

# MY TRAINING PHILOSOPHY



My parents tell me that from the time I was a small toddler, I have always loved animals. After much begging and pleading, I got my first dog when I was seven years old. Despite the fact that I wasn't old enough to be allowed come to my dog's basic obedience classes, [Coco, my Collie](#), learned as many dog tricks as I could think of -- including knowing his right and left paw and looking both ways before we would cross the street. We entered a small pet show when I was in the 6th grade and won a ribbon for the "Trickiest Dog". I will never forget how hard we practiced for that show and what a thrill it was to show off our teamwork. I remember wishing I could train my dog for more shows like that one....too bad that was before dog agility was a sport!

I believe the main reason I became an obedience instructor is because I spent quite a few years as an animal shelter volunteer. To me, there is nothing more sad than the situation in which a dog and owner just don't understand each another -- something seen every day at an animal shelter. Volunteering with unwanted animals can really teach you a lot, but its hard not to leave without feeling devastated by the vast numbers of animals that were simply misunderstood by their former owners. My mission as a dog obedience instructor has always been to promote teamwork and understanding between dogs and their owners (since I've come to accept that I simply can't just take them all home with me!) I also designed a web site called "Choosing the Perfect Dog" to help potential new dog owners make good decisions.

My training philosophy is based on positive reinforcement and building a solid relationship foundation. Some of my favorite animal behaviorists and trainers are Bob Bailey & the late Marian Breland-Bailey, Karen Pryor, Terry Ryan, Sue Sternberg, Jean Donaldson, Donna Dufford, Leslie McDevitt, Julie Daniels, Susan Garrett, Jen Pinder, Kathy Keats, Greg Derrett, Nancy Gyes, Stacy Peardot-Goudy, Ronda Carter, Anna Eifert, and Elicia Calhoun. I believe that dogs can be trained to the level of service dog training without using force or harsh, inhumane techniques. I love doing pet-assisted therapy work because of the powerful connection dogs have with people in need of attention unconditional affection. I love the sport of dog agility because I enjoy the relationship it builds between people and dogs and the example it sets to demonstrate this potential to the general dog-owning public. I feel that both dog training classes and dog sports ought to be taught in a manner that builds and then reflects communication and teamwork between a dog and handler. I am a firm supporter of continuing education and certification for dog obedience instructors and promoting humane training methods. I feel very strongly that there is no "one" method to train every dog- each dog and

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handler team is unique. The wisest instructor knows how to utilize a toolbox of methods and never stops seeking new ways of approaching training. I founded [Teamworks Dog Training](#) to promote these ideals...and to foster good relationships between dogs and their people.

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