Bernese, who are very people-motivated. This book is an excellent resource for what I needed, and I'll be using a lot of the practical tips in the upcoming weeks and months with Rosie.

Sean Howard says

If I had to recommend a book to someone on how to better train their dog, and I could only recommend one, this is it. In fact, I give this book to my clients. Clear, concise, easy-to-follow and the most powerful methods for truly-dog-friendly, positive reinforcement training.

Tim The Enchanter says

If anything, this book has convinced me that Positive Dog Training is the method to employ. It provides a very detailed look at the reasoning and effectiveness of positive reinforcement training. This is helpful for someone who wants to know more than the method of training but wants to know why they are doing what they are doing. It also gives some very detailed information on teaching specific commands and a suggested order.

In my case, I was reading this on my Kindle. While I love my ereader, I need a paper book for my reference material. While the information was good, I still went out and bought a hard cover training manual for reference.

I also felt that there was not enough information regarding puppyhood and suggested times to teach and train. Overall, if you want the background and then the training plan, this is a good option. If you are looking for more than that, you will want to look elsewhere or supplement your reading.

Michelle says

I think this really is *the* go-to book for learning about positive training and how to implement it with your dog. I've never beat around the bush with indicating that I'm very pro-positive training and I think Pat Miller is one of the best.

The book begins with a little bit about Pat's history of training, namely that she was a "traditional" trainer at one point, which many were. Traditional trainers focus more on aversives and punishments: leash pops, choke chains, and the like. It tells briefly of her discovery and switch to positive methods. I think this is important: it says that anyone can do it, no matter how they trained beforehand.

From there, the book is divided into three main sections.

The first outlines the ins and outs of positive training: how it works, why it works, why it builds a better bond with your dog. It explains a little bit about how dogs think and learn and outlines some basic training tools you'll need with your dog.

The second gives instructions on how to get your dog to do some basic obedience: sit, down, stay, come, etc. She breaks each of them down into easy steps to achieve them and gives suggestions on common problems people might encounter when trying to teach their dog the particular command. At the end of each section, she gives "bonus games" which are basic tricks you can teach your dog. She stresses, time and time again, that this should be fun: both for the human and the dog.

The third addresses common behavioral problems, such as housetraining, separation anxiety, aggression, socialization, and what to do when there's a baby on the way. Each of these sections can (and are) books on their own, so in the context of a fairly short book they're somewhat glossed over. Miller is, at every turn, careful to note that if your dog has some more serious issues that finding a good positive trainer who can work with you and your dog in person is most important.

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to get started in obedience training with their dog. They'll end up with a really well-behaved dog who loves to work for them.

Benji says

This book was recommended to me many years ago when I asked for advice on a dog forum for training my corgi mix myself (without a dog trainer). I was told that Pat Miller really is one of the best in the field, and when I purchased the book I was not disappointed. I found it at a used bookstore for a dollar or so, and was told I was really lucky to find it there and so cheaply, too. Upon reading it, I understood why. This book guided me through my early years with my corgi mix, and because of it I was able to train her entirely at home with very little outside help other than the book. It is very easy to read, and easy enough for even a novice dog owner to understand. It covers all the basics - from sit, stay, to even jealousy in multiple dog homes - and six years later (give or take), Sandy is still a very well trained, mostly well behaved (except for some barking that we have made progress with over the years) dog. I keep this book on my shelf, and even now will refer to it sometimes if she presents any problem behaviors. It speaks a lot about the clicker, but

you could do most of the methods even without the use of the clicker and still be as effective. The book was really wonderful. I bought many dog training books when I first got Sandy, but this was the only one that I read all the way through. Most others left me dissatisfied, and wanting more (wondering "So, now what?"), but this one spoke to me not as though I was an expert in dog training, nor as though I was completely stupid to dog ownership (I find both of these are common ways of addressing the reader in dog training books - I am not a professional dog trainer, but I am no novice in owning dogs, either), but rather as an equal. I really enjoyed that aspect. Pat Miller knows what she's talking about, and she expresses and "trains" it well. I recommend this one to new dog owners quite often, and most of them have been thankful for the suggestion finding that it helped them, too.

A few more things that I would like to add is that it, also, has resources listed in the back (links to more information on clicker training, video links, etc) which were very, very helpful. It, also, has a chart in the back for tracking training. I loved this aspect of the book, and Sandy's tricks are charted in the back. Even today I can look at it and see how fast she learned.

Sander says

I think every dog owner in the world needs to read this book.

My family has had dogs for pretty much all my life. None of the dogs have been well trained, and as a result, we've had many problematic behaviors in our dogs. We've had:

- 1) A big mutt who lived in the yard and never listened to anybody
- 2) A dachshund who would pee a little whenever he got attention and was afraid to go on walks
- 3) A medium sized mutt who would pull really hard on walks and occasionally get aggressive towards strangers
- 4) Another dachshund who likes to drive everyone mad with endless barking

The general opinion in my family seems to be that these problems are either inherent to the specific dogs or their breeds, or that the problems appeared because the family members were not 'alpha' enough with the dogs. Whenever one of our dogs would offer a behavior we didn't like, they would get punished, either verbally or physically. Most members of our family used a prong collar when walking the dog that liked to pull (I refused to use it because it looked far too painful). So, as I was growing up, I learned that if I ever want to have a well behaved dog, I would need to basically be mean towards my dogs, and much more consistently than my family had been.

I'm living on my own now, and getting a puppy quite soon. I've been reading some books and a lot of online resources about dog behavior, and I was really surprised at how misinformed my whole family had been. This book clearly explains how my family has actually been reinforcing all the negative behaviors in our dogs by doing the old-school 'alpha' style dog training wrong. In addition, Pat Miller shows that there is actually a much better way of training our dogs, one that does not involve hurting them physically or emotionally.

From now on, whenever anybody tells me that they're having problems with their dog, I will tell them to read this book.

Shawndra says

I really liked this book and am sure I will refer back to it many times. I think the way she discusses both shaping and luring with the clicker as a marker is very useful because it both gives the distinction between the two clearly and gives you options for which one you'd like to use.

I liked how the exercises were laid out and made into games, I think that would make things more accessible to people who may be less experienced with training. I will probably recommend it to people for that reason. Its definitely geared toward pet owners, but I think that it would be good for sport/working dog owners to read as well just because its just a good back to basics text. I may not agree with all her philosophical crap about how to keep ones dog, etc. (i.e. if a dog is getting all its needs met chaining/tethering is a fine containment method.... I do not agree with her blatant anti-tethering views at all) but the training stuff is good.
