

# A Dog Owner's Guide Through the Dog Training Maze

by Roger Hild



***A Personalized Approach to Training Your Dog***

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# A Dog Owner's Guide Through the Dog Training Maze

The following work is, among other things, a compilation of previously written essays combined with various topics previously only touched upon. This work is inspired in part by my ongoing journey toward figuring out what today's dog owner really needs to know in order to successfully train his dog. Along the way, certain basic truths have become glaringly obvious to me and yet for so many people they remain undiscovered or even worse, ignored. This journey has been an interactive one in which the writer has been the student almost as often as he has been the teacher.

## **Every Question is a Teacher**

As I sat pondering what I wanted to include in this book, my mind kept drifting back to the thousands of questions asked and so patiently directed my way over the years. Every question comes from somewhere, can be seen as framing an important statement about the asker and, most importantly, every question is a teacher. Slowly it dawned on me that every question could be framed with the recognition, "this is important" and "this needs to be paid attention to."

If you strip away the specific behavioural component of the questions, the vast majority begin with either, "How can I get my dog to...?" or "How do I make my dog STOP...?" While the content of the question is important and the answer must contain specific directions which address the question, I want to spend a moment more fully focused on the owner rather than their question. I believe that all too often the owner gets lost - abandoned in the process - as the trainer focuses on the question rather than the person asking it. If we can better understand the questioner, we will then be better able to address the concern behind the question.

Most folk, when they get a dog, simply think along the lines of, "Well, I don't want him to pee on the floor, I'd like to be able to take him for walks and maybe have him come back when I call - how do I do these things?" These people probably didn't have any idea of the political minefield surrounding something as seemingly simple as training their dog. Because most people want to "do it right," when it comes to their dog, sooner or later they run headlong into the conflicting ideas of what they should be doing.

In addition to specific behavioural questions, the vast majority of people who call asking for dog training information frequently want information on a few common subjects. Usually they want to know how long it should take to train their dog so it will be a good companion, they want to know how much it will cost to train and they want to know how reliable the training will be. The often-expressed desire to go about their normal daily activities together, with the dog off leash, is an indication of the reliability they seek. What is being asked seems straightforward enough and anyone offering such services should be able to answer clearly and honestly. When these questions are left unanswered, the unsuspecting dog owning public is denied accurate information on which to base their decisions.

From my point of view, training begins in the mind of you the owner and continues any time you and your dog are together. Something in the owner sparks a question: "How can I...?", "Why does this happen?", "Is it possible...?" Questions provide the motivation to look for answers and in the process,

beliefs, possibilities and new questions are entertained. As a picture begins to emerge, purposeful action can be started to make it happen. The owner must now find the way to share this picture with his dog.

From the brief discussion so far, you should be considering the following:

Do you know what you are looking for? Can you picture it?

What questions would help you more clearly define that which you seek?

What is your motivation for wanting to train your dog?

Do you have a sense that the trainers you contact are prepared to follow your agenda or do they seem more interested in substituting their own agenda?

Do you have a sense that you are being listened to?

### **Navigating the Minefield**

If someone new to the concept of dog training were to begin a search of various training options, they might quickly come to the conclusion that they had wandered into the middle of some religious crusade. They would come across many examples where sage advice from one group of esteemed experts comes into glaring conflict with the learned opinion of another group of experts. No doubt they would be left scratching their heads and wondering how to move past the numerous contradictions.

In order to clear a path through these obstacles, it might be a good time to bring in a historical perspective. Training dogs is nothing new, indeed we (humans) have been training dogs to perform numerous jobs in a variety of roles for thousands of years. Even a certain amount of disagreement is not new. What is new is the manner in which certain camps are attempting to apply various “learning” theory to their methodology and label it as new or modern. It is not enough that they seek to offer variety in the choices the consumer has, but there is a further element to their agenda which is to promote their morally superior views, wrap the package in a blanket of sentimentality and push it with the zeal of a religious fundamentalist.

