

## START OF TRANSCRIPT

AB Hello and welcome to this audio program titled “Dog Training Down Under”.

My name is Anthony Buchalka and shortly, I will be introducing you to Basil Theofanides – a prominent professional dog trainer who will be sharing with you, some of the secrets to a well behaved dog.

Basil will start off by discussing dog psychology in an easy to understand yet highly practical manner. He will then take you through the steps of basic obedience dog training covering such commands as come, stay, sit, heel on lead, to name but a few. Basil will then discuss dog socialization and then move on to looking at some of the most common dog behaviour problems including potty training issues, excessive barking and chewing, digging, a dog who jumps up on visitors, food issues, the aggressive dog, to name but a few.

Let's move on to Basil now.

Basil Theofanides is Training Director and founder of Command Dog Training School, one of the largest and most successful professional dog training schools in Melbourne, Australia. Basil has been a nationally accredited trainer for 25 years and his experience includes the successful completion of a dog trainer instructor course, the establishment of a security firm specialising in man and dog teams which included the training of their security dogs.

In the 1980's, Basil developed a demonstration team of German Shepherd dogs and their trainers which conducted regular displays for the general public. Basil has also and continues to be involved in the successful training of countless breeds of dogs with their owners in obedience and behaviour problem solving classes. Basil also runs dog training instructor courses. Basil has appeared on many radio and TV programs and is an absolute wealth of knowledge on all aspects of dog training.

It's with great pleasure – I now introduce you to Basil Theofanides.

Hello Basil, how are you?

BASIL T I'm very well thanks Anthony. How are you?

AB I'm fine thank you. I'm quite excited to be able to interview you today. We have got quite a lot of material to cover. I would like to start by briefly getting you to describe your background in dog training.

BASIL T I have been a professional dog trainer and instructor for over 20 years. What started off as really a hobby and interest, developed into a career for me. We operate the Command Dog Training School here in Melbourne. It's a professional dog training organisation. We run everything from problem solving sessions, home training, group classes, basic, advanced and puppies. Also, we do offer certified instructor training courses for people that want to become dog training instructors.

I guess you could look at it from this point of view that a lot of the experience that we have gained over the years, we have been able to put into practice and develop our programs to obviously help the general public.

AB How long has your current school been running now?

BASIL T Our current school, Command Dog Training School was established about the mid 80's. Well, it's virtually 20 years now, although I've been doing professional dog training since about 1983.

AB I would like to begin by asking you the question a lot of dog owners have is, “How do dogs learn?”

BASIL T It's a great question and it's something that anybody with a dog should really understand the concept of.

Many people think in human terms when they come to disciplining their dogs or communicating to their dogs or training to train them. It's what we

call anthropomorphism and that is when you do really treat the dog as though it's a human.

By doing that, you really then start to become very disappointed because the dog doesn't really understand our ideals of right and wrong. So dogs essentially learn through association and experience and that simply means that they learn to associate good experiences in given situations or bad experiences in given situations and of course, learn accordingly.

A good example would be where people might pick their leash up to take their dog for a walk and what does the dog do? Gets excited and that simply is because the dog has learnt to associate that leash with a pleasant experience and that's going for a walk.

On the other hand, if let's say the dog that doesn't like his bath and you are running a bath for him and you stand by the bathroom and you say “come on mate, in you get”. The chances are he is going to look at you, listen to the sound of the bath and obviously he has learnt from that experience previously that it's unpleasant and instead of coming to you, he is going to go the other way.

So that's really two simple cases, I guess you could say that we can demonstrate how dogs do learn, whether they are good or bad associations.

AB So dogs do have a memory then?

BASIL T They do. They have got a great memory but it's really determined by consistency in terms of being taught the same thing numerous times for them to understand something and they also do remember good experiences and bad experiences over a great length of time.

AB So Basil, would I then be right in saying that dog owners should not credit their dogs with the ability to reason or understand right from wrong?

BASIL T That’s exactly right. I guess let’s think of it from this point of view.

Let’s say I was running late for an appointment. I got to my appointment and I said to the person:

“Look, I’m really, really sorry. The car had problems, I couldn’t start it and then I got a red light. Then I got stopped by the police and I got pulled over and that’s why I’m late”.

So we can reason with this and then discuss this intelligently but you can’t go up to a dog, for example, you have come home from work and you have found that he has dug a big hole in the garden – go up to him and say “did you do this you naughty dog” and take him up to the hole, show him the hole and say “don’t do it again” and expect him to understand. They don’t have that concept.

The whole idea of teaching the dogs right from wrong is to, for example, catch the dog in the act of the misdeed and then reprimand the dog but just as quickly as you reprimand the dog, at the time of the misdeed, you also have to praise the dog when he has done the right thing otherwise he doesn’t understand the difference.

AB Okay, that does make a lot of sense.

Basil, you mentioned before dogs learn by association, repetition and experience and I imagine they can be positive or negative. Can you give us another example of a good association.

BASIL T Yes certainly.

A good association would be the leash. Everybody that walks their dog knows very well that as soon as you pick the leash up, the dog gets very excited and stimulated because he associates that leash with going for walks which he loves. So the leash is a good association.

On the other hand, conversely, a bad association can be seen where you

might take your dog for a drive in the car and he gets car sick and he throws up. All it takes is that one experience where he throws up, perhaps even as a young dog, and the next time you want to take him for a drive, he is reluctant to actually go near the car because of that bad experience. So his association with that car is one of throwing up – negative and therefore he wants to stay away.

AB A question comes to mind to me which is if dogs are learning largely by association, can these associations then be changed later on, Basil?

BASIL T Yes, certainly. A good point.

You can change good to bad associations or bad to good.

A good example, first of all, of a “good” association turning “bad” would be if you are walking your dog down the street on the leash, of course, and he starts to play up and as a disciplinary reaction you hit the dog with the leash on the nose to try and stop him from, say jumping or doing something you don’t want him to do.

So what you’ve done now, is you have just changed that perception or that association from good (the dog enjoys his walk with the leash) to one of bad because now he sees the leash as being obviously something of discomfort but he is going to be hit by it.

So the next day you take the leash and say “come on mate, let’s go for a walk” and he is less likely want to come to you. He is in fact, more likely to run away from you.

