

# Lessons for My Puppy

by Eileen Anderson and Marge Rogers





---

# Lessons for My Puppy

Eileen Anderson

Marge Rogers, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA

---

© 2014, 2016 by Eileen Anderson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews, other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law, and as explicitly noted herein.

All embedded videos copyright Marge Rogers.

All photos copyright Marge Rogers unless otherwise noted.

Bright Friends Productions

1818 N. Taylor Street, Suite 8, #327

Little Rock, Arkansas 72207 [www.brightfriendsproductions.com](http://www.brightfriendsproductions.com)

Lessons for My Puppy Eileen Anderson. — 1st ed.

ISBN 978-1-943634-04-0





## Table of Contents

1. The First Thing to Teach Your Puppy	5
2. The Second Thing to Teach Your Puppy	9
3. Impulse Control. Impulse Control. Impulse Control.	14
4. Puppies Need an Off Switch!	18
5. Meeting the World	22
6. I Will Teach You What I Want You to Know	28
7. Resources	33

## Preface

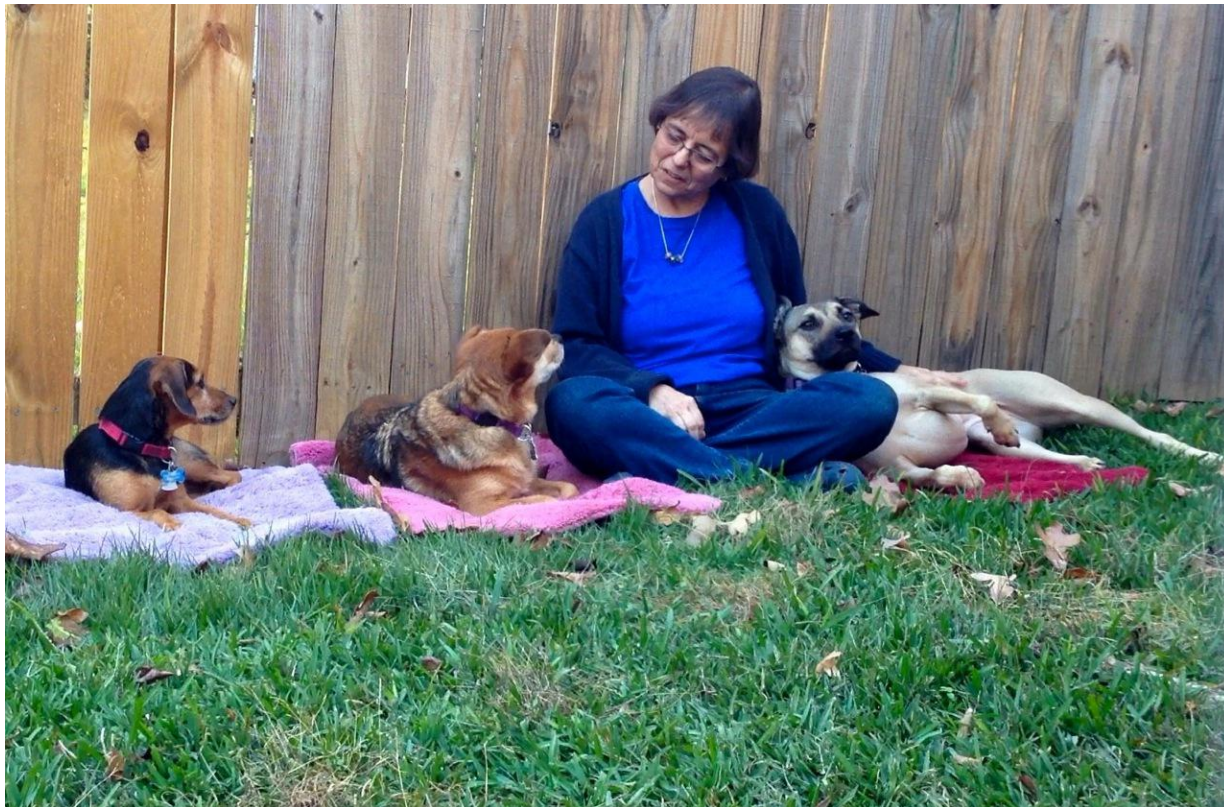
There are currently a lot of good books on the market about raising a puppy. Thankfully the out-of-date ones that attribute every problem behavior to “dominance” are starting to fade in popularity. Books that include blanket recommendations about putting the dog in his place one way or another are being supplanted with books that have much more modern information.

The wonderful thing about learning about the science of good training is the efficacy of positive reinforcement goes hand in hand with a humane approach and helps build a lifelong bond between you and your dog. The “naughty” things that dogs do are generally natural dog behaviors, and it is our job to help them learn how to behave in our human world and in our homes so that humans and dogs can live happily together.

This is not really a “how to” book. It’s about the choices one good trainer made for her particular dog. Not everything Marge does would be appropriate for every dog. Zip is a high energy, confident working breed puppy. The individual exercises might look different with, for instance, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, a Newfoundland, or a small mixed breed like any of mine. But the principles she is following, of building her bond with Zip, creating ways for them to communicate with each other, and reinforcing masses of behavior while he is young carry over to any dog.

## Who Are These People Anyway?

**Eileen Anderson, MM, MS** is an award-winning blogger and writer with a passion for dog training. She has found a wide audience putting the science of how dogs learn, along with the supporting research, into understandable articles and posts. It's not rocket science, folks, but it is behavioral science. Her writing style is unique, understandable and peppered with humor. She has published articles for the Pet Professional Guild, the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC),



Zani, Summer, Eileen, and Clara

*Photo credit: Eileen Anderson*

and other organizations. Her blog articles have been translated into several languages and published internationally. In 2015 she released a popular book on Canine Cognitive Dysfunction. She is currently offering a writing mentorship through IAABC. Eileen has master's degrees in music and engineering.

## Eileen's Sites

- [Book on canine cognitive dysfunction](#)
- [Eileenanddogs Blog](#)
- [IAABC writing mentorship](#)
- [Other published articles](#)



**Marge Rogers, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA** is nationally certified in dog training and behavior consulting through the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. She is what's known as a "cross-over" trainer. She used to train using more traditional, "balanced" methods. When those made her fearful rescue dog



**Marge and Zip**

**Photo Credit Morgan Lee Photography**

worse, she sought out better techniques and information. She hasn't looked back since.

Marge is the owner of Rewarded Behavior Continues, LLC, a company she built from the ground up. Marge does primarily in-home, private training and occasionally teaches group classes and seminars. Local veterinarians regularly refer clients for basic training and behavior modification for fear, aggression and handling issues. Marge supplements her lessons with training videos that complement the skills she is teaching. That's why she initially made these videos with Zip. She wanted her clients to be able see how she trained her own dog.

## **Marge's Site**

•[Rewarded Behavior Continues, LLC](#)



## Chapter 1

---

# The First Thing To Teach Your Puppy

---

You may be surprised at what Marge Rogers chose as her puppy's first lesson. It's not "sit," "down," or even "leave it." It's even more important than those behaviors!





My friend Marge has a new puppy, Zip, a Portuguese Water Dog. I just love what she decided to teach him first.

Marge is a professional trainer. Depending on Zip's interest and aptitude, he may eventually be able to help her in her business as a neutral dog, play therapy dog, or uncle dog. He'll be introduced to a variety of fun dog sports. I think I heard whispers



**Seaworthy's Won Direction "Zip"**

about agility as well as water dog sports. All these are possibilities, of course. No matter what his temperament, health, and inclinations, he will always be a beloved family pet.

Marge asked me, "Do you know what the first thing I'm going to teach him is?" I didn't know, but I figured it would be good.

## **What is That First Thing?**

"I'm going to teach him that I'm FUN."

I have to say that was not what I expected, but the more I thought about it, the more I liked it.

That first lesson accomplishes so many things.

- It sets the tone for a lifetime bond.
- It associates Marge with terrific things. Most of us gain strong associations with food with our dogs. That happens almost automatically if we train with food, and if we are careful how and when we feed. (See my article "Double Your Money" in the [Spring 2014 issue of BARKS magazine](#), page 19.) But in addition to being the provider of food, Marge is setting herself up as the entertainment center in her pup's life. Via classical conditioning, she is building an association with herself to joy as well as nurturance.
- Zip's play with her is something he can learn to "take on the road."
- The behaviors that happen in the play (little proto-behaviors that will be built on for skills later) get imbued with the fun--more classical conditioning.
- Finally, fun and anxiety are mutually exclusive. Play helps create a joyful world.