It would only seem reasonable that any advances in teaching/learning or any “new methods” being promoted, should meet certain tests - they should be judged in relation to their effect on the desired outcome. If they can produce the results more quickly, more reliably, are easier for the consumer to apply and they can be shown to be “more humane” they should be considered. However, they should be viewed with increased scepticism for each of those tested elements which they fail (ease of use, efficiency, reliability and are humane).

When I first began training, the standard for learning the basics was a ten-week course. If they had done their homework, at the end of the ten weeks the owner could reasonable expect their dog to heel on a loose leash, heel around people who were standing still, heel off-leash, stand calmly and quietly while examined by a stranger, come when called and hold both a ‘sit stay’ and ‘down stay’. If they so chose, they could take those skills and enter an obedience trial where those skills would be tested and a qualifying score earned.

Since I began training over twenty years ago and well before the latest wave of “new ideas and methods,” it would be reasonable to expect that if, in recent years, newer, more improved training

methods had been developed the results would be reflected in the simple obedience/training test I've already mentioned. Surely the "new" methods could be shown to reduce training time while increasing reliability. Has this been the case? In a word, NO. Rather than an improvement in outcome, there has been a marked decline in results.

Keeping the above in mind, I'll now give an example of what I saw at an actual dog show not long ago. There was a total of four obedience trials over a period of two days. Being a border town, there were plenty of American and Canadian entries at these well-attended trials. After watching many of the performances and noting the number of non-qualifiers from all classes, I'd have to say the whole thing was pretty disappointing. The failure rate was very high - in some classes it exceeded 70%!

Watching some of the dog and handler teams warming up, while waiting for their turns, I saw some near 'perfect scores' in the offing. Once in the ring however, many of these same dogs acted as if they had no concept of something as simple as "heel" - never mind "sit" or "stay." While watching the performances, it occurred to me that many of these dogs simply are not trained. For these dogs, geared only to reward, there was no work ethic in place.

When I first began training dogs, the pass rates at trials were much higher (often in the 60-80% range). We used to look at some exercises (such as "stays") as "givens" and it was rare indeed that someone failed because of a broken stay. These days, judging by the number of "trained" dogs I see every day in our parks and on our city streets - 'trained dogs' that must wear nose leashes and who treat a recall as a good enough reason to run the other way - I'd say the decline in performance is general and not just limited to what we see in the competitive obedience ring. When I read about more and more towns looking at banning certain breeds and when I see all the places where dogs are no longer welcome I wonder about the direction we are taking "man's best friend." Why the decline in reliability? What has happened over the past twenty plus years?

Is it coincidence that this decline fits within the same time frame as the increasing popularity of the movement that likes to label itself as "dog friendly?" I listen to what many in that movement are touting as "the latest scientific knowledge and advances in dog training." Those same trainers see themselves as "the new wave" and are quick to point out the methods of yesteryear are "old fashioned" and some even suggest those old methods are less effective, unnecessary and even abusive. They like to preach the doctrine of "conditioning" rather than training and management over compliance. ***Yet the fact remains - the results speak for themselves and on this count these "new" methods fail miserably.***

As you consider choosing a training method you should consider the following:

What is the outcome I'm looking for?

Will this training meet any standard of reliability?

What results has the trainer produced and what end-product can I expect?

How long will it take to produce those results?

How will the training hold up under a variety of distracting conditions?

Am I being offered real substance or only "feel-good" fluff?

## **Discipline is not a four-letter word.**

Any dog trainer you approach should be willing and able to discuss their views and answer your questions about discipline. In any household where there are rules, there will sometimes have to be enforcement. Having said that, it is impossible to have any discussion about discipline without acknowledging it to be a subject on which people tend to be deeply divided. Those in one camp would have us believe all that is necessary is to reward the “good” and ignore the “bad.” The view held by those in the opposite camp is that punishment solves everything. Somewhere between these two extremes is where one would find a good balance in their approach. Any plan needs to be viewed in terms of effectiveness and long-term outcome.