An example of a bad association to good. We look at the car scenario where the dog gets car sick. The way I would desensitise that dog to the car to create a good would one, a good association would be to get him to hop into the using a treat. Don’t actually drive anywhere. Then get him to hop out and that’s the end of that first training session. Then repeat that over and over again until he is jumping into the car excitedly and quite

happily. Once you have done that, then he sits in the car for may be 2 or 3 minutes without driving and then you hop out and give him a reward. Then from there you can start the car up once he is inside but don't actually drive anyway. He sits there for 5 minutes and you just build on that. So you can see where we are heading with this. The next thing you know, you are driving short distances to longer distances and then finally you drive to the local park where you let him out for a run.

So what you've done now is you have desensitised him to being car sick and you have created a good association with that vehicle.

AB The other type of association that people may have heard of is area associations.

BASIL T Area association is where a dog has either a good or bad experience in a given area.

From a training point of view, we explain to people that they must train their dogs in a variety of areas, not just simply go to their training ground or training establishment and just practice in the backyard. That's not enough because the dog perceives that he only has to listen to you in those given areas. If you train your backyard, down the local park, in the street – in other words, everywhere you would normally take him, what you are doing is reinforcing all the correct behaviours in a variety of areas which means then the dog is more likely to listen to you 90% of the time. So that's a good example of what we call area association.

AB Terrific. Just moving along now.

What about tones of voice? Humans have lots of tones of voice, men and woman are quite different in the deepness of their voice. Is that important?

BASIL T It is. A lot of people say to me that “Oh look, my husband has really best control of the dog and I don't” and that is because, in many cases, a lot of

woman don't have the ability to actually deepen their voice. Because dogs do communicate quite a lot using their voice and their body language, what we need to do is try and almost, I guess mimic the sounds that they make to get the most out of them. So from a training perspective, we have developed three simple tones:

1. Corrective Tone

A corrective tone Which is a deep growly sound. So when you are trying to tell your dog he is doing something wrong, you would say “no” with a deep growl. If you can't get that deep growl, what you do is lower your chin, so it comes close to your chest and then just use as best a baritone voice as possible and say “nooooo”. It doesn't have to be a loud voice because dogs have got great hearing. It takes practice to be able to get that tone right. So that's your corrective tone.

2. Praise Tone

You have a praise tone which is converse to the corrective tone. It has to be high pitched and happy because when a dog barks in a happy sound, it's usually in a high pitch voice. If you think about the dog that is excited because he is going to walk he will start to wine, he will start to sound like this ... and he will start to bark in a high pitched voice. So that's signifying that he excited. So we say to the dog “he is a good boy, he is a good dog” nice and high pitched and happy. It has to be genuine and effective, otherwise it's not going to work. That's your praise tone.

3. Command Tone

The command tone is the tone you use to teach your dog an exercise. Such as sit, or stay or drop and it has to be given in a firm authoritative sound. So you would say to your dog for example, “sit, stay, drop”. Again, you don't have to yell because they have great hearing but you do have to get that tone right.

Here is an example of what not to do.

When you discipline your dog, command the dog and then praise the dog all in the same tone - “no”, “good dog”, “sit”, “good”. A lot of people do that.

Or they go the other way and they say “sit”, “good boy”, “no”, “sit” good boy” - it’s all the same sound. There is no definition. The dog can certainly learn from it but it’s going to take him three times as long.

AB I can see there are a lot of people who love their dog so much that they don’t like raising their voice. That could be a concern or a difficulty in training if they are not able to have that firm stricter voice then?

BASIL T That’s exactly right. A lot of people are a little bit perhaps too soft with their dogs and they end up with strife. The dog not listening. The dog basically running rings around them. But you don’t have to use a loud voice. You don’t have to yell and scream at your dog. You don’t have to get angry with your dog to get the dog to learn and to respond you. You just have to apply those tones and apply them correctly and at the right moment. If you do that and you are consistent, it’s amazing how the dog will start to listen to you.

AB Basil, is there much variation in the ability of dogs to learn? I'm thinking of the younger dog and the older dog? Because some people buy a dog that is a year or two old, for example.

BASIL T There is an old adage “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks”. You can really. I will give you an example of young dog – old dog.

Years ago, I had an old geriatric German Shepherd dog, Al. He was about, I think, 9 at the time or 10 and I had a very young German Shepherd puppy at the time who was about 6 months old. I was teaching a thing called Fly Ball which is now very popular where the dog has to go up to this contraption which has got a lever and a tennis ball and he has



to hit this pedal which then trips the lever which then flicks the tennis ball up and he catches it. It took me 10 minutes to teach the young dog, Arnie, to actually use the pedal on command. When I said “pedal, trip it and then catch it”. But with Al, the old 9 year old, it took me half that time, 5 minutes. So it’s amazing. Even as an old dog, you can still train or teach that dog a lot. But provided you have already taught the dog and had that dog learn obedience training. But if a dog is simply left to his own devices, he is not going to listen to you. He is not interested in listening to you.

So you can teach young dogs – they have got a great capacity to learn but then older dogs also have a good capacity provided you have established that early foundation.

Having said that, with puppies, the best opportunity you have in teaching them a lot is when they are going through their critical periods of development which is between birth and 16 weeks of age. Or in the case of owning a puppy, usually from 8 to 16 weeks, as you tend to purchase puppies at that age.

AB That was actually my next question, Basil. We have covered how dogs learn and we walked about association, repetition.

What is the importance of that early training period, often called socialization?

BASIL T Yes, certainly.

It’s actually what we call conditioning and socialization. It’s the imprinting period or it’s also known as critical periods or developmental periods. Puppies will go through 4 periods of development from the time they are born up to 16 weeks of age. Each of those stages of development, the puppy is going through a great deal of development in terms of its ability to socialize, interact, not be scared of noises and sounds and different situations. Its ability to learn and take things on and obviously to become

used to the human part of it's life.

### Stage One

The first stage is between birth and 3 weeks of age – what we call neonatal. Puppies really rely on the mother for everything. The mother gives it food and warmth and also helps puppies eliminates waste. But also puppies open up their eyes in that period. They get their first glimpse of life. They start walking around and they start reacting to sound about the twenty first day.

By 3 weeks of age, they have also learnt that there other siblings around. They have learnt to interact with them because they are climbing over them to get to their mother's teats and so, and so they are already starting to develop this association with their own kind.