Marge's lesson would not be appropriate--as a first lesson anyway-- for every dog. She's got a well bred, confident, socialized puppy (of a social breed, no less). She picked the sassy one of the litter. When we get a dog with a suboptimal or unknown history (Marge has had plenty of rescues too, I might add), the first lesson we often need to teach the dog is some version of "You are safe." Or "I won't be mean to you." Or, "We'll always go at your speed; I won't force you." Those things look a bit different. What you see Marge doing in the video is appropriate for a confident, dare I say "pushy," little guy.

But even with our fearful dogs, the sooner we can get some joyful fun in their lives, the better. And the more I think about it, the more similar the approaches are. Whether you are showing the pup a rollicking good time or giving him a place to feel safe, you are prioritizing his emotional state over mere skills or obedience.

## **Movie 1: "I Am Fun"**

### **What Does It Achieve?**

Do you see all the sub-lessons in the movie, all the bricks that Marge is laying for Zip's future skills?

- Zip is getting experience on stable and unstable surfaces, including a metal surface.
- Zip is climbing through things that touch his legs.

- He's getting to put different things in his mouth and getting an outlet to chew and be mouthy.
- He's experiencing things that make sudden noises.
- He is learning to tug.
- He is learning to release and trade.
- He is learning a puppy retrieve.
- He's learning that Marge will direct him to things that are OK to play with. (Did you notice that there is only one "real" dog toy in the whole video?)
- He is learning to come when called.
- He is learning to settle down and to be handled.

All this in a few minutes of play with a really fun lady.

### **My Puppy's First Lessons (Were Not Nearly as Cool)**

I'm trying to remember the first things I taught Clara. In a four dog household, I think one of the first lessons was, "This is how you can happily fit into the group." But I also taught her "You are safe with me."



Actually I just remembered: The very very first thing I taught Clara was, "I have spray cheese, the ambrosia of your world." The first *behavior* I taught her was "Go in there," e.g., from a mat to a crate. I was always having to rearrange my dogs.



**10 week old Clara on the day she arrived**

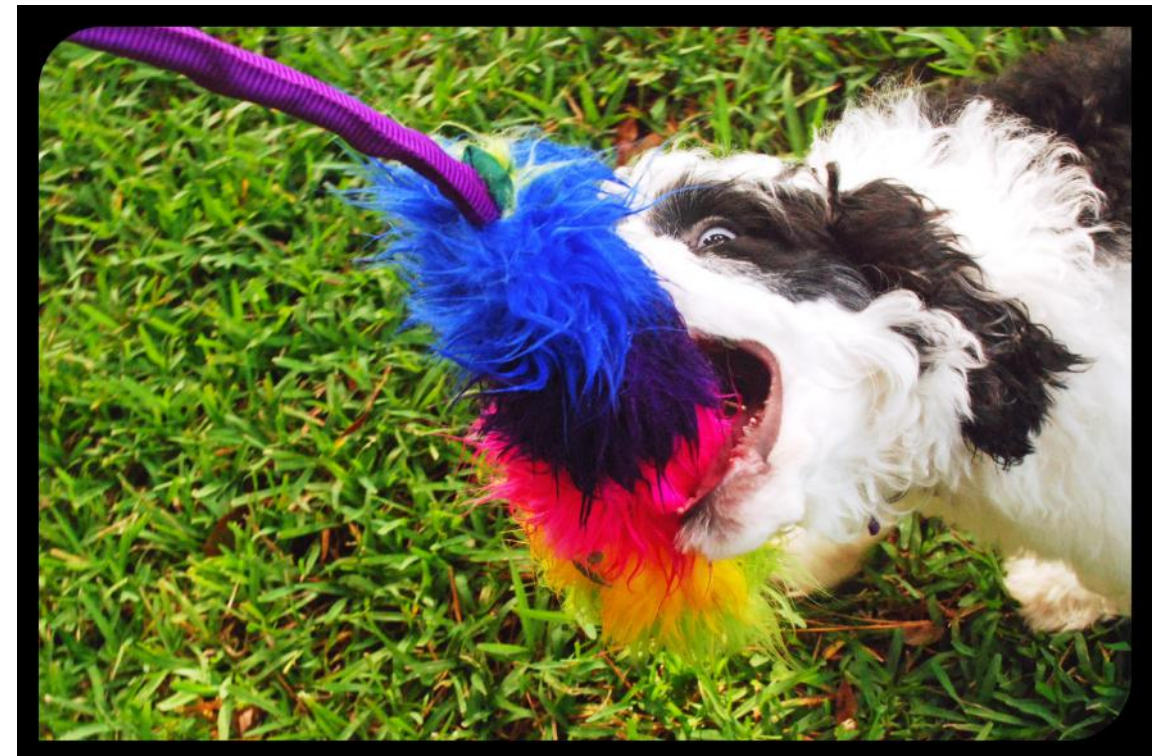
***Photo credit Eileen Anderson***

kind of fun with me, and has always played any kind of game I offered with enthusiasm. But I do wish I had been as deliberate as Marge in setting the stage for a playful relationship with Clara. Even more so with Zani, a born party girl.

I didn't set about using play cleverly like Marge. Frankly, I let Zani babysit Clara a lot, since I was really in over my head with a geriatric dog, a reactive dog, and then a feral puppy, most of them incompatible with each other. If Clara and I hadn't had such a strong bond, all that babysitting could have been a bad idea. Luckily Clara is up for just about any

I'll remember for next time: there are some things that are even more important than sit and down. Build the relationship. Then the skills will likely be a piece of cake.

What was the first thing you taught your puppy or new dog?



