

Beginner One

Instructor

Steve Stout
jessebae@sbcglobal.net
812-454-1626

Assistant

Robin Mello

Introduction

All our trainers are volunteers. We do this because we love dogs and we want to help everyone who has a dog to have the best human-canine relationship possible. My first dog was a wonderful crossbreed that I found in 1979. My first entrance into formal obedience training began in 1994 with my first Doberman. We had our first obedience trial in 1996 and since then I've trained more than 7 of my own Dobermans. Now I'm training my first Chinese Crested.

Dogs don't think like humans no matter how much we love them and how much they are devoted to us. So we need to learn to think like dogs. Training is all about *Communication*; you need to learn what your dog is thinking and to be able to communicate on his level.

All relationships have a hierarchy. Even in democracies there are always *Leaders*. To be successful in training you must be the *Leader* in your relationship. Like all relationships, the strength is built by the degree and nature of interaction. Ultimately, the end result of your interactions should and must be pleasant for your dog. Training should be enjoyable for both of you. Leave self-criticism and doubt behind. We will all make mistakes and that is good because Mistakes are an Opportunity for us to learn.

We use Motivation in our training to encourage our dogs to Work (do what we want). Motivation is whatever Drives your dog. We all have *Drives*. Some of us are driven by money, by relationships, by "success", etc. Dogs have 3 categories of *Drive*, Prey, Pack and Defense.

(From volhard.com) The various behaviors that your dog has in each *Drive* will determine his personality and how he perceives the world.

Behaviors of **Prey Drive** (associated with hunting, killing and eating) are activated by motion, sound and smell:

- Seeing, hearing, tracking, **chasing** anything that moves, pouncing, scenting, high-pitched barking, biting, killing, jumping up, pulling down, **shaking**, tearing and ripping apart, carrying, **eating**, digging and burying.

NOTE: We use chasing, shaking and eating for motivation in our training.

Beginner One

Pack Drive consists of:

- Reproduction and adhering to a social hierarchy governed by rules of behavior to *assure order*. The dog works with members of his pack (your family).

Pack Drive is stimulated by Rank Order. Physical contact, playing, as well as, licking are all part of Pack Drive. A dog with many of these behaviors follows you around the house, is happiest when with you, loves to be petted and groomed, and likes to work with you. He may be unhappy when left alone for long periods.

NOTE: We use physical contact (petting, grooming) and playing in our training. We also use verbal praise and verbal commands.

Defense Drive is governed by the instincts for survival and consists of both fight and flight behaviors. Defense drive is more complex than Prey or Pack drive, especially in a young dog. Fight behaviors tend to not be fully developed until the dog is over two years of age [NOTE: post-adolescence], although tendencies towards these behaviors will be seen at an earlier age.

Examples of Fight Behavior:

- Dog “stands tall”, stares at other dogs, likes to “strut his stuff”. He will stand his ground with his ears and whiskers pointed forward and his tail held up. He will go towards unfamiliar objects or situations, and his hackles will go up from his shoulders to his neck. He may guard his food, toys or territory from other dogs or *People*, and may dislike being petted or groomed. Such a dog will lie in front of doorways and other places, making his owner walk around him.

Examples of Flight Behavior:

- Demonstrate that the dog is unsure. Hackles that go up the full length of the body, not just the neck, hiding or running away from new situations, a dislike of being touched by strangers or a general lack of confidence. Young dogs tend to exhibit more flight behavior than older dogs. Freezing is generally considered inhibited flight behavior.

NOTE: We constantly observe our dog’s behavior to assess what drives are at work and to what degree. When we see Defense Drive, we must identify the cause and take the appropriate action to lessen the intensity of the stimulus (cause). If you wish to assess your dog’s Personality you can find questions and assessment tools on volhard.com. All these drives are always present but the Situation will affect how the drives will determine your dog’s behavior.

Beginner One

For most of the commands that you want your Dog to know, he needs to be in Pack Drive, that is, doing something for you – walking on leash without pulling, sit and stay, go lie down and come when called. You don't want your dog to be in Prey or Defense drives when teaching this.

Prey Drive behaviors, although not necessary for basic obedience commands, come in handy in the training of a dog that has few Pack behaviors. Through the use of a treat or toy, you can exploit prey behaviors to teach a Pack Exercise.

Bringing Out Drives:

1. Prey Drive is elicited by the use of *motion* – hand signals (down or come) – a *high pitched tone* of voice, or an object of attraction (anything the dog will actively work for, such as a *toy or food*, chasing or being chased, and leaning backward with your body.
2. Pack Drive is elicited by *physical affection, verbal praise and smiling* at your dog. Grooming and *Playing* bring out Pack drive behaviors.
3. Defense Drive is elicited by leaning over the dog, either from the front or side, checking (a sharp tug on the leash) or a harsh tone of voice.

Switching Drives:

When your dog becomes distracted by a strong stimulus (for example, a squirrel), you may have to use Defense Drive to get him back into Pack Drive until he has learned to do it on command. Learning is difficult, if not impossible, when your dog is in Flight behavior. Body posture and deep tone of voice are usually enough for this dog and should not be checked. (End volhard.com)

My comments are formatted as NOTE. I have italicized items that I particularly wish you to absorb. There is much more information at volhard.com. Please note that I am endorsing the information I have included, but specifically nothing else that you may find on this site. Understanding Drives in dogs does not happen overnight but only by time and effort invested in observing and interacting.

Some Beginners may well feel that is too much information and that they “just want to train my dog to behave”. While I understand that and felt much the same when I started, I grew to see that communication requires knowing your dog.