



Evolution Dog Training Tips

Choosing a dog trainer

We know how dizzying it can be to know what to look for in a dog trainer, and there's a lot of info to consider when it comes to choosing one that's right for you and your canine companions. While there is no clear cut criteria, you could examine some of the core values of each different trainer by digging a bit deeper into their methods, beliefs and ethics. NOT just their popularity or even reviews!

What makes a dog trainer “good” and how can you know who to trust? Here are some tips and things to look for so you don't get scammed:

1. **ALPhaBeT sOUp?** There are so many different certifications, accreditations, schools, educational courses, mentorships, and letters. It can be hard to know what it all means.
 - a. *The most amazing part of that is MOST OF THEM ALL SUPPORT THE SAME THINGS:* ethical, humane, and positive training methods backed by science and decades of hands-on experience by some of the world's best behavior professional across multiple disciplines from ethology to nutrition, to veterinary medicine, to the behavior of all species, to doctorate degrees in biology, psychology and just about anything else you can think of that's related to animals and their well-being and quality of life.
2. **Unregulated field of practice-** Do you find it strange that your Fantastic Sam hairdresser had to go to school and have a license to give you a terrible haircut? But, anyone can call themselves a dog trainer and apply any methods they want even without any official education about psychology, ethics, science, peer-reviews, compassion, or concern for the animal's wellbeing during their training.
 - a. There is hope- dig into the right trainer for you by becoming aware of the fundamentals and core of ethical dog training.
3. **Flashy Videos-** While any trainer can make these, it's not the most important aspect of showing one's work. Some dog training involves helping a family get over a bite to a child, should we post “flashy” videos about that? Obedience such as heel, stay, come and place are super easy for almost anyone to accomplish so videos displaying a trainer's ability to achieve basic obedience are only the tip of the iceberg and considered to be very rudimentary.
 - a. Just keep in mind, some trainers may not have the time or staff to get the flashy videos that some prioritize.
 - b. Another important fact- sometime behavior goals aren't quick and flashy, so most would find it boring to watch a dog learn confidence over time, learn to walk on a leash over a few weeks while the owners were busy with work and kids, or learn a stay from start to finish over a few hours or days for example.

4. **Emotional concern-** If your trainer isn't always making sure your dog is emotionally safe and not overly stressed, fearful, or avoidant, they may not be formally educated about how dogs learn and their overall well-being.
 - a. It can take a seasoned professional who is well-educated to provide the best advice.
5. **Ethics-** Not only in the way they train dogs but how they treat people and how they run their business.
 - a. Honesty, kindness, transparency, compassion and continuing education are good qualities to look for.
 - i. Of course, asking about their experience with training dogs hands-on is essential!
 - ii. **Code of ethics** Here's one (of many) professional organizations code of ethics pledges that humane trainers don't mind upholding. Compare that to "I was a police K9 trainer". And sure, some trainers can say it and not mean it, but you can tell who definitely is not, based upon their opinion of those that do.

Here are some reliable resources to start your research about the complex and important considerations when choosing a professional to work with you and your dog:

[International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants](#)

[Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainer](#)

[Karen Pryor Academy](#)

[American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior](#)

Wishing you a paws-itively tail-wagging day!

Leanne, and the Evolution Dog Training Team



Text or Call us for help: (702) 997-5462