**Tugging is definitely fun!**



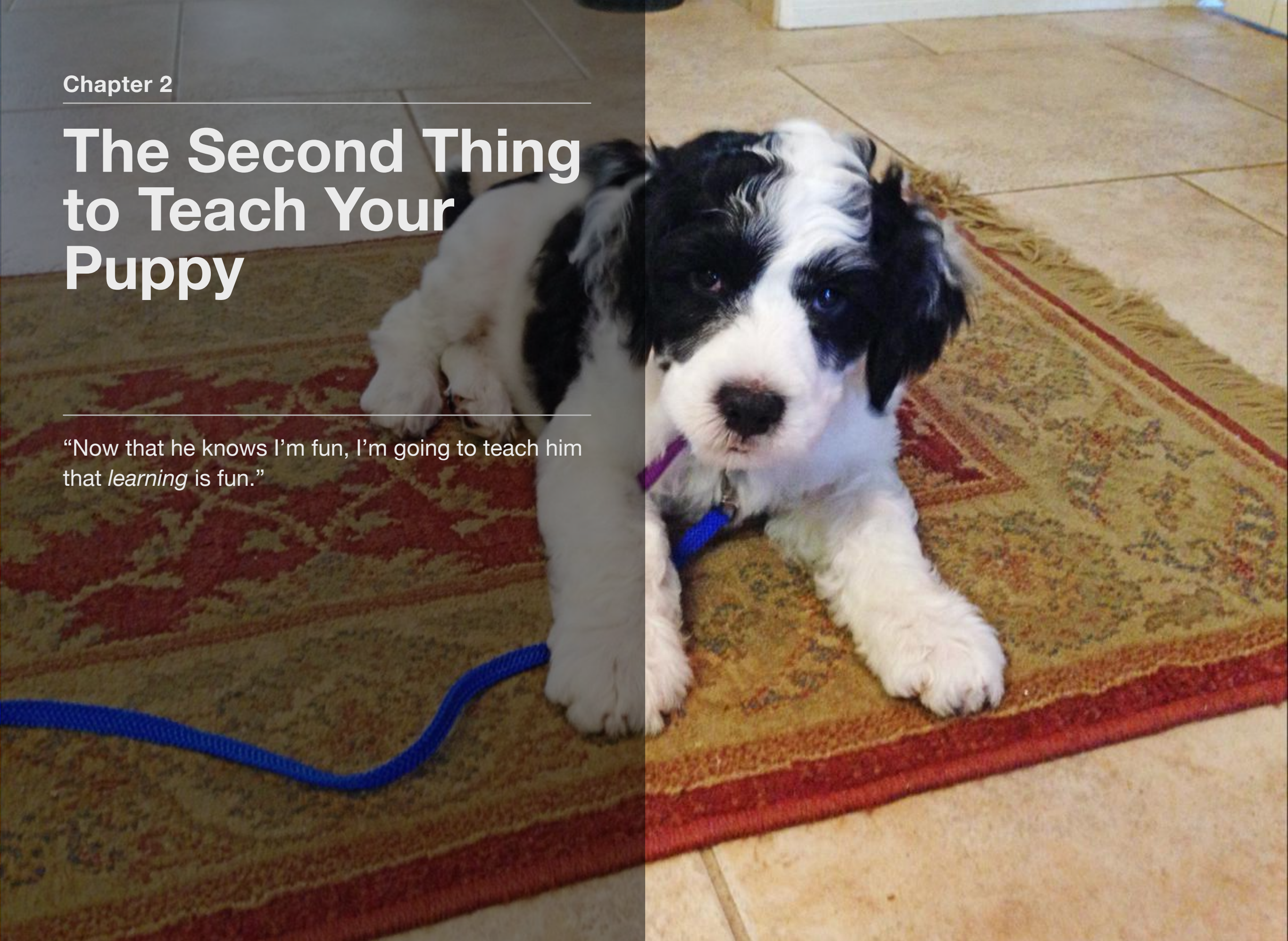
## Chapter 2

---

# The Second Thing to Teach Your Puppy

---

“Now that he knows I’m fun, I’m going to teach him that *learning* is fun.”





I really enjoyed seeing what Marge decided to teach her puppy first. She taught Zip (and continues to teach him) that she is FUN. So I asked her what she was going to teach him second. (I love to watch her training!)

She said, "Now I'm going to teach him that *learning* is fun."



**Zip learns play is training and training is play.**

## Teaching a Dog that Learning is Fun

Why would this be so important that Marge would embark on it so early on? Doesn't she need to train Zip how to behave acceptably?

First, we need to shake the notion that training is something we do to the dog. It is something we do *with* the dog. Then, it wouldn't hurt to drop the "obedience" model from the back of our minds. With positive reinforcement-based training, we can get something better than obedience. We can build a joyful, trusting partnership between two species, and along the way we can ease our dog's path into the weird human world.

And right along with that: Using aversives in training is known to inhibit learning. If you went to math class and the teacher hit you over the head with a ruler every time you got the answer wrong, you could still learn math. It probably wouldn't be your favorite subject and you probably wouldn't learn it as fast as you would if you enjoyed it.

What if, instead, the teacher valued above all that the student be happy, relaxed, and enjoying himself, and did all in her power to make that happen? This is not only humane and kind, but also very practical. If Zip is "in the game," if he and Marge are partners, he will value the game. She can help him build resiliency. If at some point she makes mistakes or gives unclear information, he'll keep trying. And that's where we see that the partnership works both ways. Zip will teach Marge to formulate training plans, improve observation skills, and work through timing errors.



Marge goes so far as to say, "At this stage, the behaviors I'm teaching him don't really matter." Wow. So obviously true, yet so radical.

What she wants, what she values, and what she is building: an eager student.

A dog can learn a behavior at any age if he has the physical skills to do it and the trainer has the mechanical skills to teach it. That's why the lesson right now is two-way communication.

If learning is fun for him, Marge can teach him anything.

## What Do They Practice?

So, what did Marge show us in Lesson 2? Keep in mind that the actual behaviors they work on are less important than the growing partnership. But I know some of you will be curious about some of what they do, so here is a list with short explanations.

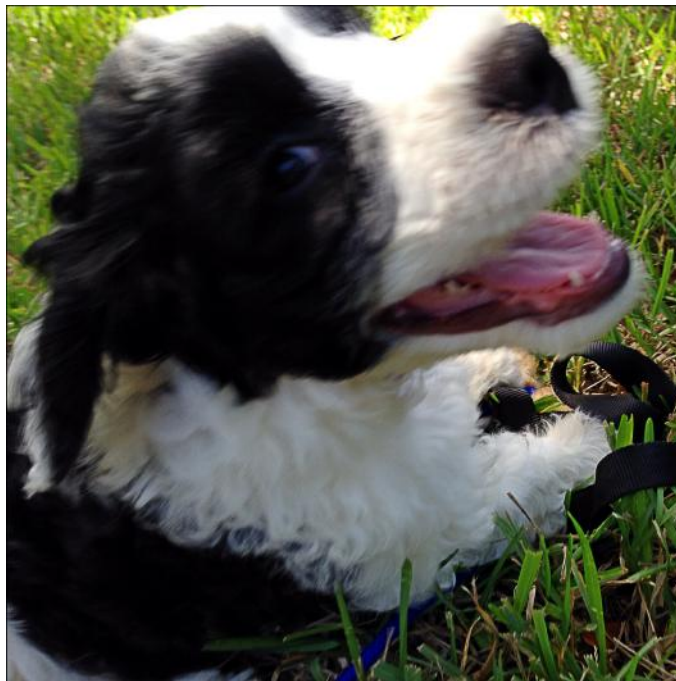
- Name training. She is teaching him that hearing his name predicts something great. He is learning to shift his attention immediately to her when he hears his name. The name game builds a positive classical association to hearing his name and to her, and also builds a recall.
- Puppy retrieve (with optional somersaults!). What all is this good for? Let us count the ways. It is an interactive, cooperative game. It's great for exercise: it drains the dog's tank, but not the owner's. It can be a great interaction for kids and dogs.

Also, Zip is rehearsing returning to her and releasing things to her. Deposits into those "Let Go of Stuff" and "Return to Me" accounts are always good!

- Impulse control. Just about all of life with dogs boils down to impulse control, doesn't it? Many "good dog" behaviors share the principles of that exercise: do not help yourself to things you want. Look at your person when there's something you want. Do it in the face of distractions (starting with a food distraction).
- Turns. Those are some agility moves Marge is making, and they teach some nice lessons. Prime among them are moving with Marge, turning, and switching seamlessly from being on Marge's left to her right. For many of us, the days of teaching our dogs to walk exclusively on the left side are long gone.
- Perch work. This is for both hind end awareness and strength. It will help in sports, everyday coordination, and tight turns for competition heeling. Plus cool stuff like a "tuck sit" as you can see at the end of this short video.
- Hand targeting. Hand targeting teaches puppies that hands near their face are a good thing. It teaches them to use their nose on hands instead of puppy teeth. It is a foundation behavior for a recall. The dog is at point A, and you want them with you at point B: use a hand target. Marge says it is a great way to start a training dialogue.



- Experiencing new things. Just like in Lesson 1, Marge is continuing to introduce Zip to new things. Can you see that she has made it more challenging? Dogs are great discriminators, and as they get older are quick to categorize things as abnormal and scary if they haven't seen them before. So the more surprising and rare stuff she can show Zip, as long as it happens with good associations, the better. What she shows in the movie is the tip of the iceberg. She is taking him every day for different levels of observation of and interaction with the world.
- Conditioning praise. Did you hear all the utterances of "Good boy good boy good boy"? This is not just filler. Dogs find repeated sound stimulating. You'll hear that kind of repetition from many good trainers when they are having an exciting fun time with their dogs. But also: how many times in his life is Zip going to hear "good boy" and get a treat or special play? Answer: a lot. Marge is also conditioning praise



**Zip agrees: learning is and should be fun!**

as a secondary reinforcer. If she keeps it conditioned well, the phrase by itself will gain some reinforcing power. This is another foundation she is laying down in their training relationship.

## What About Sit, Down, and Stay?

Have you noticed the absence of certain behaviors that many of us are brought up to believe are the absolute foundation of proper dog behavior? How come we don't see Marge telling Zip to sit, down, or stay?