When discussing a topic as sensitive as discipline, it is important to be clear on what is meant by the terms that are used. Two such meanings for the word “discipline” are:

1. Training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behaviour, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement.
2. Controlled behaviour resulting from disciplinary training; self-control.

Excerpted from The American Heritage Dictionary® of the English Language, Third Edition.

For my purposes, the word “Discipline,” as it is used here, means setting and maintaining limits. Rules, order and obedience, are all included as part of those “limits.” Limits must be clearly expressed or taught before they can be enforced. Once taught, if not enforced, a limit soon becomes meaningless and will be ignored. Whenever we are trying to sort out a behaviour problem involving any kind of limit, the question becomes, “Is he unaware of the limit or is he ignoring it?”

It is always easier to make rules than it is to follow through and enforce them. As soon as you make the rule, however, you must decide how it will be enforced. It would be naive to think, now that we have rules to limit certain behaviours, the problem is solved. By definition, limits restrict and will be tested rather early on. How long after you got your drivers licence was it before you exceeded the speed limit? In this example it should be clear that knowledge (without some kind of enforcement) of the rule is not enough.

The ultimate goal in all this is “self-discipline,” which is where the limits become internalized. This process is the result of both learning and maturation. Until internal limits are established (trained) external controls are both useful and necessary.

Those who would have us believe that there is no place in “modern training” for punishment or correction, often make reference to the work of Dr Ian Dunbar. Dr. Dunbar’s approach stressed the positive and depended heavily on rewarding the behaviour being taught. He is an advocate of teaching an incompatible behaviour to the one you are trying to stop, for example teaching the dog to sit where he might otherwise jump. However, Dr Dunbar has stated, in seminars he has given, that the most effective training approach includes both Rewards and Punishment.

The following passage was written by Dr. Dunbar in a section titled **“Positive or Negative Reinforcement?”**

*“It is often asked which is more effective when training a dog, positive or negative*

*reinforcement... An extreme exponent of the "force training method" might consider a reward to be the absence of punishment, whereas via the "natural method," negative reinforcement is often the absence of positive reinforcement. It would be naive to insist that either extreme is totally advantageous and a complementary combination of both techniques will presumably produce the best results. It is certainly easier, quicker and considerably more effective to train a dog via the "natural method," using only positive reinforcement. **NEVERTHELESS, IN ITS LIFETIME, A DOG WILL INEVITABLY DEVELOP A VARIETY OF BAD HABITS OR UNDESIRABLE TRAITS, SOME OF WHICH ARE BEST PREVENTED BY IMMEDIATE PUNISHMENT.**"*

**\*\*Emphasis added**

Dunbar continues:

*"The timing and severity of punishment largely determines its effect upon behavior. The effect is greatest immediately following the punishment, but in time the behavior often returns to its original level. This is the main disadvantage when using negative reinforcement for efficient behavior control. Punishment is useful for reducing the incidence of an undesirable trait, but in order to be continually effective the punishment must be continued periodically. If the dog is allowed to indulge in the bad habit, the reinforcing consequences of the behavior will override previous aversive conditioning. Occasionally, a dog may respond at an even higher level than before."*

From, "DOG BEHAVIOR, WHY DOGS DO WHAT THEY DO" page 139 by Ian Dunbar

Gary Wilkes (who is one of the earliest pioneers of the current fad of "clicker training") has drawn some fire for suggesting that both rewards and punishments must be employed if behaviour is to be successfully and reliably modified. In an article he wrote and presented as part of a CAPPDT seminar, Gary describes how to go about shaping behaviour then putting it on cue. As part of this process he talks about "Integrating the behavior into the dog's repertoire and then adding consequences for failure," and writes:

*"By definition, operant conditioning is 'behavior that is determined by its consequences.' To create a performance repertoire that is precise, crisp and unfailing, there must be consequences that maintain that level of performance. That means pleasant consequences for success, and unpleasant consequences for failure. **WHILE IT IS OFTEN SUGGESTED THAT "ALL POSITIVE" TRAINING CAN CREATE SUCH PERFORMANCE, I AM NOT AWARE THAT ANYONE HAS EVER ACTUALLY DONE IT WITH DOGS IN OBEDIENCE COMPETITION.** (emphasis mine). For performance animals, I include another step in my order of training – aversive control for failure."*

My own philosophy includes the idea that dogs make decisions and sometimes become contentious. When I am helping a student learn to work with and relate to their dog, I teach them to think in terms of two things: **Respect and Contention**. They must always work with respect and work to secure their dog's respect. The dog must be worked past what will come to be called "Points of Contention." Once a behaviour has been reliably connected to a command, any of the dog's decisions to contest a limit or command must be thwarted quickly (corrected).

In recent years, society has become much more tolerant of behaviour from children that would not have been accepted at any other time in history. There are probably many reasons why this is so, including

the conflicting advice from so many “experts.” Many parents have been led to believe that unrestrained self-expression, and the immediate fulfilment of desire, are essential ingredients to becoming “well-adjusted.” In fact, there are those who would go so far as to suggest any exercise of reasonable limits or expectation of self-restraint might mortally wound “self-esteem.” An overly-permissive attitude in which every demand is indulged, and no limits enforced, has contributed to some young people becoming quite self-centered and showing little or no respect for others.

Unfortunately, our dogs have not escaped this prevailing attitude and the results have been disastrous. Dogs out of control, a lack of discipline, and ineffective attempts to correct problems are the reasons behind most of the behavioural problems about which I am consulted. Generally there seems to be a misconception about what constitutes discipline and what role, if any, it should play in the relationship with our dog.

The problem with both camps, those that favour discipline and those that are opposed, is that their approach to training often takes on a “one size fits all” dimension. Anyone trying their “approach” and not achieving the desired results, is somehow left with the feeling that they, and not the approach, failed. A sensible approach would be to recognize that the individual dog’s personality and temperament play a much more important role in deciding what strategy to take. Many good dogs are lost to doctrine from both sides.

A sensible approach to discipline, would balance the offerings from both camps, while taking into account the needs and challenges of each dog. It would focus on and reward “the good,” but would not ignore “the bad.” Such an approach would be positive but not permissive or over indulgent. It would employ the use of “corrections,” but would not be too heavy handed or abusive. Finding this balance is sometimes like trying to hit a moving target and it is possible to face criticism from both sides. On the one hand, there are those that would say the methods are too correction oriented, while on the other hand there are those that would say it is too reward focused.

Discipline plays an important role in the life of every dog. Looking at the “critical periods” there seems to be a correlation between the critical periods for socialization and the need for discipline. Dr. Michael Fox states:

*“When permissively raised pups reach sexual maturity they may become even more difficult to handle, showing extreme indifference to their owners and violent aggression when disciplined or forcibly restrained. Humane destruction is the fate of many such dogs; owners who wanted to raise their pet permissively should have chosen a more submissive and sociable breed or have had it castrated early in life to reduce the chances of sex-related aggression and dominance fighting that is associated with maturity.”*

Since we take over from mom when we take the puppy, we also must continue the lessons on discipline she had already started. The actual techniques used to establish and enforce limits depend largely on the age, breed and personality of each individual dog.



## **Humane does not mean the removal of consequences.**

*“Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.”* This oft quoted statement serves to remind us that there is a cause and effect relationship between behaviour and consequences and we would be wise to learn from those consequences. It adds an element of predictability to behaviour and describes one basis for learning. This phrase assumes, of course, that the “lessons” were noteworthy enough to be noticed and worthy of learning from.