### Stage 2

Between 3 weeks and 8 weeks of age – that's the second critical period. The puppies need to stay in the kennel environment in that period because they learn first of all to interact, they learn hierarchy structure, what we call “pack instinct”. They learn to be subordinate to the mother and also they need their mother because the mother is still feeding the puppies, teaching the puppies and disciplining the puppies.

What I find is if puppies are taken away too soon, say before they complete that second period, they are taken away too soon from their litter, they can't make up for that sudden loss of that family environment and they could end up either being completely nervous of other dogs in the future or aggressive towards other dogs because they have missed that important canine socialization side of it.

AB That's an important point Basil, because there is some breeders out there try and sell their dogs as young as six weeks of age.

BASIL T That’s exactly right and it’s just so wrong. You need to give that puppy the best life start possible. The best life start is to let those puppies go to a new home between 7 and 8 weeks of age. 8 weeks being the optimum time.

The other thing is too, there is a law here in Victoria that says pet shops and dog breeders aren’t allowed to sell puppies under 8 weeks of age, but there is always going to be those that obviously don’t play by the law.

AB So you mentioned those first two periods:

0 to 3 weeks; and

3 weeks to 8.

What comes after that?

BASIL T Stage 3

Then the puppy goes to it’s new home at 8 weeks age. So 8 to 12 – that’s the third critical period and this is where now the puppy has to make some major adjustments to a new environment – different smells, different sounds and it could be going through what we call a “fear period” as well because it’s left it’s brothers and sisters and its mother. It is important that when it does go to that new home, that the new family starts to condition that puppy to the different sounds of the home very carefully, very gradually – not to simply allow everybody to rush up to the puppy and pick it up and hold it and wanting to interact with it.

In the first week particularly, it just needs to get used to everybody in the pup’s time, not in their time. Once the puppy has established quite confidentially that this is his new home, and it won’t take long, other things that have to happen, things like toilet training, allowing puppy certain behaviours and discouraging other behaviours, such as not allowing the puppy for example on the couch or on the bed. Teaching the puppy that it has to sleep on its own bed because this is all part of establishing pecking

order and also establishing clearly what the puppies are allowed or not allowed to do.

Other things that have to happen is conditioning puppies to the outside world. Contrary to what a lot of vets will tell you, they say “don’t take the puppy out until it’s had it’s all it’s shots”. In many cases, if you do that, you have missed the boat because by 16 weeks of age, the puppy’s critical period has gone and you can’t go back and retrieve what you failed to do for it. So you need to take that puppy out into the outside world. Let it walk on hard surfaced areas, obviously. Get it used to different sounds – traffic and people. So, in other words, wherever you would normally go with your puppy as an older dog, you teach the puppy to accept as a young pup.

AB Okay, that’s terrific. I think that will help a lot of people out there realising that imprinting stage is very important.

We might move on now to basic obedience training.

Would you mind explaining to people what it actually is and why it’s important?

BASIL T Basic obedience training is, as it says, it’s really fundamental training that first of all teaches the dog to respond to a handler’s commands, and just really doing some basic exercises that all dogs should be able to do with their owners. Things such as teaching the dog not to pull on the leash. That’s a very basic exercise. Teaching I’m to sit, that’s very basic. To come, to lie down, and even to stay. The basic obedience exercises really form the basis of establishing clearly to the dog that it is at the bottom of the pecking order and it must still listen to the leader or the pack leader or the human owner as being the higher member of the family.

AB What age should dogs begin this basic obedience course or training?

BASIL T Basic obedience can be started anywhere from say, 16 weeks and up.

Our programs allow people to start from 18 weeks and there is no real upper parameter from 7 years of age, people that have perhaps purchased a dog from a shelter and they need to do some training with it. The minimum age would be about 16 weeks age – the maximum age it really depends on the dog.

AB Before we go into some step by step explanations of each of those different commands, how long would the average dog owner need to spend on obedience training?

BASIL T Again, apart from the actual process of going to the course, our programs run for 10 weeks or 10 x 1 hour sessions and we have other programs that run for say, 8 x 1 hour sessions. But in terms of practising they should only need to practise 5 to 10 minutes of the exercises that they are taught each week everyday. It's not much to ask apart from the dog's regular walks. If they do that, they will achieve proficiency in all the said exercises.

AB What equipment would people need to get?

BASIL T It really depends on the person and also on the dog.

There are three types of equipment that we use.

We use heat halters which fit around the muzzle and they are adjusted to the dog's size.

We use soft training collars by a company called Black Dog which are very good collars, particularly for puppies and also for more older dogs which might be a bit more sensitive.

We also use correction collars. They are also incorrectly known as choker chains or chain collars – slip chains.

We use all those three pieces of equipment. The reason is that each of those pieces of equipment used correctly has great benefit in the training

of dogs and obviously allowing people to allow them to control them.

AB Can this training be done at home or is it better that people approach an organization such as yours to get expert help?

BASIL T I think most people can still train their dog at home but the difficulty is you can't see your own mistakes. You might think you are doing it correctly, but if you are making a mistake consistently, then you're not going to get very far with your training.

Also, a lot of people that may have had dogs in the past, they get themselves another dog because maybe their dog has died or they haven't had a dog for years and what may have worked okay for that dog, doesn't necessarily work okay for the new one because they are all diverse in character.

So I would say “give it a shot” but if you are having difficulties they need to contact a professional dog trainer that can assist them.

AB So would I be right in saying that basic obedience training is really going to help you develop a dog that basically does what it's told and realizes that you're the pack leader and it just behaves in a proper manner?

BASIL T That's right. It's really what all dog owners should be able to have instilled in their dog. It's really training for the pet dog. We're not talking about competition dogs, we're just talking about pet dog ownership.

AB We might move into some of the explanations of some of the steps that you would teach in basic obedience training. We might start with the “come” command. If you could just explain how someone could practice this at home.

BASIL T There is a couple of ways we can tackle it. First of all, even with young dogs and also older dogs, you can use either treats to motivate the dog but the difficulty is there that if the puppy or the dog isn't weaned off the treats, it will only work for you if you've got food. So that's a bit of a pitfall.