It's not really that she isn't reinforcing sit and down, and even a little stay. She may not have *named* these behaviors, but they are some of the many that she is capturing and reinforcing in contexts. She is putting money in the bank for later. She has Zip's whole life to teach him verbal and other types of cues. Now is the time to establish a bond, show him that certain things pay off bigtime, to reinforce a large variety of desirable behaviors in an informal way; to teach him that learning and trying stuff aren't scary. This will give Zip a palette of behaviors to default to in life situations. Sit and down are definitely in the palette, and a tiny puppy "stay" is developing as she waits a little longer and holds eye contact a little longer. And the more of these good behaviors he knows, the less time Marge will have to spend diminishing undesirable ones.

And the verbal cue thing? Believe it or not, you really don't need word cues at this point. Zip has already picked up situational cues to do certain things. Dogs are geniuses at this; so good at it



that we don't even notice it half the time. We think they know a verbal cue but they are really reading the situation. Zip is already developing a default sit (you can see that in the impulse control section), eye contact, and can walk nicely on a leash. A word is just a label. There will be time for that.

## **Movie 2: “Learning Is Fun”**

Have you shown your puppy or dog that learning is fun? (And what do you think Marge's next lesson will be?)

P.S. Editorial remark: I'm so glad Marge didn't say she's "teaching Zip how to learn." I've always thought that was a very human-centric thing to say. Animals already know how to learn. Many of our problems come from the fact that they learn stuff that we don't want them to. Marge is teaching Zip how to be her dog, have fun with her, communicate with her, solve problems, and be happy in a human world. And with her graduated challenges, she is helping him develop his brain power.



## Chapter 3

---

# Impulse Control. Impulse Control. Impulse Control.

---

“Leave it.”

“Zen.”

“It’s Yer Choice.”

Whatever you call it, impulse control is vital.





OK, wait a doggone minute! How is it that in Zip's last lesson, I was being all poetic about how the behaviors didn't matter all that much, but all of a sudden we are zeroing in on just one thing? And it sounds so...cold! How did we get there? Does this mean that Marge has given up on bonding and positive reinforcement and creating fun for her puppy (and rainbows and fairies while we're at it)?

Of course not! What Marge has done is make learning impulse control a win/win situation. With good teaching of impulse control (including what people call "Leave It," "Zen," or "**It's Yer Choice**,") dogs learn that when they control themselves around stuff they want, they can get even better stuff!

As Sue Ailsby says:

*It's not my job to control the animal. It's the animal's job to control herself. It's my job to put the animal in a situation where she can learn what I want her to know as quickly and easily as possible.*

Sue calls it Zen, since the way to get the thing is to leave the thing alone. It's just something else to learn, and Zip has already had many lessons in "learning is fun!".



**Zip is learning good things come to those who wait.**

## **That Puppy Sure Sits a Lot!**

For a puppy that didn't have any formal training sessions on "sit" Zip sure sits a lot. How did that happen? While Marge may not have done any training sessions on "sit," she was still teaching Zip to sit by reinforcing that behavior when he offered it. Since, as Marge would say, "**Rewarded Behavior Continues**," Zip started sitting more. When barking doesn't work to get out of a pen, he'll try sitting and will get rewarded (you can see this in the movie). If dashing towards the door doesn't work, he'll try sitting. That's how highly reinforced behaviors can start to fill in the blanks. I



love seeing puppies put two and two together and try it out, like Zip does.

Having default, highly reinforced behaviors is one of the lovely things about positive reinforcement training. At first, when teaching impulse control, any behavior but lunging toward the desired object or goal is usually reinforced. But soon, the trainer can select out of these other behaviors she has already been reinforcing what she'd like to have. You can see that Marge is building in eye contact and a general orientation to her in all these situations, as well as sitting.

By the way, one of the reasons Marge hasn't done any formal "sit" training is because she wants to teach Zip a "tuck" sit and just hasn't gotten around to it. Zip turns 10 weeks old today. She has plenty of time.

## What Do They Practice?

So, what did Marge show us in Lesson 3? Zip is working on impulse control in the following ways:

- Waiting for permission to grab the tug toy. Getting the permission by looking at Marge.
- Staying away from food in Marge's hand (at puppy level). Getting the food by looking at Marge.
- Being quiet in his pen when Marge approaches.

- Sitting quietly to get his leash put on (see, she is teaching sit, but she still has yet to say the word!)
- Waiting to go out the door. Getting permission by looking at Marge.
- Reorienting to Marge after they go out the door together.

Not only is he learning to control his impulses, he is learning to look to Marge when he wants something. A huge part of impulse control is focus on the handler. And Marge has been building that since Day 1.

## Movie 3: "Impulse Control. Impulse Control. Impulse Control."

### Using Positive Reinforcement to Teach the Dog Not to Do Something

So many of us came to dog training because our dogs had behavior problems. We wanted them to Stop. Doing. That. And that is also one of the main questions that people ask about positive reinforcement based training: how to you teach a dog not to do something? Today's whole movie, plus the two before it, do exactly that, but you have to know what to watch for. When you increase some behaviors, some others decrease without a whole lot of work. Some of the things that Zip is learning not to do are:

- Lunge for the toy



- Run off with the toy (since Marge has made herself the entertainment center--and also because the toy has a handle on it!)
- Help himself to food without permission
- Jump around when Marge puts his leash on
- Run out the door without permission
- Go nuts once he gets outside
- And countless other behaviors that humans do not prefer!

All without a harsh word, a stern look, being forced into a position or held in place, or any kind of physical punishment.

How do you teach your dog about impulse control?



**Most puppies are naturally drawn to toys. You can use play and games to teach them impulse control through increasing levels of arousal.**