Even the learning theory known as “Operant conditioning,” holds as its main premise that behaviour is determined by the consequences it produces. Some behaviours we engage in result in consequences we enjoy and are thus motivated to repeat while other behaviour results in consequences we found most unpleasant and therefore we avoid those behaviours in the future. Consequences that are predictable and sufficiently unpleasant will nearly always cause a behaviour to cease. This is as true for dogs as it is for people and we’ve known it to be the case long before Skinner came along with his learning theory.

All this is leading up to my warning which is: ***Watch out for any training program that is built around rewards only.*** Often labeled as ‘pure positive’ or ‘positive reinforcement only’ these programs attempt to sell the sizzle without the steak by promoting the idea of all fun and games while avoiding anything unpleasant. Don’t walk - ***run*** from anything that ever forbids you from using and enforcing the word “NO.” In short, beware of any training approach which seeks to eliminate consequences - either good or bad. Think about it this way, if learning is dependant on providing meaningful consequences associated with behaviour, eliminating consequences is also eliminating that opportunity to learn.

How about specifics - can discipline sometimes include something that produces momentary pain? In a word, YES. This is also an area where there will be disagreement from those who believe in the process of ‘reward or ignore.’ The fancy name often used for this approach is “Positive reinforcement and Negative Punishment.” Up until recently, this approach was almost exclusively employed by the Ostrich and politicians (ignore the bad and hope it goes away)! Seriously though, pain is a teacher (as well as pleasure) and sometimes the best teacher for some of life’s most important lessons.

Tony Robbins has said that a great deal of behaviour is motivated by either searching for pleasure or attempting to avoid pain. He has said both are teachers and we cannot help but learn from both. He has also observed that very often pain is the greater motivator.

To close this discussion, here are a couple more quotes on the subject:

*“I conceive that pleasures are to be avoided if greater pains be the consequence, and pains to be coveted that will terminate in greater pleasures.”* -Michel De Montaigne

*“Nature has placed mankind under the government of two sovereign masters, \*pain\* and \*pleasure\*...they govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it.”* -Jeremy Bentham

## Relative Cost of Training Your Dog

It is probably a safe assumption that for anyone taking the time from their busy schedule to read this, that price matters. A very common scenario begins with the ringing of the phone, is quickly followed by the caller confirming this is the 'place that trains dogs' and then the question, "How much would it cost to train my dog?"

In times past, I (like many other trainers) would run through my price list for the various programs I offer, while perhaps giving a brief description of each. It took a while for me to realize that my answer often failed to address the real question I was being asked. In order to answer the question, it is important to understand what is being asked, what is needed and in what context it is being asked. The fact is that for most people training their dog, the process is not simply a dollars and cents formula. Indeed the total currency required in this endeavor amounts to a combination of money, time, energy and ability.

In order to get to the true cost, one has to have a clear idea of what they are looking for. For each person calling, how their dog is now and how it will be once trained, offers a unique understanding of "training." Once the dog owner begins the training process, the outcome they seek may change or grow but every goal has to begin with a vision of something.

Right, so the owner has decided they want their dog to walk nicely at their side on a loose leash and they want him to come when they call him - for now that's it, nothing else - how much? In this example let's assume that everything they would need is included in a basic dog training package. Thinking in Canadian dollars (I'm Canadian after all) the average numbers might look something like this:

Option 1. Group classes. Eight weeks/classes @ \$25.00/week - total \$200.00.

Option 2. Private sessions. Five sessions @ \$90.00/session - total \$450.00.

Option 3. Two week Deluxe. Including remote collar, and four private lessons - \$825.00.

Option 4. Two week Board and Train. Includes remote collar - \$1900.00.

Does presenting the above four options really answer the question? Not quite.

Option 1 seems like the best deal but starting with 'time,' lets consider the rest of the currency that is required if the goals are to be realized. In the group class, because the instructor must be available equally to all, the dog owner gets the least amount of their instructor's time. Over the eight weeks of training, the owner will have to put in at least forty minutes of training per day if they are to succeed. (40 X 6 days X 8 weeks = 1920 minutes or 32 hours) Unless you have more time than you know what to do with, those hours are worth something. If we place a value of even \$20.00 per hour on each of those hours, we must add \$640.00 to the \$200.00 course cost. If time is tight, the value of each of those hours goes way up!