But what you can do is simply take a treat in your hand, show the dog the treat and obviously he is going to be focused on you. Walk backwards or run backwards briskly and say to your dog his name and then the command “come” but the command has to be in a happy lively manner, so it would be like this “Rover, Come – Good Boy” and you praise the immediate response that gives you. You keep running backwards about may be 5 or 6 paces praising every response the dog gives you. So it would be like this “Rover, Come. He’s a good boy. Come. Good boy”. You have run back 5 spaces, you stop. You give the reward to the puppy or the dog the treat, and you pat the dog and you reward the dog by voice as well.

So all along, the puppy or the dog is getting some treats, a pat and also “boy” at the same time and you build on that. But one thing about the recall, many people make mistakes with it. What they do is they tend to call their dog to discipline them. That’s a pitfall because imagine, if you call your dog and you say “Rover, come here, come here you naughty dog”. Of course, poor old Rover, he is going to get so scared and anxious, he thinks “well, what have I done wrong?” and he is going to be reluctant to come to you.

So one thing about the recall, only, only ever call your dog when you know when he is ready to come back to you and also only call him in a happy and lively manner and you build on that. That’s your first step.

Finally, you can then, once the dog is reliable, you can hide from the dog, call him. He looks for you, he finds you. You praise him. You don’t have to give him a treat reward but you might give him his toy and give him a play. You might throw the ball for him. May be that’s what motivates him. But whatever it is, it’s got to be a positive experience. So that’s the best way to start off that recall exercise.

AB We might move on then to the next command, the “sit” command.

**BASIL T** Sit can be done a number of ways. You can use guidance and then praise where you guide the dog into the action or you can use a food reward. The quickest and easiest is just to establish the exercise first and then you can either shape it into a sit at heel. You can take a treat or his food bowl and you hold the food bowl up so he has to look up at the food and you don't move your hand, you just keep it up at say chest height and wait until the dog puts his hind quarter down, in other words he puts his bottom on the ground and soon as he does that, you give him the reward and praise him. So what you're doing is waiting until the dog does the action but you don't give any commands at this stage, then reward him.

Every time you are presenting the food, he is going to learn again, using association and experience that if you present the food and he sits he is going to get the treat. The next thing you know, after doing it 2 or 3 times, his bottom is going to hit that deck so quick because he wants that treat. Once you have established that and you have shaped that behaviour, the next thing you need to do is to bring in a command and you do this by again, holding the food out, as soon as the dog's hindquarter hits the deck, or just a second before he hits the deck, you say “sit” in a firm sound. The dog sits and you reward. So then he starts to learn to associate that command with the action that he has already learnt and then you withhold the treat. You just simply say “sit” and when he carries it out, you reward him by praising and patting him and may be giving him a play.

So that's the easiest way to establish a sit command.

**AB** Can that sit be taught with a hand signal as well?

**BASIL T** Yes, you can use hand signals but you have got to be very clear with hand signals. You have got to develop hand signals for all your exercises and make sure you are consistent because a lot of people tend to use the same hand signal without realising for everything. Such as point the finger and saying “sit”. Pointing the finger and disciplining the dog and saying “no” or pointing the finger down and saying “drop”. All that is fairly, fairly



similar. But if you are going to use a hand signal for the sit, it can be done a variety of ways. If you're in front of the dog you simply hold a hand with a closed fist and you might bring the hand up like a salute, straight up in the air, or like you are waving to say somebody and say “sit” at the same time. So he is going to follow that hand as it goes up and he is going to track it and then he is naturally going to sit for you. So then he associates that hand signal with the command but you don't bring hand signals until the dog has actually learnt the exercise. That can be used as a visual aid during intermediate stages of training.

AB What about the stand command then?

BASIL T Stand is very useful because you can teach your dog to stand to be examined by the vet or yourself or to groom the dog and so it's a very useful exercise.

A simple way to do it is by as you are grooming your dog, you can crouch down and just gently put your hand on the dog's tummy and as he stands anyway, because it's quite natural for many dogs to do that, as you place your hand on their tummy, you say “stand” and just brush them gently, provided they like the brush and you reward the dog by just praising him and saying “oh you're a good boy – stand. Oh, good dog, very good”. That's a simple way of teaching the stand exercise.

There is a number of ways. You can use guidance, you can use food reward to actually get the dog into the action - in a similar way that you do the sit, you shape the behaviour and then command him. I think the easiest way is to just simply hand under the tummy gently, the dog stands, pat him, praise and just a light brush.

AB You mentioned a few minutes the command “drop”. I imagine that would be useful for people to have their dog drop, for example, when they are eating. They can have their dog sit and drop so they sit there quietly. Would that be correct?

**BASIL T** Absolutely Anthony. It's an excellent exercise. It's a very subordinate style or type of exercise and I think every dog should be able to carry that out for their owners. And again, the easiest way is through association. You don't even have to handle your dog. If you simply wait until your dog is about to lie down and he gives you tell tail signs. At night when you're sitting around the TV or in your lounge room, your dog comes in and he goes to his bed and he starts to walk around in a circle, just before he lies down, and as soon as he starts to do that, you wait for the moment – as he lies down, you say “Drop. Good boy. He is a good boy”. Now, that's an easy way of teaching him over a period of time, that drop is a good exercise. You don't even have to physically handle the dog.

Another way if you want to expedite the exercise, is to have him sitting and just simply show him a treat. Bring it to his nose, draw the food directly to the ground, so he is going to follow it with his head and you end up with the hand with your food in between his front legs. Now, his head is bowing down there, then draw the hand forward so he has to stretch down to get to the food and generally, they will just simply lie down because it's easier for them to lie down and get to the food. As soon as he does that, you give him the reward but you don't say anything. You don't say “drop”. Then you repeat this until you get consistency with your hand movement down and in him lying down. Once you know he is reliable in that situation, then you bring the command in and you say “drop” as he lies down and give him a treat. Again, you gradually ween him off that food.

**AB** How long should a dog be able to remain the drop position?

**BASIL T** Initially, you would only need the dog there for a couple of seconds and then you give them a release command such as “finish” or “ok” and then praise him. So it doesn't matter if he gets up and then gradually he has to stay there longer to get the reward. You might have him down there for say, 5 seconds and then he gets his treat after he has dropped. Or otherwise it might be 10 seconds. Then finally, once your dog is used to it,

you should be able to even build up to 1 minute, even up to 2 minutes – like a drop exercise until you give him a release command.

AB Basil, where does the “stay” command fit in then in the scheme of things?