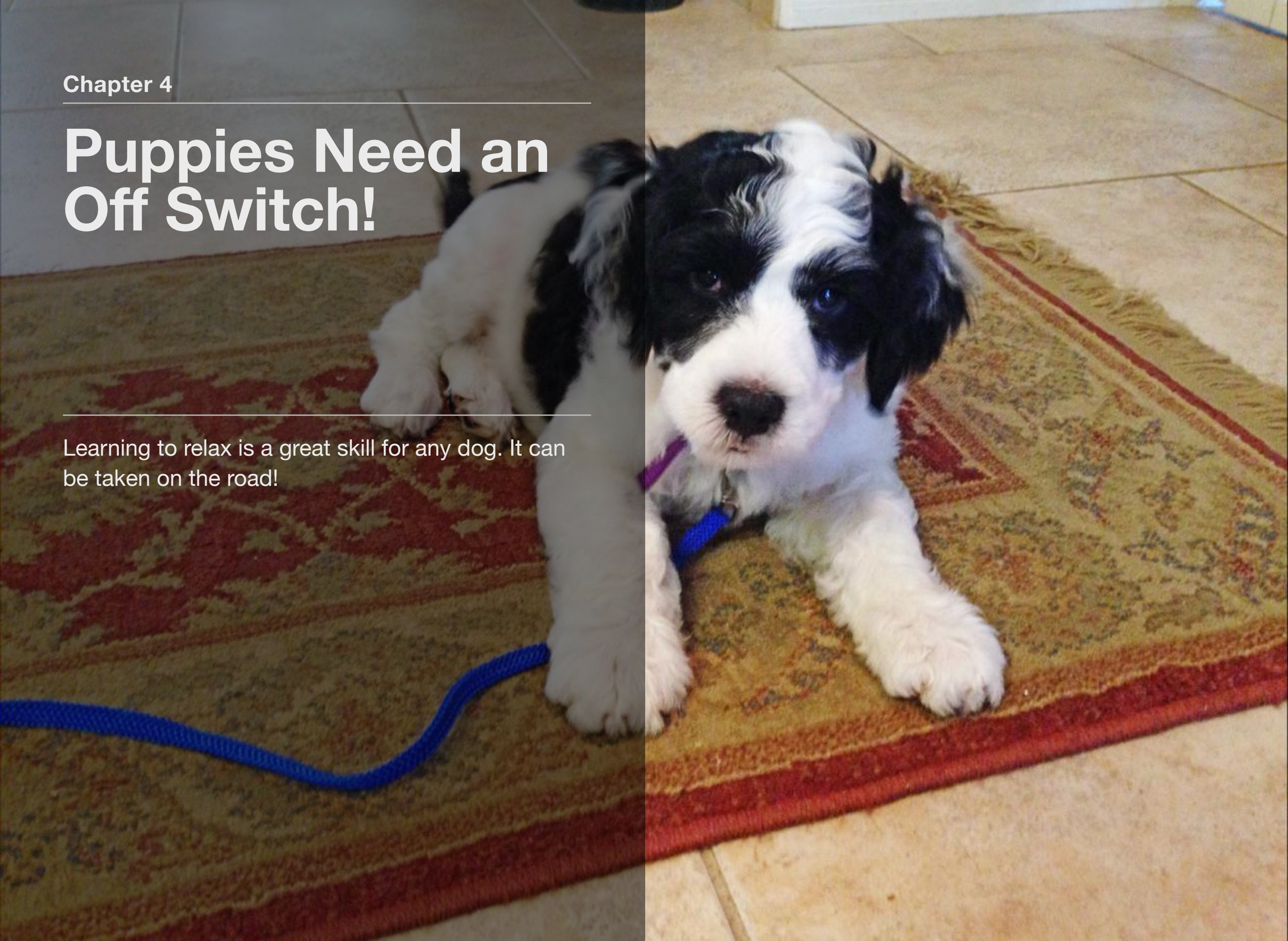
## Chapter 4

---

# Puppies Need an Off Switch!

---

Learning to relax is a great skill for any dog. It can be taken on the road!





So how many of you with puppies out there wish sometimes that you could flip a switch to turn them off, just for a little bit? Catch your breath, do the dishes, sit down for just a minute?

I have it on pretty good authority that most of the puppies would also appreciate having an off switch, too! Just as human babies can get all wound up without knowing how to come down on their own, puppies get overwound too.

Some of the advice that gets passed around is off the mark. Owners of high-energy dogs are told to exercise them more and more to burn off the energy. Every time the dog leaves the house it's for a rousing run or play time. While stimulation and exercise are vitally important, taken by themselves, they can actually exacerbate the problem of being wound up. The dog rehearses a pattern of arousal.

That's why learning to relax is an important life skill. Marge is really good at teaching it, in my opinion. She teaches "relax" as a behavior, just like teaching sit, down and come. And it's a win/win for puppy and caregiver.



**Zip takes relaxation to a whole new level.**



## Resources

There are many, many resources for this. A lot of what Marge does with her dogs, including what you will see with Zip, is from the work of Leslie McDevitt ([Control Unleashed](#), [Control Unleashed-- The Puppy Program](#), [Control Unleashed Seminar DVD](#)) and Dr. Karen Overall.

Lots of other trainers have methods for teaching this behavior, too. Sue Ailsby teaches it in her [Training Levels program](#). Nan Arthur has a method in her book [Chill Out Fido](#), [Laura VanArendonk Baugh wrote a whole book about it](#), and [Emily Larlham has some great videos](#). I have some resources in my blog as well. You can check out the page, "[Clara Relaxes: Video Progress](#)" which has a lot of videos and links to several blog posts.

The goal of all of these methods is far beyond just getting the dog to stay still. It is to teach the dog to chill out and relax.

## From Practice to the Real World

Being able to recover and think through increasing levels of arousal can be taught. Most people play with their dogs and puppies without breaks. But breaks allow the puppy to reset, and to learn how to transition between different states of excitement and arousal. They also can keep the pup from going over the top.

In the movie, you will first see Zip relaxing in a non-challenging situation. Then Marge transitions him back and forth between

relaxing and getting up to play. Marge works with lots of puppy owners, and has them start with play increments of 5 seconds (one banana, 2 banana, up to 5.). Reset/relax, then start again. Gradually increase duration and difficulty.

At 1:06, watch Zip's right front leg. He is not just lying down; he is relaxing his muscles. Later you can see him also change his breathing when asked to relax. I've watched the movie several times, and keep seeing other aspects of the relaxation. In the last tug session, between the 2:00 and 3:00 minute marks, Zip is growling--a symptom of high arousal for him. You can see how hard he has to work to control himself when Marge asks him to release the tug and relax. "Ohhhh I wanna bite that shoe.....but I won't." This is yet another example of impulse control.

Take note as well, how Marge reinforces Zip for the relaxed behavior. She is using food rewards, delivered with soft body language right to his mouth. Nothing active, no tossing treats. This is in contrast to the active play with the toy during the "up" states.

The final part of the movie shows a real world application. You can't see it in the movie, but while Zip is chilling on the floor at the animal hospital, there are two very active toddlers and another dog nearby. This is where you can see yet another benefit of playing tug with a puppy (with a rule structure such as Marge uses). Environmental stressors can also bring about an aroused state. A dog doesn't have to be jumping around to get over-

excited. But playing tug has helped Zip learn how to "come down" from that state, and his lessons carry over beautifully to the new environment.

## **Movie 4: "You Can Take a Breath and Reset"**

Just like last time, this is another lesson on how to teach a puppy not to do something using positive reinforcement-based training. Notice all the things Zip is not doing?

- Biting
- Running around screaming
- Stealing the toy and running away
- Leaping up to investigate the other dog or the kids at the vet

All because Marge has "filled in the blanks" with desirable behaviors, and is teaching Zip at a very young age how to calm down.

How about you all? Does your puppy have an off switch? Also, any guesses about Lesson Five? Because we have left out something BIG!



## Chapter 5

---

# Meeting the World

---

Why Lesson 5 is really Lesson 0.





Zip, please meet the world. World, watch out, here comes Zip!



**Zip on the table at the vet. He spent the whole time working on some sticky treats that the vet smashed onto the table. What a great idea! He wanted to get up there again!**

In a way, this should be Lesson Zero, since Marge has been socializing Zip from the very start. Also, socialization is in a class by itself. The impressions puppies get when very young, particularly in their first three months of life, will create their world view and affect their temperament and attitudes. This world view is infinitely harder to change later. Dogs can learn training and games for their whole lives. But if their early impressions of the world are negative, or they are not exposed to our human world during the socialization window, they will be playing catch-up for the rest of their lives. (I have direct experience with this, having a **dog who grew up in the woods.**)

Marge is socializing Zip with skill and care, with consideration of both his physical and emotional safety.

## **Don't Keep Them Home**

Many people still follow outdated advice to keep their puppies sequestered during the early months of their lives because of the danger of infectious diseases. While it's true that precautions should be taken to protect pups while their immune systems are still developing, the sad truth is the following:

*Behavioral issues, not infectious diseases, are the number one cause of death for dogs under three years of age. --AVSAB Position Statement on **Puppy Socialization***



Let that be our call to action to get puppies out and about in a safe and positive way. Puppy classes, handling, and other socialization activities correlate positively with good behavior and retention in the home.

The following position statement (the source of the above quote) has appropriate information about balancing puppy socialization with protection from contagious diseases. I'll cover some practical suggestions about that as well.

*American Veterinary Society for Animal Behavior Position Statement on Puppy Socialization*

