



Canine REWARD

By: Angel Soriano



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The term **REWARD** more often than not is misunderstood with food or treats. Even professional dog trainers sell themselves to the “treat-devil”, while losing out on the real meaning of rewarding your dog. The reason for this cheap sell-out is that it's easy and effortless. You show a treat to a dog and he follows it. Not much talent required in this method.



Treat-training (also known as food-training) is a waste of a dog's IQ, as we're treating them no different than a common rat, as you too could place a cheese-treat at the end of a maze, and you can then watch a rat teach themselves to go through the maze to get to the cheese.

The facts are that TREAT training deals with only two areas of an animal's capacities. One dealing with their taste buds, which is a major one, as most animals on the planet will respond favorably to food. The other area is their sense of smell, as this also helps them fulfill that learned behavior of tasting this fabulous treat. When using a treat, the dog is performing an action for you, for the purposes of receiving a munchy ---- no real thought process here (this is all instinctive, and no real brain activity is needed to do this). Remember, we can get a rat to instinctively do the same.

So, at the end of the day, if ALL you use in **training** your dog is food, you have conceptually limited this wonderfully incredibly smart canine creature to simply two areas, when in reality, they have zero limits. My coaching to you is to NOT limit their learning so early.

Have I said enough about “treat-training” to make you dislike it forever? DON'T.

There **is** a place for treat-training, however, not when doing typical training exercises with your dog. I will talk about treat-training in a different paper, as my comments and input are too detailed, and are the subject of possibly a long narrative, but certainly not as part of advanced canine reward mechanisms.

Remember this other fact; a classical dog can learn and retain about 200 commands. Impressive !!! Specifically when you think about the fact that we (humans) have to write them down to remember all 200 commands :-) It's virtually a new language.

So, let's talk about proper REWARDS. Which is why you are hopefully reading this.

I have built my canine behavioral career by identifying the proper reward method for any given dog (and these change based on the act you need them to do). You need to spend some time thinking about this topic, as it is the most important part of training your dog. The act of recognizing the correct reward mechanism for your dog, for the particular action you want them to do is second to no other activity.

The reward tools that I recommend daily are (and in no particular order, as they vary based on activity needs):



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- **Touch; quiet praise.** This kind of praise is when you take the time to actually gently touch (pet) your dog after an obedience action has taken place. Quiet praise lowers their heartbeat and their cortisol (stress hormone). This is an excellent way to get your dog to process their recent actions and why they received praise for them. Also, a great way to control a high energy dog.



- **Touch; loud praise.** This kind of praise is when you are loud in your physical actions, patting, friendly slapping, quick fast petting. When you do this, your dog's heartbeat will speed-up. This is an excellent way to get a low energy dog to come to the obedience or working game.

- **Prey-drive praise; ball, kong, toy, rag, rope, etc.**

This kind of praise is used when the dog is a willing participant in chasing a ball, kong, rope, or anything thrown away from them. We use this to reward any action the dog gives us, as it usually work well with almost any training you are attempting to complete, providing the dog requires high prey motivation.

- **Voice; quiet praise.** Quiet voice praise is similar to Touch Quiet Praise covered earlier, in that it is used by gently applying soothing praise words to the dog when required after an obedience action has taken place. Quiet verbal praise lowers their heartbeat and their cortisol (stress hormone).
- **Voice; loud praise.** This kind of praise is similar to Touch Loud Praise covered earlier, in that it is used you need your dog's heartbeat to speed-up. This is an excellent way to get a low energy dog to come to the.
- **Defense praise.** This type of praise is ONLY use when training a dog for personal protection purposes. It is only evident in dogs that are very confident and able to accept this type of reward, as intended. To be perfectly clear, a dog that likes this type of reward, should **only** be trained by a professional dog trainer experienced and vested into Personal Protection disciplines, as this kind of reward can lead to trouble if done incorrectly. Consult an expert.

The bonding that takes place as a result of quality praising is unquestionably needed for any type of dog training or conditioning you ever undertake.

Remember, during the reward phase of dog training, it is perfectly normal to again have to interrupt incorrect behaviors. As a dog may become over stimulated with the praise and break some rules. If this happens, stop the praise, and commence some interruptions. Once he has interrupted, then commence the praise again. Confusing?

So now that you know this much about praising your pooch properly, **get to work**, throw the treats away, and get started rewarding him the way it was intended.



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Happy training my friends. It's in the cards !!!