



A quarterly newsletter bringing you informative treats from the dog world, and keeping you up-to-date with our services

The long and winding road, *that leads to your dog*

By: *Caroline Spark and Diana Clark*

One of the many things I enjoy about my work is helping people find a new dog who will be their next companion, family dog, or service dog, or serve some other special purpose. Sometimes the right dog comes along at just the right time. But more often there are options to consider, decisions to make. Mistakes happen too. It can all feel quite overwhelming, especially if you have never had a dog before, recently lost a canine friend, or had to re-home a dog under difficult circumstances. It can take patience, perseverance, guidance and more than a little luck, but it's worth it in the end: You and a dog who is just right for you.

Recently I worked with Diana Clark, a psychotherapist, who was looking for a new companion and therapy dog after her beloved old dog, Strider, died at the age of sixteen.

Here's Diana's story:

I waited two months before I felt ready to begin the search for a new dog. I made a list of what I was looking for: female, mixed breed, two to five years old, housebroken, good manners indoors and outside, quiet, friendly with adults, kids and dogs, good in the car. I contacted breed-specific rescue groups, shelters, and asked service dog organizations about career change dogs. I looked on-line daily, but three weeks later, I hadn't found a single dog that I wanted to meet.

Then a beautiful two-year old female Australian Shepherd mix showed up at a local shelter. Her description said that she came from a stable home, and was housebroken, shy, but good with children and dogs. I rushed to the shelter two hours before it opened, but someone had already adopted her. Instead I adopted her sister, who was described as "exactly the same dog." As it turned out, Lily was afraid of everyone, including me, and especially children. I worked with her for three months, learning as much as I could about fearful dogs. I consulted with veterinarians and a Tellington Touch practitioner, and sought behavioral advice. Lily remained more or less paralyzed by her fears. Finally, I realized that she might take months to trust me and really wasn't suited to therapy work. Sadly I decided to look for another home for her and continue my search.

This time I was determined to find a dog who was a good fit for my lifestyle and therapy practice, as well as see Lily settled in a home that suited her better than mine. It was helpful to get professional advice on what to look for, what to avoid, and how to read between the lines of Petfinder ads for dogs needing new homes. For example, "shy" might mean anything from somewhat timid to terrified of everything. "Good with kids" might mean friendly and confident around children in general – or only in the family in which the dog grew up. It was also helpful to be encouraged to wait until I was sure I had made a real connection with a dog, even if that meant waiting many more months.

As it turned out, it wasn't long before I struck gold – twice. First, Lily found a new home with people who specialize in Collie rescue, know about rehabilitating fearful dogs, and live on acreage with three other well-loved rescue dogs. That same weekend, Lily's new family received an inquiry about re-homing a six-month old female Collie. A couple in Eugene had purchased two Collie pups from a breeder, but were overwhelmed by the demands of caring for three children under the age of ten and two rambunctious puppies. Even though I hadn't been considering a puppy or a purebred dog, I drove to Eugene to meet Tara. It was love at first sight!

I had learned a lot from my experiences with Lily. Instead of making a snap decision under pressure, I spent the afternoon with the family, observing the puppies. I saw that Tara was calm and confident, great with children and dogs. She had been to a puppy class, was crate trained, and walked well on a leash. Much as I was tempted, I didn't bring Tara home with me that day, but went back to Portland to give it more thought and get more professional advice, especially about how I could integrate such a young dog into my therapy practice. Meanwhile, the family had a chance to say goodbye to Tara. When I brought her home on Mother's Day, everything was ready for her. Right away, she was able to settle in with me, now she joins in psychotherapy sessions like a pro.

Did I get everything on my ideal dog list? No, she gets into puppy mischief, barks when she's excited, and gets carsick. Just as Strider had his behavior challenges and quirks, and as we all do. Is she perfect for me? Yes! I am very grateful for Caroline's guidance and encouragement through this process, and my friends, family and clients who have supported me on the journey to Tara.