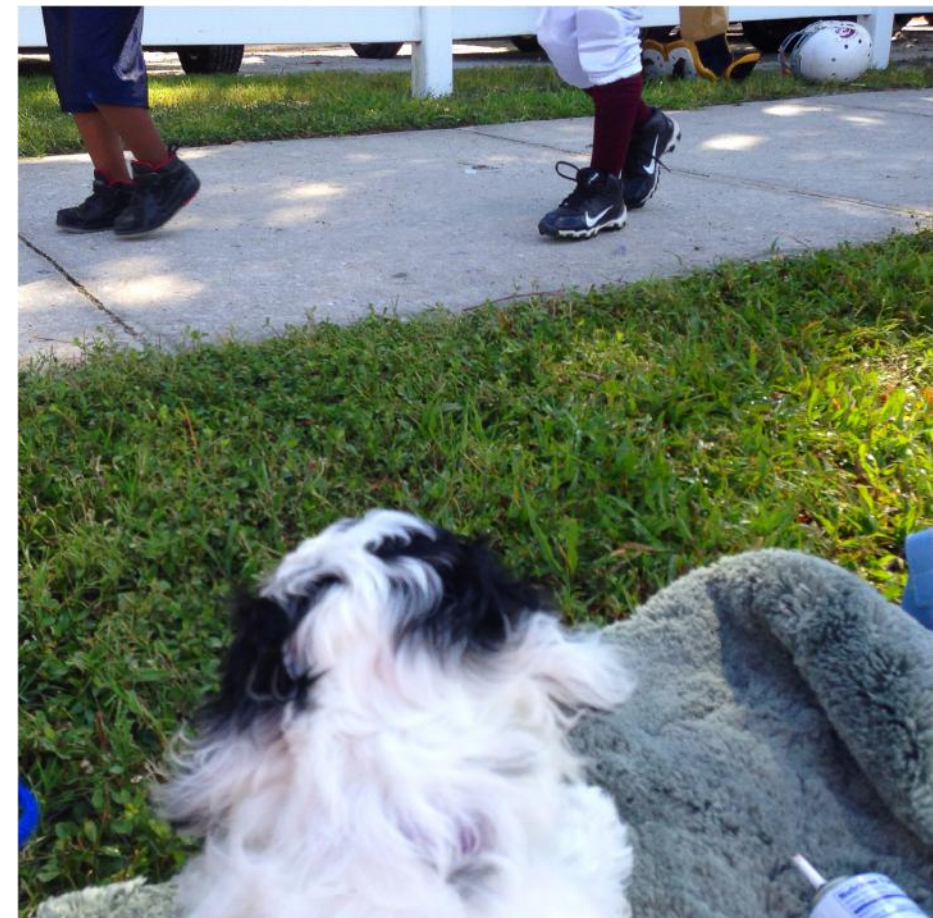
## **What Does Socialization Mean?**

There is a good summary in the position statement:

*Veterinarians specializing in behavior recommend that owners take advantage of every safe opportunity to expose young puppies to the great variety of stimuli that they will experience in their lives. --AVSAB Position Statement on Puppy Socialization*

Let me emphasize the word "safe." This refers not only to hygiene and protecting puppies' immune systems. It also covers the type of exposures that are appropriate for puppies.

You will see in the movie that Zip is observing the world and experiencing new environments, with direct, deliberate associations by Marge with pleasurable experiences like great food and play. Remember how Marge taught Zip that she was fun and that learning was fun? In today's clips, which represent a tiny percentage of her daily work with Zip, she is teaching him that the world can be fun.



**Zip watching some student athletes. Note the rug--and the spray cheese!**



We see him at a retirement home, at the sports fields, the bookstore, a strip mall, a parking lot, the lobby at the vet office, and the hardware store. And Marge says, don't forget to build good associations to the car, too!

She is also doing preemptive work. With puppies, we don't generally have the luxury of going out and doing strict classical conditioning separately on every possible thing they will encounter. We don't have a tractor day, a bicycle day, or a mailman day, when all other stimuli retreat. But when you have a blank slate, you can take action that will either head off possible negative associations to sudden events (management) or, if you are lucky, work towards creating a positive association. For instance, you will see Marge give Zip a slurp from the food tube [see the end of this chapter for food tube information] when a car goes by or when another dog fusses in the vet office. **She does this as soon as he perceives these things and does not wait to see if he reacts.** In formal classical conditioning one would probably wait a couple of beats before causing the food to appear, and have more controlled exposures. We don't always have that luxury in real life, but often with puppies we don't need it.

When we are consistent about the general pairing of sudden events with goodies, the dog can get both the classical association (a motorcycle--great, that predicts salmon!) and the

operant behavior (I think I'll reorient to my human to help that salmon along!).

## A Note on Hygiene

Common sense will take you a long way here. One way pups can get exposed to infectious diseases is through the bacteria present in dog feces. If you take your pup to a class, make sure that the hosts of the class use disinfectant cleaners before the class, as suggested in the position statement above. When doing socialization on the road, people can minimize a pup's exposure to pathogens by setting it down on a rug when in public. When the pup is very small, it can be carried, then placed on a mat or rug for minimal exposure (see the sidewalk picture above). Later on when you let the pup walk about, steer him away from unknown animals (obviously!), trash, and feces. And avoid dog parks, where all three of these are generally present.

## What Is Marge Not Doing?

There are also some things that people assume fall under socialization **which have hidden force in them (flooding)**, and can really backfire. This happens a lot with puppies and fearful adult dogs with perfectly well-meaning humans.

So what don't we see? We don't see a bunch of strangers petting Zip. We don't see him being lured up to children to get treats from them. We don't see a "pass the puppy" exercise (where puppy owners sit in a circle and hand the puppies around to each other). All of these scenarios can create or exacerbate fear, as the



puppy is put into strange situations with insufficient control over the scenario and insufficient support from his owner.

Let me repeat: leading puppies or shy or fearful dogs up to strangers to have the stranger give them a treat is a really bad idea that unfortunately has made its way into the cultural mythology about "how to introduce dogs to people." **Here's why not to do that.**

Zip has indeed met plenty of people and kids (not covered in this video). This was done in a controlled way, one at a time, and performed with lots of breaks. Marge herself handled the food and/or toys until Zip was entirely comfortable with the person.

## **What's The Goal?**

People naturally have different goals with their dogs. Since almost every dog will be handled by a vet and will meet strangers in its lifetime, exposure to different people and careful handling are both beneficial in the formative weeks, the so-called socialization window. But dogs don't have to be social butterflies. As dogs grow older and their temperaments become apparent, many will not want to interact with and like every human (or every dog) they meet, and they don't need to.

I write frequently about my formerly feral dog Clara, and **recently published an update on her own--extended--socialization process.** I missed her socialization window, so for several years have been doing a slow-motion version of what Marge and many others do with their puppies. Interestingly, Clara is showing herself to be a curious and extroverted dog. I think she would have been extremely people-friendly had she not been raised feral. I take that into account when considering my goals with her. Given the chance, she probably would have been a social butterfly. So, belatedly, I'm giving her that chance. Our activities would be a bit different if she weren't turning out to be so gregarious.

## **Movie 5: "I Will Introduce You To the World in a Safe and Fun Way"**



Likewise, the video is not a tutorial on how to socialize YOUR puppy. Each puppy is an individual and has different needs. This video provides a sampling of how Marge is expanding Zip's world beyond the confines of her house.

How did you socialize your puppy?

**Note:** Marge and I both use food tubes for high value treat delivery. We use **Coghlan's tubes, which can be bought at REI** and other places online. **Here is a link to my blog on food tubes and what to put in them.** You have to get the right consistency. Most high end pâté style canned dog foods (not chunky) work well.