BASIL T Stay is an excellent exercise. You can teach your dog to stay whilst you're opening a door so you can get through. Teach him to stay whilst you are chatting to somebody. Teach him to lie down and then stay on his bed, for example, or on his mat so he learns that well he has got to remain there until you release him. That's where you would use or apply the stay exercise. It's quite simple really to teach him that.

You teach him from a sit position first, if you like. The dog is next to you sitting, he has already learnt to sit and he is quite steady there and just simply say “stay” without moving and then after about 3 or 4 seconds, you praise him and say “oh good boy” and you repeat that every so often. Over maybe 3 or 4 minutes. Then once you have done that, the next stage will be to say “stay” and just step one step to the front and face him and then you return straight back. You pause 5 seconds you say “oh good boy” and you might even give him a little reward.

So what you've done is, you have already taught him to sit, he is already sitting there and staying virtually and then you step away from him so he learns, well “stay means remain here until you come back” and you build in that. That's the easiest way.

AB We have covered come, sit, stand, drop and stay. What about heel? Say someone is walking their dog. I imagine that's very important to get down pat fairly quickly.

BASIL T Sure. Walking at heel or you could even do social walking. Walking at heel means having the dog walk so it's front legs are level with yours. My way of thinking is that that can be quite boring for the dog. Why not allow the dog to actually go to the end of the lead but still not pull you. That's called social walking. So social walking we teach the dog to go to the end

but then if he starts to pull he learns that the walk is going to cease. If you are using a head halter it's quite simple because all you're doing is you are saying “let's go” which is a command that you can use, you step forward with your left foot. Your dog moves with you and you praise him. As soon as he starts to rush and you know he is going to try and rush ahead, you stop and don't go any further and gently draw the leash towards you at the same height as the dog. The dog has to turn around and look at you because he is wearing the halter and as soon as he does that, you say “oh good boy” and then you change direction and go back the other way. So he starts to think “well, hang on, I'm not going any further. Every time I start to pull I have to stop”. So you are going to find that over a period of time, however long that period might be, he is going to learn that simply pulling gets him nowhere and changing direction he has to learn to follow you.

If you are using a correction chain, the timing of that correction is important because you have to be able to say “no” or “ah” before that leash tightens, before that chain tightens. Then you have to stop at the same time and give the leash a little jerk parallel with his back to reinforce. So think about this, you are saying “no” or “ah” then a click on the leash to reinforce the “ah”. The dog stops. You say “good boy”. Then you say “let's go” and continue again. He starts to pull and you repeat that until he stops.

AB Even if it means you going up the footpath stopping and starting?

BASIL T That's exactly right. What you're saying is “I'm not going any further if you are pulling” and then you change direction and go back the other way. In the end, he is going to get sick and tired of pulling because every time he pulls you change direction and you stop.

AB Basil, often when dogs are out walking or being trained, it seems they are very bored and not interested. Is there a way to make training more interesting for a dog?

BASIL T Absolutely. I think first of all, don't over train and always finish off on a good note.

Over training means training any longer than 10 minutes or 5 minutes on the same exercise. Dogs aren't like robots. You can't just simply program them and expect them to work for you. They do get bored just as people get bored. They do become inattentive and that can be sometimes exacerbated by the dog owner simply over tiring, or what we call nagging the dog. Nagging is something a lot of people do. Nagging is where they don't use the training equipment properly. If they are using for example, a chain collar and they are constantly jerking the dog or rattling the chain which simply nags the dog, they are using a monotonous voice, always the same tone. The same tone, “sit”, “no”, “good dog”. Of course, that just makes the dog very bored and inattentive.

Then the other aspect is that they are not giving the dog sufficient play at the end of an exercise. What we try and do in our courses is we say to people when you are practising, say if we are doing an hour's session with a group of people, we break that hour session into say, 8 segments of training. After every segment of say 5 minutes, they might do 2 minutes of play and the play can be simply throwing the ball for their dog. Obviously, they have to be on a leash so they wouldn't throw it too far, using a tug of war toy or a rope to play tug of war and then saying “give” so you are teaching the dog to give it back. But that toy has to be something the dog really loves and really wants. At the end of that play segment they say “give” and they put the toy away so the dog looks forward to the next segment.

It's what we call developing working happiness so the dog enjoys to do the exercise and training. When they are doing 10 minutes of practice, that 10 minutes can be broken up with 2 minutes of training and 1 minute of play and it's easy to rip that toy out of your back pocket and give them a play at the end of a 2 minute training session. Fun for the person and fun for the dog. Also they should revert to a well known like and liked exercise

at the end of any training segment so the dog always remembers the last thing has been the most pleasant and the play is obviously very important. All they have to do is say to their dog “finish” and the dog relates to that word “finish” in a happy voice and looks forward to that game.

AB Basil, would you be able to share some sociability exercises that would be useful?

BASIL T Yes certainly.

In a lot of cases, people you see them with their dogs. They meet another dog and the first thing they do is they tighten their leash up because they are concerned the dog is going to jump on another dog or they are concerned that the other dog is going to jump on their dog. So you are getting these leashes which are pulled tight. As soon as these leashes are pulled tight, it sends a signal to the dog “be on guard” and they are also restricting what we call area of independence that the dog needs. The dog is pulled closer to the owner, the dog gets more stressed and the next thing you know you’ve got a dog fight because the owner has actually triggered it by shortening that lead.

What people need to do is to relax the leash and keep the dogs on a loose lead. If your dog is an aggressive dog, that’s different. Then you have to put a muzzle on the dog to be able to do this exercise. But generally speaking, loose leads and let the dogs have a sniff. What will happen is, the first thing they will do, the dogs will go up to each other, they will sniff each other around the neck because that’s where the scent glands are and then they will move to the base of the tail where are the other scent glands and then they will walk around. Look for the signals. If the dog’s tail is up and they are walking in a stiff and rigid manner then there is a chance that there could be a bit of a fight with them because they are starting to sort of shape up to each other. But if their tails are wagging and they are getting excited, then that’s fine. You look for those signals as well where the tail is may be halfway down and just wagging and the ears are

pricked forward because the dog is alert and the mouth is slightly open. That's a happy dog.