"There is no faith which has never yet been broken, except that of a truly faithful dog." - Konrad Lorenz

[Living with Dogs]

Will Work For Food

Does your dog scarf down meals in mere seconds? Then both of you are missing out. For dogs, eating should be work. First of all because searching and hunting for food is natural for canines whose ancestors spent the majority of their time this way. And second of all—and here's the major benefit to you—switching to a work-to-eat strategy keeps your dog wonderfully occupied during your absences. That means he won't be splitting apart the couch cushions or getting into the trash or barking up a storm at the squirrels in the garden. In other words, you won't return home to a stack of written complaints from your neighbors.

Instead of just serving up your dog's meals, try feeding him in treat puzzles or Kongs that he gets when you're not home. This way, your dog will spend half his day retrieving his food and the other half sleeping off the mental effort. The result? A calmer, more content dog.

The key to a successful work-to-eat program is to start simple and only gradually increase the level of difficulty. You can go low-tech by hiding your dog's food under a laundry basket or cardboard box, or inside an empty cereal box. Or you can use interactive food toys like BusterCubes and Kongs.

Kongs in particular are great because you can easily make the food retrieval task more difficult—and more rewarding—by varying the type of stuffing and the tightness of the layers. An easy Kong might contain loose kibble and chicken bits and be plugged by peanut butter or wet food. An advanced Kong might be a many-layered masterpiece that includes Natural Balance cubes, dog biscuits, wet food, and your dog's favorite table scraps if you indulge him in such culinary delights. (For recipe inspiration, visit kongcompany.com)

Cautionary note: Make sure anything you leave for your dog in your absence is age appropriate and safe. Supervise carefully at first, so you know your dog's chewing and other play habits. You might prefer to let your dog hunt for food before you leave home, so she's ready for a good nap when she's alone. If in any doubt, consult your veterinarian or behavior specialist.



[Did You Know]

These Remarkable Things About Dogs?

Hot air. Dogs have sweat glands between their paws, not, as commonly believed, in their tongues. But they do cool themselves somewhat by panting, which allows heat to escape through their breath.

Trifold protection. Dogs have three eyelids. The third one, a thin membrane that can extend across the eyeball, is there to keep the eye protected and lubricated.

Born to run. Like other running animals, dogs have no clavicles and have shoulder blades that are unattached to the skeleton for greater flexibility.

A singular snout. Your dog's nose print is as unique as the human fingerprint and can be used equally well for identification.

[A World of Dogs]

A Dog's World View

How often have you found yourself thinking your dog is sad because he gazes at you with mournful eyes? That a sigh signals boredom? We are prone to projecting human emotions onto animals. It's hard not to, because our ability to imagine what dogs might want is limited by our knowledge of their experience of the world. Not that dogs don't have feelings or thoughts; they surely do. But we get into difficult territory when we interpret canine expressions and behavior by our own standards and then proceed to scold, comfort, discipline, outfit, or medicate our dogs based on our faulty assumptions. Despite the best of intentions, we might do more harm than good—or at least miss the mark by a mile.

How can we adopt a more canine perspective? A good first step would be to better understand what the world "looks like" or rather, smells like, to dogs. A dog's sense of smell is their window on the world. It's not just that dogs pick up more than we do with their two to three hundred million scent receptors, compared to our paltry six million. Or that the very mechanics of their noses are so different from ours. Rather, a dog's whole world is a web of complex smells. Objects are first assessed not by eyeballing or handling but by sniffing. Time is a matter of smell—strong means new, weak means old, older, ancient. We humans each have our own signature odor, as distinct to a dog as a fingerprint to the FBI. Hence dogs' ability to track a person's route through a crowded street days, even weeks, later.

A dog's world is fascinating and you don't need a degree in ethology to explore it. Books by Temple Grandin, Alexandra Horowitz, Marc Bekoff, or Jean Donaldson can serve as excellent initiations into the world of dogs. After all, as nature writer and essayist Edward Hoagland said:

"In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train him to be semihuman. The point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly a dog."



[Dogs in Action] Herding

Few things are more satisfying than knowing you've put in a good day's work, especially when you get to do something for which you feel uniquely suited. Herding breeds and breed mixes are made (literally) to herd. People who share their lives with these energetic and intelligent dogs report that no amount of off-leash activity induces a fraction of the blissful tiredness in their dogs that they see after a couple of rounds on the field herding sheep (or goats, ducks or geese). Given the number of herding dog breeds—the AKC lists 24, but there are more than 70 worldwide—and their popularity as pet companions, it's not surprising that many people take up herding recreationally.

