

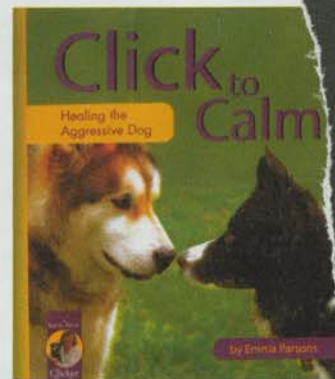


BY JANINE ADAMS

Click to Calm: Healing the Aggressive Dog,
by Emma Parsons

This guide to using clicker training to help calm aggressive or reactive dogs is written by someone who's been there. Parsons' Golden Retriever, Ben, used to attack dogs. Now he doesn't. Parsons offers

(like when you sight another dog) might prime your dog to act aggressively. But rather than suggesting you change your body language, she suggests you train your dog to respond differently to it. Your dog can learn that when you tense up, he gets treats. Thus his reaction to your instinctive body language can completely change the course of subsequent events.



details on how she accomplished this, and she provides step-by-step instructions so that you can do it yourself.

"As a result of my work with Ben, and subsequently with many other aggressive dogs," she writes, "I now believe that almost every case of aggression can be helped through positive training and careful management. Aggression can never be erased completely, but it can be calmed."

After explaining the basics of clicker training and the foundation skills used with the aggressive dog, Parsons then gets into the nitty-gritty: the process of clicking with an aggressive dog. She covers a wide range of situations that can trigger aggressive behavior, and provides solutions for each.

Some of the information is a revelation. For example, she discusses the familiar concept that your own body language

Parsons uses detail in a cookbook-type approach. She has "training recipes" for dealing with various situations. These recipes help you break down the training into tiny parts, which make training less daunting and more effective.

In this clearly written book, Parsons offers hope to the owner of an aggressive dog. With patience, diligence, and a lot of love, you can teach your dog to behave calmly in public.

Sunshine Books, \$24.95; (800) 473-5435; www.clickertraining.com

Janine Adams is an award-winning writer and the author of six books, including How to Say It to Your Dog (Prentice Hall Press, 2003).

FEATURE REVIEW

In Focus: Developing a Working Relationship With Your Performance Dog, by Deborah Jones, Ph.D., and Judy Keller

The "F" of the FOCUS acronym stands for "fun," but it could just as easily stand for "foundation."

A solid foundation is necessary for good performance, whether you participate in agility, obedience, flyball, or another sport. If your dog doesn't understand what you want, when you want it, you'll go nowhere. The program in this book teaches you how to build a solid foundation with your dog that will help you both perform at optimum levels.

Though geared toward agility, its advice transfers to other activities, and the FOCUS program works for any training goal.

Dogs do things for a reason. That reason, Jones and Keller explain, has partly to do with the dog's focus at any given time. Perhaps he's focused on the environment — another dog, or in the case of agility, a particular obstacle. Or the dog could be focused on the handler (not always a good thing, as they explain), or on himself. Determining your dog's focus is key to making this program work.

How does one do that? Know your dog. A positive relationship

with your dog is the foundation of everything. This program can help you create or solidify that relationship.

FOCUS stands for "Fun, Obedience and Consistency lead to Unbelievable Success."

Jones and Keller explain how dogs that are having too much fun can be difficult to control on the agility course, because they don't care what the handler wants — they're doing their own thing, and having a darn good time of it.

Conversely, dogs that don't know how to have enough fun can lack the confidence to excel.

The authors help readers to identify where their dogs fall on the wallflower to fun-loving scale, and explain how to create a balance between fun and focus. They also tell you how to achieve the proper level of obedience, and how to be consistent in your dealings with your dog.

This book won't explain how to teach your dog to negotiate agility obstacles. It *will* offer an education in why a solid foundation is the only way to ensure that you and your dog are in sync in everything you do. That's information all dog owners can use.

Clean Run Productions, LLC, \$14.95; (800) 311-6503; www.cleanrun.com

— Maryanne Dell