**Zip's first outing to the beach. He is, after all, a water dog.**



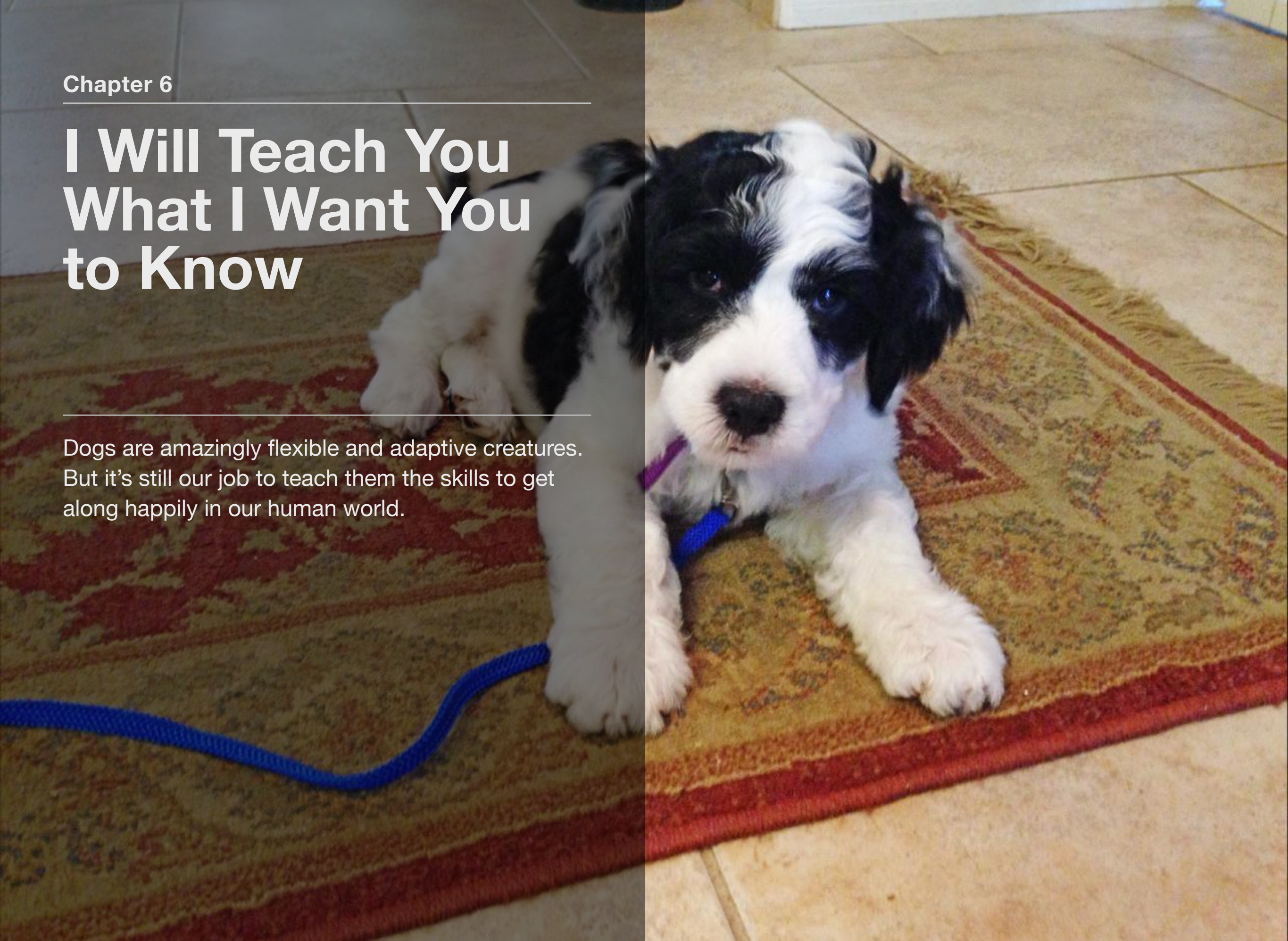
## Chapter 6

---

# I Will Teach You What I Want You to Know

---

Dogs are amazingly flexible and adaptive creatures. But it's still our job to teach them the skills to get along happily in our human world.





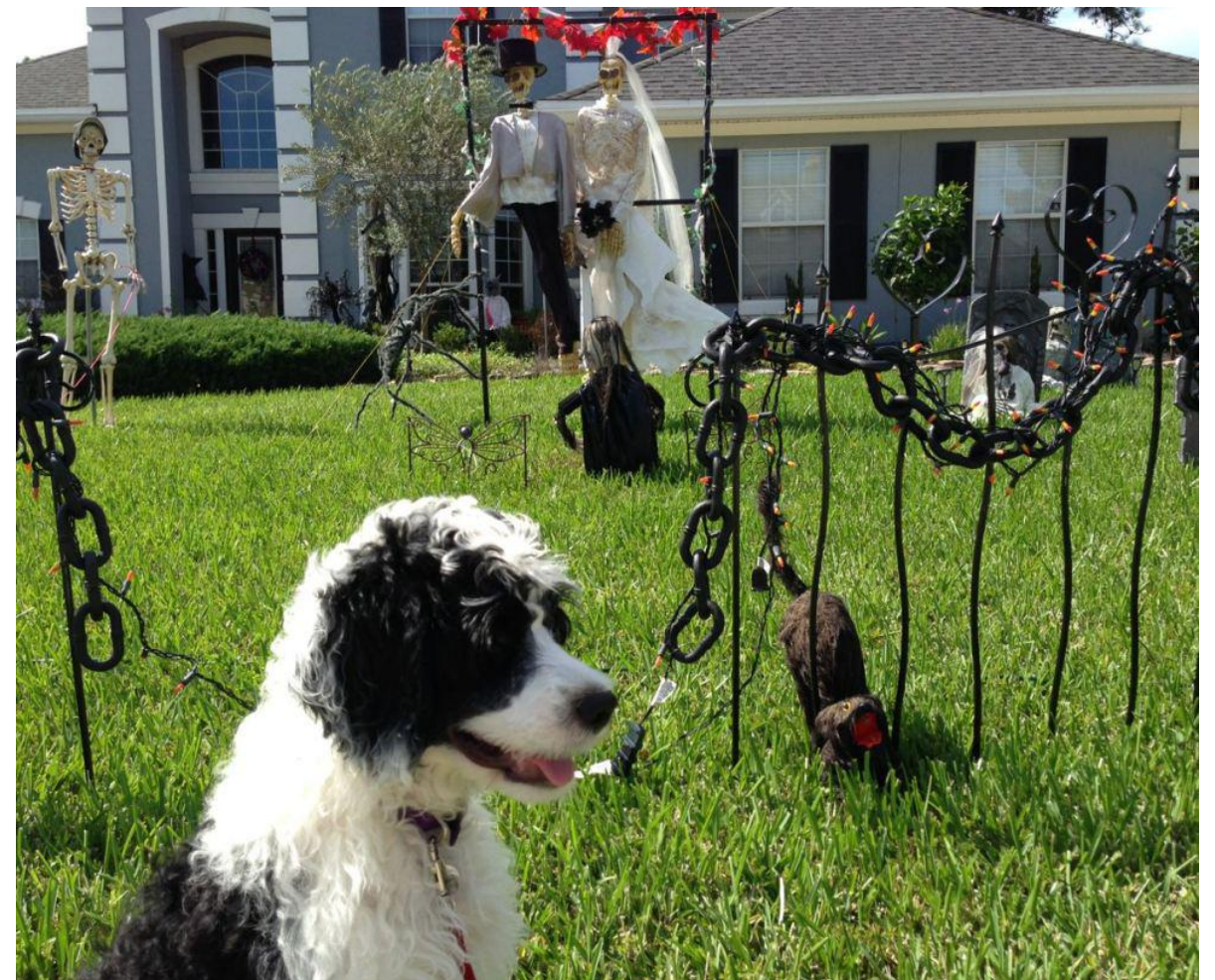
*You are not born with the skills to be successful in my world. It's up to me to teach you.--Marge Rogers' pledge to her puppy, Zip*

In case you hadn't noticed, all these "puppy lessons" are lessons for the trainer as much or more than for the puppy. But Lesson Six most of all. In this lesson, Marge makes a pledge to Zip: She will remember that it is up to her to teach him what he needs to know and how to act in order to be happy in our strange human world.

It's not a question of "obedience." It's more like someone explaining to a dear friend how best to get along in foreign country.

So much of our normal approach to dog training is that of solving "problem behaviors" that bother us (usually after they have gotten established). Nine times out of ten (that's a made up statistic, but I bet it's true), the problem behaviors are just regular old "out of the box" dog behaviors that don't fit well in our human world. You know, chewing stuff up, stealing food, jumping on people, digging holes, barking too much, nipping at fingers. These things aren't evil. They usually just aren't convenient for us. But throw in the mythology of dominance, where we are told that dogs are continually challenging our authority, and these natural dog behaviors can cause a dog to lose its home or its life.

What you will see in this movie is the opposite of that. The most important word in the movie is "teach." Thoughtful, preemptive teaching such as Marge is doing is a win/win for human and dog. Puppy learns a palette of fun, acceptable behaviors via positive reinforcement. He develops skills for even more fun and learning with Marge. He develops good associations to the world through careful exposures. Marge gets a lovely, well behaved dog and Zip gets a big, big world to play in.



**Marge promises Zip: "I will do my best to help you be confident and happy."**



Marge points out in the movie that puppies are not born with the skills to get along perfectly in the human world. And it's actually worse than that: they are born with behaviors that are actively troublesome to us. For instance, "See food. Eat food," as Marge puts it. The counter surfing dog is not challenging our authority. He is doing what comes naturally: scarfing up whatever is available. And once he finds something up there, it will be tough teaching him never to go there again. It will make little sense to his doggie brain. It's not about authority, it's about availability. How much better would it be to teach him never to go there in the first place? Never get that first sweet reinforcer for counter or table surfing.