Then what you do – allow them a quick sniff on the leash and then you encourage them to follow you away from the other dog and by doing that, you are teaching him “well, okay, you can have a bit of a sniff and hello but let's move away now”. You can simply say “let's go” and if he doesn't follow, take a treat, bring it to his nose and say “let's go” and he thinks “oh yes, I better follow that”. The next thing you know, you have taught the dog that's “let's go” is a positive thing and he is quite happy to come with you away from the other dog. That's a simple way of teaching your dog to interact and also on leash and also move away when you tell him. But they shouldn't be allowed to play on leash because then that teaches the dogs not to listen to you when they are on the lead which is not what you want with either.

AB We have covered a lot there Basil. Just briefly, so a dog who has successfully completed basic obedience course – I'm just thinking of the benefits a dog owner could expect, a mean a dog that's easier to look after, easier to walk?

BASIL T The benefits are really a lifetime because what you have done is you have taught the dog all these basic exercises. You can use all these exercises in day to day life with the dog and the more you use it, the more disciplined and the more obedient that dog is going to be a bigger part of your family. You are not going to have this out of control dog that won't listen to anybody, that does as he pleases, jumps on everybody as you go out the door which is not really what you want out of a companion. You will be able to have this dog coming inside, lying down by the fire with you and really, he will become a greater member to that family and to that household. So I think that's a far better thing to have. A small investment of your time and obviously a small investment in money but for a lifetime of gain.

AB Absolutely. Okay Basil, I think we've covered the obedience training very well. That leaves us directly on to one of the most pressing questions, I think dog owners have and that's management of the common behaviour problems.

I would like to start with toilet training. If you could just give the listeners some help where to start, particularly the new dog owner who has just come home with a pup.

BASIL T Sure, look toilet training is something that can be established quite early in the piece. In fact, with puppies it's the easiest, absolute easiest way of doing it. Puppies obviously in a kennel situation, they just wee and poo and the mother cleans up after them and then obviously the breeder will clean up after them anyway. So the puppies have learnt that it doesn't matter where they do it. But most puppies are fairly hygienic.

So what you do when you get your puppy home, the first thing should be to put in the backyard where you want him to go to the toilet. Not inside the house. Let him explore, let him go to the toilet and when he goes quietly say “oh, you're a good puppy” and then you can bring him inside. But then you've got to give that puppy every opportunity to go to the toilet. So in other words, every half an hour, that puppy has to be picked up, taken outside in the same spot to be allowed to relieve itself. But you could also bring a command in to teach the puppy to do it on command when it's older and it's a great way of speeding up the process rather than you having to wait there until it suits the puppy.

So you start saying to the puppy “hurry up” or “quick, quick” or “toilet” or whatever you want to say but make sure you are consistent and as the puppy starts to do it, you are still saying “quick, quick, quick, quick” and once he finishes going to the toilet and relieving himself, you say “oh good puppy” and then you bring him back inside. Then again, half an hour later you repeat the process even though the puppy may not feel like going, you still go through that procedure.



The other thing is to keep an eye out for tell tale signals that the puppy wants to go. That could be simply the puppy sniffing around, going around in a circle, having a bit of a sniff. It could be that he has just been fed and he is going to want to go to the toilet or he has just had a drink of water or another case is where the puppy has had a bit of a play. What they will do is they will play and all of a sudden they will stop, go to the toilet and before you know it, they have left a little puddle for you. So it is important that you, as a puppy owner, are aware of these situations and be vigilant and take that puppy out as often as possible.

Don't ever scold the puppy for doing it inside the house because by scolding it, you could end up with problems because the puppy will be so scared that it will actually stop itself from going to the toilet and become sick and I've seen that happen. If you do see the puppy going to the toilet inside a simple “ah ah” is sufficient without yelling, pick that puppy up in a gentle way and it's going to stop. Take it outside, the same position as last time, go through the procedure of “quick quick” and it may or may not continue and if it does you praise it. So that's one approach.

The other thing is, and I prefer not to use this, is to use newspapers. That's a pitfall. That's an old way. Using newspapers inside the house really teaches the puppy what? To do it on a newspaper inside which is not what we want. So you get rid of the newspapers.

Another way of doing it, and this is where I was able to toilet train my puppy using what we call a “crate training method”, you just have a normal transport crate for a puppy. You can have either a collapsible crate style of the plastic type which has got a handle on it and you teach the puppy for example at night to sleep in that crate. So you have his bedding in there and have that next to your bed and when the puppy wants to go to the toilet he will cry. That's when you open the crate door – you take him outside and he goes to the toilet and you bring him back inside, back inside his crate and close it. That way he can't simply go wondering at

night and just go to the toilet wherever he pleases.

AB What about through the day Basil? Would you use that through the day or just at night?

BASIL T During the day, if you're not going to be at home because you have to go to work, look, if your puppy is inside, what's going to happen, he is going to go to the toilet. You can't do anything about that. What you could do though, you could have a little enclosure for him, like a child's playpen and you can actually get now, playpens for puppies. It's quite amazing and they all link together like a little fence and you can have it inside. Yes, it's an excellent apparatus.

So you can have your puppy in there and if he is inside, may be just get a litter tray like you do for cats and put some granules in there that you can get from the pet shop. The puppy is then going to use that to go to the toilet and so that you are still controlling it a little bit more and you are ensuring the puppy doesn't simply go wondering everywhere, urinating and defecating inside the house. So that's what you can do if you're away during the day and he has to be left inside.

But if he is outside, then it's not really an issue because the puppy is already going to go somewhere outside, so you don't have that problem. If he is outside obviously you will need a kennel for him.

These are the things that you need to be able to do with your puppies. In fact, even older dogs you follow the exact same scenario. The only difference is with an older dog, it's already had the imprinting take place so it may have gotten used to doing it inside so you have to be even more vigilant and I would crate that dog until he learnt not to do it, until you actually let him out.

AB That was actually a question I had so you would with the older dog, use a crate still, it's not just for puppies?

BASIL T Correct. Absolutely. If it was a toilet training problem and provided you use the crate properly and that means that you only use it when you are at home to supervise, and that way you can keep an eye on the dog, he is not going to go wondering but he is going to cry because he wants to go to the toilet so you take him out and then bring him back inside and put him back in the crate.