Next consider the energy requirement. Simple question: How much value do you place on your energy? An eight week commitment does not seem like much but this means doing the work **EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT**. The fact is that many people run out of gas before they run out of class and they end up coasting. Sometimes this means they try again with another class or they settle for less than their original goal.

Finally consider the ability angle. Is the owner able to physically do the exercises as outlined? Are they able to follow through working mostly on their own with minimal instruction and assistance from an instructor? Are they able to apply the generalized instruction to their own unique experience and set of circumstances?

Option 2 certainly offers more. Instructor time is plentiful - practice time may be a problem. You still have to find 40 minutes per day over a four to five week period. The total time requirement in terms of hours is still in the neighbourhood of 16 hours. Using the same modest \$20.00/hour figure the value of the time would equal \$320.00 added to the \$450.00 paid for the program.

I was thinking of this recently when observing a family I was working with. Both husband and wife were very busy professionals and had very limited time available. Both decided private training was the best way to go and both realized (after a couple weeks) that they didn't have enough time to adequately do the job. Both readily agreed that if they were to find any more time, they would need to purchase it from someone else.

Option 3 requires much less time and energy and is much easier on both the owner and the dog. The process is faster, clearer and more effective. Using the same time formula we arrive at about 8 hours practice over a two-week period costing \$160.00.

Now might be a good time to revise the figures mentioned earlier in this article:

Option 1 (group classes). Course \$200.00, Time \$640.00, Energy (half as much again as the time cost) \$320.00 - Total \$1160.00.

Option 2 (private instruction). Course \$450.00, Time \$320.00, Energy \$160 - Total \$930.00.

Option 3 (Deluxe with remote). Course \$825.00, Time \$160.00, Energy \$80.00 - Total \$1065.00.

Option 4 (Board and Train). Course \$1900, Time and energy not a factor. - Total \$1900.00

From the above example it begins to become clear that the cost is relative and depends on the resources you have and are prepared to invest in the project. The fact is that the value of sweat equity is a far more important price to add to the cost of training a dog for without that, the job will not get done.

### **Koehler's Miscalculation**

When it comes to dog training methodology, it is unlikely any has achieved more notoriety than the "Koehler Method of Dog Training." Even after forty years, Koehler's ideas remain central to many a debate about dog training. While his detractors say the methodology is "old fashioned" and insist Koehler's time is past, supporters of the method disagree and say it remains both highly relevant and very effective.

Since its first appearance in 1962, this popular dog training book has gone through 38 printings and sold more than 475,000 copies. The instructions and training approaches have been found equally successful

by groups in a training class environment or by individuals training alone. Though currently out of print, due to demand, there is talk of bringing it back for a further printing. It's longevity seems to be a direct result of the principles it encapsulates and which reflect the amount of work and research that went into its development. The method as presented in the book represents sixteen years of careful planning and development (from 1946 to 1962).

How about those claims that his time has past; are there newer methods than those penned by Koehler? If there are newer methods, are they more reliable? What miscalculations (if any) did Koehler make as he presented the method he developed?

What is most commonly meant when referring to the so called "newer" methods is the use of food to lure, reward, reinforce or some combination of all three. The reinforcement is most often used in the context of Skinner's "Operant Conditioning" theory and will commonly be used in conjunction with "negative punishment." It should be noted that while many dog trainers have only recently stumbled across Skinner's theories, they are not new. To put this into a time frame, the theory of operant conditioning was around before Koehler and while he didn't embrace Skinner's theory, he most certainly was aware of it.