Thus, Marge will teach Zip habits that are incompatible with inappropriate scavenging. Marge used to have much bigger dogs (mastiffs, then ridgebacks) and I was going to tease her and say she finally got a dog who couldn't reach the counter, but I can hear Sue Ailsby laughing at me. Porties are said to be incorrigible counter dogs. But Marge is a match for that. As you'll see in the movie, she has her special "magnetic mat" in the kitchen door that has thwarted many a potential food thief.

## Whose Benefit?

My favorite part of the movie is when Marge has Zip in her lap for administering eye medication and getting a toenail trim. She prioritized handling (building positive associations with classical conditioning) and has a pup who is all squishy in her lap: relaxed

and trusting. She has the benefit of being able to do some tricky husbandry behaviors with a cooperative puppy. But Zip is the big winner here. He doesn't fear the grooming table, the clippers, the medication bottle, or Marge's hands, for that matter.

My heart still gets all mooshy when I see people doing training that doesn't have human preferences as the sole prompt. This whole movie is dedicated to Zip's welfare every bit as much as Marge's convenience. The more things our dogs are comfortable with, the more skills our dogs have, the wider their worlds can be.



**Zip learning to relax on the grooming table. Zip is a fast learner.**

## Movie 6: “I Will Take the Time To Teach You What I Want You To Know”

Marge's summary to Zip after the six Life Lessons:

*These are my life lessons for you, my sweet puppy. And for me too. Now, let's train!*



“Training? I’m in!”



## ***Thank you for reading! – Eileen and Marge***

We hope you enjoyed the book. Feel free to share your thoughts and responses. (But be sure to check out the **Resources** section too!)



Share on Facebook



Share on Twitter



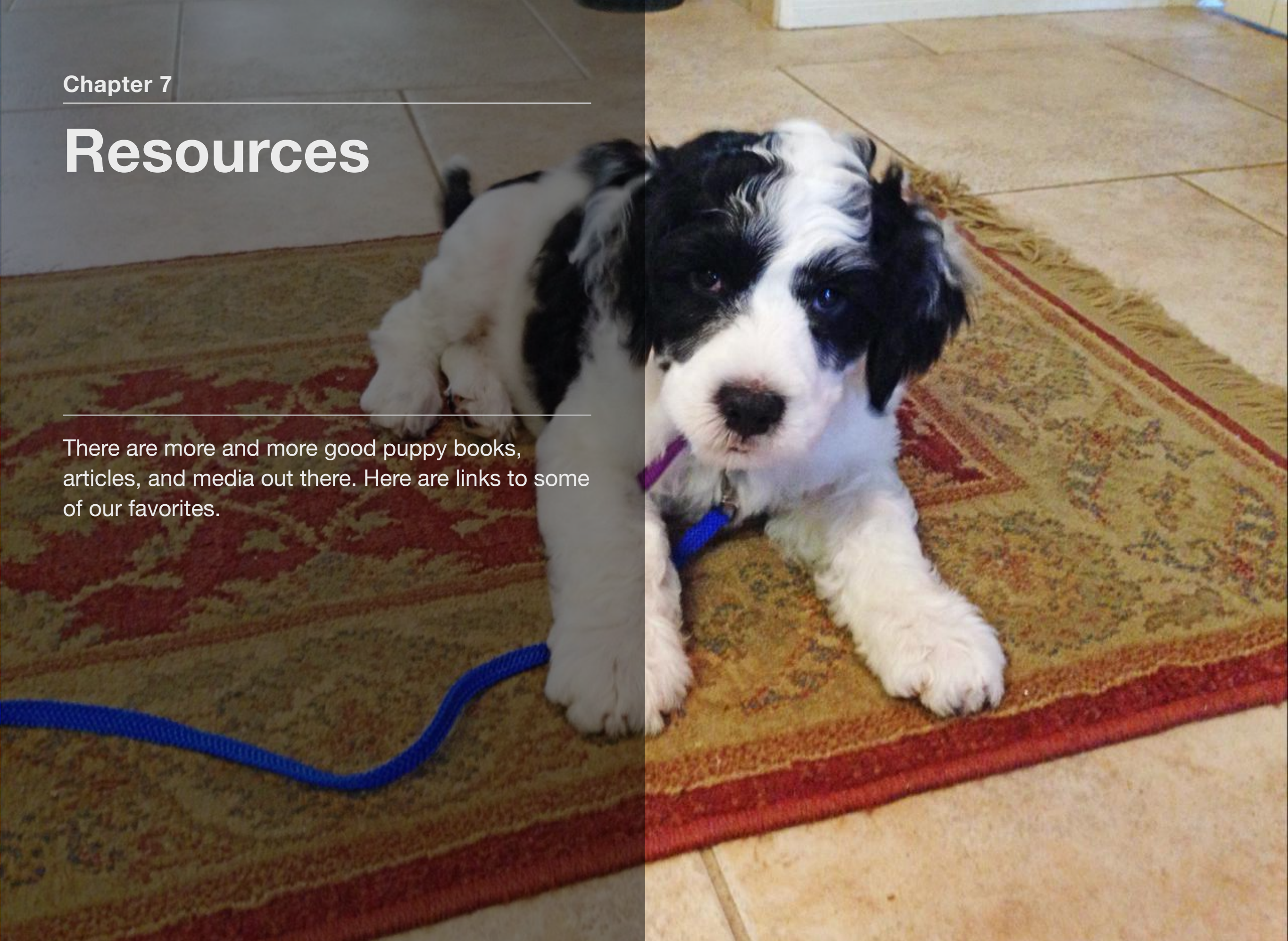
Pin on Pinterest



# Resources

---

There are more and more good puppy books, articles, and media out there. Here are links to some of our favorites.





## Books

- [Puppy Start Right: Foundation Training for the Companion Dog](#)  
-- Kenneth Martin, DVM, and Debbie Martin, RVT, VTS
- [Life Skills for Puppies: Laying the Foundation for a Loving, Lasting Relationship](#) -- Helen Zulch, Daniel Mills, Peter Baumber
- [The Focused Puppy](#) -- Deborah Jones, PhD, and Judy Keller
- [Control Unleashed](#) -- Leslie McDevitt
- [Control Unleashed – The Puppy Program](#) -- Leslie McDevitt
- [Training Levels: Steps to Success--ebooks](#) -- Sue Ailsby
- [Training Levels: Steps to Success--print books](#) -- Sue Ailsby
- [Way to Go! How to Housetrain a Dog of Any Age](#) -- Dr. Patricia McConnell
- [Clickertraining – The 4 Secrets of Becoming a Supertrainer](#)  
Mortan Egtvedt & Cecilie Koeste
- [The Culture Clash](#) -- Jean Donaldson
- [When Pigs Fly – Training Success With Impossible Dogs](#) -- Jane Killion
- [Fired Up, Frantic, and Freaked Out: Training the Crazy Dog from Over the Top to Under Control](#)--Laura VanArendonk Baugh

## Free Online Articles

- [Your Puppy Nipping Guide](#)--Pet Professional Guild
- [Before You Get Your Puppy](#)--Dr. Ian Dunbar
- [After You Get Your Puppy](#)--Dr. Ian Dunbar
- [Operation Socialization: Just Add Puppy](#) -- Ariana Kincaid
- [AVSAB Position Statement on Puppy Socialization](#) -- American Veterinary Society for Animal Behavior
- [Socializing Puppies with Kids, Madeline Gabriel](#) -- Madeline Gabriel
- [Two Misunderstandings About Socialization](#) -- Robin Bennett
- [Dog as a Second Language: A Primer for Humans](#) -- Dr. Ilana Reisner

## Online Programs

- [Housetraining 123](#) -- Webinar by Helen Verte
- [Puppy Peaks](#) -- Online course by agility great Susan Garrett
- [Performance Puppy Class](#) -- Online course by agility great Silvia Trkman



## Free Online Videos and Channels

- **It's Yer Choice**--Impulse control exercise by Susan Garrett
- **"Kikopup"** YouTube channel--Emily Larlham
- **Marge Rogers' YouTube Channel**
- **Eileen Anderson's YouTube Channel**

## DVDs

- **Clicker Puppy** -- Joan Orr
- **Puppy Culture: The Powerful First 12 Weeks that Can Shape Your Puppy's Future** -- Jane Killion
- **Control Unleashed Seminar**--Leslie McDevitt