The other way would be just to simply tie him up next to you on his bed so he can't simply wonder if you haven't got a crate and again, the same thing will happen. He will start to cry because he wants to go, you unhook him from the leash or take the leash with you, walk him out the door, so he goes to the toilet outside or pick him up and put him outside. But the whole thing is that you have to give that dog opportunities to do it and reward the dog.

AB What about scent marking? Do dogs actually scent mark inside as well as outside?

BASIL T Yes, some do. They are territorial, particularly if there is other animals in the house. Let's say you picked up a new dog from the pound, even though he has been de-sexed he may have only just been de-sexed but all his life he has gone around urinating and scent marking. He has also left that compound or the animal shelter for example, where there is a lot of other dogs and therefore he has been doing a lot of urination and scent marking.

What you have to do is be observant. As soon as you bring the dog in, bring him in on a leash. The second, you will see it, he will start to sniff as though he is about to do it and the second he starts to, just before he lifts that leg, you growl at him and give him a good tug on the leash and say “don't you do that. No.” So what you've done is you've caught him in the act and you have corrected him and then you take him outside and you say “okay”, “quick quick” or “hurry up” and then let him sniff a post out the back. He might have a dedicated post that you have put in your yard

which is what I've done with my dogs. They sniff it, they go to the toilet and all of a sudden you have just changed the association from doing it inside to doing it outside.

AB So you have actually put a post specifically for your dogs?

BASIL T Absolutely. Yes, we call it the “pee post”.

AB The pee post.

BASIL T There is a letter “P” on it.

AB We might move on Basil to another common problem of chewing. Chewing furniture, etc inside.

BASIL T It is usually related to bored dogs and puppies. The way to deal with it is virtually the same. With puppies, puppies particularly are going through a teething process from about 14 weeks of age up to 7 months where they are losing their baby teeth and getting adult teeth. Prior to that, they are still teething anyway because they are gaining some of their puppy teeth in the early stages. So they need things to chew on. One way to alleviate them chewing on your furniture is to give them some good quality dog toys. I prefer to use good toys like the Kong Toy, an exceptionally good grand. Aussie Dog toys also make extremely good chewing toys and have those handy for the puppy and the dog. But the thing is, don't just get 10 or 20 toys and say “there you go mate, there is a whole box of toys” and give them to him at the same because after a while he is going to get bored with all those toys and that's where he is going to bite your furniture.

What you should do instead is have a collection of good quality toys but rotate them around everyday. So one day he might have a Kong toy and may be some other type of toy. The next day he might have one of the Aussie Dog toys or he Matthew might have a nyala bone or something like that but you rotate them too so it makes it interesting for the dog.

Also, if you give that dog ample environmental stimulation, in other words

you've got the dog out the backyard in the area that he is allowed to muck about in and he has got his toys and he might have something dangling from rope, that he can grab and hole and chew, then that's going to alleviate the possibility of that dog wanting to chew things he is not supposed to.

AB Basil, would a dog who is digging, respond to a lot of those tips as well?

BASIL T Yes, absolutely. Although some dogs, they like to bury their toys. So you have got to watch out. Is the dog digging to bury or is your dog simply digging out of boredom?

Most of these destructive behaviours are because the dogs don't have enough stimulation in their life. The owners first of all, haven't taken their dogs for a walk often enough. I had case not long ago when I was on a radio show, and I had a caller ring in, a listener ring in and said "look, my dog is chewing everything. He is just destroying everything. The furniture." The thing I asked the caller was "well, how often do you walk the dog?" "Maybe once a fortnight if I'm lucky". Well, the first answer I had for him is "you start taking the dog out every day".

So, dogs need stimulation. Daily stimulation – daily walks. Half an hour to 40 minutes is what they need plus some obedience training and also quality time by having that dog inside the house with the owner.

If you do all that, plus have obviously some decent toys, you will minimise the chance the dog is going to dig holes and be destructive as well. I think that's the first approach rather than trying to discipline the dog afterwards.

AB I'd like to move on to excessive barking which is a big problem in a lot of neighbourhoods these days.

BASIL T It is. It's one of the biggest problems that we get calls from and we have got to go and obviously help them solve these problems.

So, why do dogs bark?

Dogs usually bark because they are calling to the other members of the pack which means they have been left on their own for long periods of time and so they are barking, as if to say “well, come back, don’t leave me here”. But then it becomes incessant barking and that’s when the problems arise. Dogs bark out of boredom. So how do alleviate boredom? It goes back to the same old thing. I sound probably like a broken record, but it boils down to:

Training, having the dog obedient to you.

Stimulation, environmental – having some good quality dog toys

Ample exercise. Making sure you take your dog out for his 30 to 40 minute walk every day.

Quality time. Sharing time with the owners inside the house. So not just simply relegated to being out in the backyard.

If you do all those things, you will alleviate the chance this dog is going to start to bark excessively and become a problem.

But other reasons why dogs might bark is because they can hear other dogs barking and they are calling back to them. If that happens, then you need to do some set up training. You set the dog up. You have got to sort of work out, “okay, I know this dog will bark when he hears this noise”. So have somebody help you that can actually create that trigger. That way then when he starts to bark for that particular reason because somebody has created a noise and the dog barks, you can quickly yell out “quiet” in a growling voice. If necessary, throw a bucket of water on him. That’s what we call aversion therapy. So you are teaching him to associate the incessant barking or the barking with getting a bucket of water.

AB Basil, we are quickly running out of time but there is a few points I would

love you to explain to us before we finish up.

The dog who is jumping on people. So visitors come in and it's all over you as you come in the door.

**BASIL T** That's a common problem Anthony and I have to say it's one of my pet hates. I don't care what size dog it is, whether it's small, medium or large – I hate dogs jumping. Really, it's a dangerous thing too. It can knock people over, and knock children over and really injure them.

Why do dogs jump?

Because generally, people have rewarded the behaviour without realising. You get home from work. You walk inside, you see the dog. “Hello mate, how are you”. The next thing you know the dog is jumping all over you and you are patting the dog. So that's actually a reward. The best way to deal with that is to walk home. Get home and ignore the dog. Let him jump. Turn your back on him and walk away. If he jumps again, turn your back and walk the other way. All of a sudden you are going to find this dog starts to think “well, hang on I'm not getting the attention I was getting before” and he will be a little bit complexed by this. When he stops jumping, that's when you quietly say to him “oh you're a good dog”. In other words, “I'm not interested in speaking to you or talking to you until you stop the behaviour”. Everybody in the household has to do the same. You can't have one person in the household trying to discipline the dog or condition the dog not to jump and have others that undo it by encouraging it. So it's really a situation where everybody has to do it consistently.