Curious indeed is the fact that the Breland's had already identified problems with operant conditioning a year before Koehler's book was even published. In 1961 the Breland's paper, "The Misbehavior of Organisms" was published. This paper highlighted some serious reliability problems of both instability and unpredictability with conditioned behaviours. Within the realm of utilizing both positive reinforcement and negative punishment, NOTHING resolved those reliability issues and the Brelands labelled the process "instinctive drift." Koehler's approach proved much more reliable than the conditioning approach of the behaviorists.

As far as the use of food or conditioning being new - it's simply not the case. Not only is there mention of using food to condition various behaviours in many old training books, Koehler spoke of this himself. I've included a few samples of comments which indicate his awareness of the techniques and their failings. Page 20 of "The Koehler Method of Dog Training" says:

*"Recently, a pup beguiled people from the cover of a picture magazine. The accompanying copy told of a "tid-bit training technique," and decried punishment, claiming it caused inhibitions."*

(This sounds very much like what one hears these days as part of the "new wave" sales pitch.)

He goes on: *"Tragically, millions of readers will fail to see the difference between this popping of biscuits into "rote happy" situation workers and the training of dogs in conduct that is favorable even during moments of distraction or emergency - possibly when the dog is not even hungry!"*

*"A dog with a liking for leg-of-mailman will indulge his tastes, oblivious to the tid-bits that shower as manna from heaven. He'll probably end up as an incorrigible offender - another victim of the 'have a cookie' or 'shame-shame' shammers."*

And finally a bit further on he writes: *"There will always be more emphasis and clarity to be had in the contrast between punishment and reward than from the technique of "only good," and if they obey, "still more good." And there is more meaning and awareness of living in a life that knows the*

*consequences of both favorable and unfavorable action. So let's not deprive the dog of his privilege of experiencing the consequences of right and wrong, or, more definitely, punishment as well as praise."*

It seems what is being presented as the "new" methods are simply old ideas wrapped in new packaging and Koehler's reason for rejecting them was based on his desire to present a method that produced more consistent and reliable results. Did he succeed? To those critical of his approach his advice was to offer the leash along with the request, "Here-show me!" To this day, it appears there are many willing to criticize but nothing yet has met the, "here-show me" standard.

What then was the "miscalculation" I referred to in the title of this piece? On page 17 Koehler refers to a group of "wincers" and on the next page he defines them as overly sensitive folks who, among other things, can interfere with the training process. He writes:

*"It is important that you be equipped to deal with these eyebrow archers-and deal with them you must, lest you be confused by their protests and weakened in your purpose of thoroughly training your dog...<snip> They range over most of the civilized world; generally one or more will be found close to where dogs are being worked. They often operate individually, but inflict their greatest cruelties when amalgamated into societies. They easily recognize each other by their smiles, which are as dried syrup on yesterdays pancakes. Their most noticeable habits are wincing when dogs are effectually corrected and smiling approvingly at each other when a dozen ineffective corrections seem only to fire a dog's maniacal attempts to hurl his anatomy within reach of another dog that could maim him in one brief skirmish. Their common calls are: "I couldn't-do-that, I-couldn't-do-that, and "Oh myyy-oh myyy." They have no mating call. This is easily understood."*

I believe the miscalculation was in underestimating the wincers ability to reproduce despite having no mating call. This group seems to increase their population by a process of infiltration, indoctrination and misrepresentation. Not only are they able to amalgamate into societies but they have become very good at organizing those societies into political machines capable of promoting their own brand of truth - determined by what is "politically correct." Koehler seemed to believe that presenting most people with the facts would result in logical decisions based on common sense. He didn't count on the ability wincers have of obscuring the truth, neutralizing the facts and burying the whole thing in a pit of emotional blackmail and political correctness.

You have now been presented with much to think about. I hope that some of the questions you have about training your dog have been answered and that some of the points I've made have proven thought-provoking enough as to give rise to more questions. It is now time for you to do your research, find a dog-trainer you are comfortable working with and go train your dog. Dogs everywhere are depending on our ability to get the job done and in the process, present our communities with well-mannered companions that will be welcome for many years to come - the alternative is simply not an option.