A sheepdog trial commonly involves using whistles and calls to direct your dog to move three sheep through an obstacle course of slatted panels and a Y-shaped plywood chute into a pen. But there are many different herding events and different courses within each type. Also, plenty of enthusiasts never compete, but simply go once a week to have fun with their dogs.

Interested in herding with your dog? Google the term plus your locale—or check out herding breed associations' websites for info on sheepdog or cattle dog trials.

[Healthy Dog] Keeping Breath Fresh

Bad breath is a common but highly treatable problem in dogs. The smell, caused by bacteria in your dog's mouth, stomach, or lungs, most often signals a dental or gastric issue. Sudden or unusually foul breath, however, can indicate serious illness. In such cases, a visit to the vet is important. Don't assume that unpleasant "dog breath" is normal and something you have to live with. Think of your dog's oral hygiene as you would your own: An integral part of daily well-being and long-term health. Some prevention tips:

1. Feed your dog high-quality food.
2. Brush your dog's teeth regularly. Every day is ideal; twice a week is a minimum.
3. Give your dog hard chew toys. Chewing is nature's teeth-cleaning tool for dogs.
4. Use breath-improvement products. Good ones exist, but do your research so you don't buy something that's essentially a biscuit and nothing more.



DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

German Shepherd Dog

A recent breed (officially created in 1899), the German Shepherd Dog is popular around the world—and has long been in the Top 10 of AKC's most registered breeds. In this country, early silver-screen stars like Strongheart and Rin Tin Tin boosted the GSD's status. Athletic, hard working, highly trainable, and with a keen sense of smell, the GSD excels as a working dog, distinguishing himself in tracking, detection, and search & rescue. Though the GSD is the quintessential law-enforcement dog, he also finds time to goof around. A GSD, for example, holds the record for most golf balls swallowed (28, at a 2004 tournament – and yes, she did recover after surgery!) GSDs can be found throughout popular culture, from comic books (Batman's Ace the Bat Hound) to blockbusters like the post-apocalyptic science fiction movie I Am Legend.

To give a German Shepherd Dog a home, search online for your local rescue organization.



Our Services

City Dog Country Dog specializes in providing training, behavior and quality-of-life solutions for dogs and their human families in Portland and on the Central Oregon Coast.

[About] **Caroline Spark**

Owner of City Dog Country Dog, Caroline has nearly 30 years experience helping people solve problems, meet learning goals, and achieve positive change. With a PhD in psychology and a background in counseling and adult education, she has also studied extensively in the field of dog training and behavior, and has a Diploma in Advanced Canine Behavioral Sciences from the Companion Animal Sciences Institute. She is also proud to acknowledge shelter dogs as some of her best teachers. Caroline is a Certified Pet Dog Trainer (CPDT-KA) through the Association for Pet Dog Trainers, a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC) through the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants, a Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner, and an AKC Canine Good Citizen evaluator. Caroline knows from personal experience the stresses and joys of living with and rehabilitating dogs with behavior problems. She brings understanding, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, and a spirit of play to her work with dogs and people.

Contact Caroline@CityDogCountryDogTraining.com for solutions to training and behavior problem and to find out more about City Dog Country Dog's services.

City Dog
Country Dog

TRAINING SOLUTIONS FOR BUSY LIVES



[Tips & Tools] *How To Pill Your Dog*

If you can, sneak pills into your dog either by getting chewable medication from your vet, mixing the meds in with your dog's meal, or sticking the pill inside a soft treat like cheese or hot dog. If that doesn't work, the procedure is:

1. Hold the pill with one hand. Place that hand on your dog's lower jaw, the other on his upper jaw. Lift up his head.
2. Open your dog's mouth and put the pill to the side of the tongue as far back as you can reach. Quickly remove your hand and close your dog's jaw.
3. Keep your dog's head tilted upward and his jaws closed. Encourage him to swallow by gently stroking his throat downward with the other hand. As soon as you think your dog has swallowed the pill, release him and offer him a yummy treat.

(Instructions courtesy of ASPCA)

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