So that's really the best way. To ignore the dog when you first get home. Ignore the behaviour and only reward it when it's not doing it.

**AB** Which I think some people would probably find hard. They love their dogs so much as I mentioned before, they just want to pick them up but they have to realise that they are not really helping at all.

BASIL T Yes, you have got to just toughen up a little bit, that’s all.

AB Basil, a lot of potential dog owners with young children have concerns about, is it safe to have a dog with a young child. Is there any tips you can share with people who are considering buying a dog with young children?

BASIL T Yes, certainly.

The first thing is they have to really also teach the children how to interact with the dog but if you are getting an older dog – let’s presume the dog is okay with children. One thing is you should never allow young children to go up to that dog because the first thing they want to do is to cuddle it. But as soon as they put their arms around the dog’s neck, the dog feels threatened because that’s not natural. Dogs don’t cuddle each other. So the dog doesn’t understand that the child is no threat. So he reacts by having a bite and of course, where is the face, right next to the dog. That’s why a lot of children do get bitten around the face if they are going to get a dog bite.

I would suggest that, parents just simply need to use common sense. First of all, always ensure there is an adult around and supervising dogs and kids anywhere up to say 5 or 6 years of age.

Secondly, you need to ensure that that dog has been disciplined, has had obedience training and does respond and perceives itself as being at the bottom of the pecking order.

Thirdly, teach kids not to tease the dogs. Teach kids how they should behave. If kids can’t behave because they are obviously under 12 months of age, or 2 years of age and they are running around and being silly, then take the dog away from that environment. Give them both time out.

AB Yes, that makes a lot of sense.

BASIL T These are just some basic points but you can get more information on children and dogs. We have got on our web site a little section there on



how children should interact with dogs and also how to introduce a baby to its new home.

AB Whilst we are on that, may be you can give people your web site address.

BASIL T Yes, certainly. It's quite easy. It's [www.dogtraining.com.au](http://www.dogtraining.com.au)

AB There are two more areas I would like to quickly cover is the anxious timid dog. Some people are concerned their dog is on their own all day. They have become very anxious, crying when they are not there.

BASIL T Yes, I think what you are heading towards is the separation anxiety. Separation anxiety is often misdiagnosed. A lot of dogs don't actually have it but let's presume dogs do get stressed when - your dog does get stressed when you leave as a dog owner. May be starts to bark in a forlorn way or in a way which it sounds like it's distressed. It gets nervous every time you leave. It follows you around like a shadow. All these things can certainly point to a dog suffering separation anxiety. How do you deal with it? Depending on the degree. Obedience training, believe it or not is one thing you must do because it gives the dog a bit more confidence because you are giving it discipline and authority and it's probably lacking that at the moment.

Also you might have to look at some sort of chemical intervention and that means taking it to the vet. The vet may prescribe either a valium for the dog or “Clomicalm” which is a valium type of drug for dogs. That in conjunction with some training and desensitization would certainly go along way. Desensitization I mean, teaching the dog that he has to stay on his bed. He can't be right on your lap. Even if it means staying on his mat for 20 seconds and building up to 30 seconds and 40, 50 seconds and then from there, having the dog inside a room and then walking out and closing the door and coming back straight away. So your dog is starting to realise that “oh, you are going to come back and you are not just going to leave”.

We haven't got much time left so I can't go into a great deal of detail, but essentially, it's a case of desensitisation, training, obedience training and discipline training and may be some chemical intervention.

AB Thank you for that Basil. Lastly, would you be able to share with us some management of a dog which is a very fussy and finicky eater please.

BASIL T People tend to create fussy eaters. Dogs aren't like cats. They don't need a diverse range of dog foods. What you need to do is if you find your dog is only eating human food because he won't eat pet food and you want to make life easier for yourself, simply teach the dog – get some high quality premium dog food, whatever that might be. Put a small amount of it down in the bowl for the dog. If he doesn't eat it then take it away and he misses out on that meal.

The next meal, you put the exact same product down. Leave it there for 15 minutes. If he doesn't eat it, take it away.

So what you're saying is “well, unless you eat this, you are not getting anything else” and make sure no one else in the family gives snacks to the dog because that's what happens. In more cases than not where people will try and give the dog the food they want it to eat, the dog won't eat it so they feel sorry for it and give it a little tid bit. A snack of some sort. It might be a biscuit they are eating. So the dog then starts to get some sort of sustenance. But really, self preservation is pretty strong in dogs. If they go without food for about 3 days, I will guarantee the next time you put that food down, he will eat it.

That's what I would be doing.

AB That's terrific Basil. We have covered a huge amount of ground today. We have talked about how dogs learned. We have talked about socialization or that imprinting stage.

We have discussed basic obedience and ways people can be doing that at

home.

We have managed to cover quite a lot in behaviour problems.

Just to finish up, would you just have any general tips for people training their dogs. Things they could be thinking about from day one?

**BASIL T** I think make sure they set themselves goals. If they are doing obedience training, create a little record or a log book so they can see their progress and chat their progress everyday. That way they don't get despondent if the dog doesn't work on one particular day because they can look back and say "well, he might be having just an off day". So I think keeping a record.

Setting yourself an objective each day when you go out to practice. Don't just simply go "oh I better get out there and do it". It should be "today I'm going to work on my sit. Tomorrow I'm going to work on my heel and I am going to achieve this, this and this. So goal setting.

Make it fun for the dog. Always keep the training segments short and finish off with a lot of play and always finish off on a positive note.

Don't ever treat your dog like a human being.

Treat it as a dog.

**AB** I would like to thank you Basil for sharing all this amazing information which I'm sure will help all the dog owners who listen to this audio and apply your tips and techniques.

Thank you very much.

**BASIL T** My pleasure again Anthony. Thank you very much.

**AB** That brings us to an end to this audio program titled "Dog Training Down Under".

Congratulations on this big step to improving your experience of being a

dog owner.

We hope you have gained some valuable knowledge and will now be more confident with your dog in both day to day activities plus managing or even preventing some of the most common dog behaviour problems.

Thank you for your time and I wish you good luck with all your dog obedience.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**

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