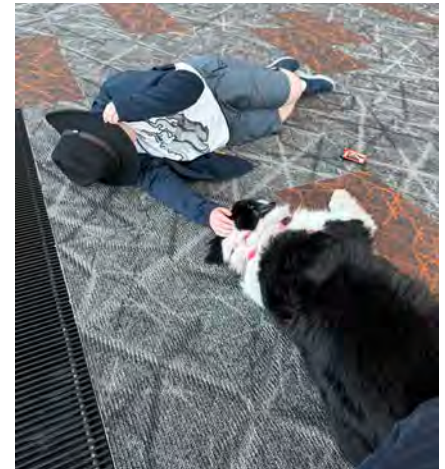


STILL MORE OUT AND ABOUT

ITA teams Peggy Chudd & Gus, Jane Fischer & Mickey, and Eileen Ambrose & Kevin participated in 8 presentations to 6th graders at Union Middle School. **[RIGHT:]** The teacher put the dogs' trading cards into her window the moment she got them. **[BELOW LEFT:]** The kids offered many excellent drawings of the dogs in their thank-you notes.

The classes were a bit crazy and chaotic, but there were still precious moments with individual kids, several of whom shed tears while stroking the dogs. **[RIGHT:]** One boy who was having a particularly bad day spent an hour connecting with Mickey and Kevin.



[RIGHT:] ITA teams Beth Wolfer & Edgar, Becky Butler & Miso, and Patty Meldrum & Finn made a whole lot of people very happy at the Sandy Department of Child & Family Services on November 18th.



How You Talk About Your Dog Matters

by Karen B. London, PhD, CAAB, XPDT-KA

What you say matters, full stop.

Listen in at the dog park, and you're likely to hear all kinds of words used when people talk about their dogs. By tuning into what they're saying, you can get a pretty good idea about the way they view their dogs, and what kind of relationship they have with them. Your words show how you view the world, what has value for you and what doesn't. Because words are powerful, you must take care when wielding them — including when it comes to discussing dogs. Here are some terms to listen for, and what they may be saying about the speaker's unconscious perspective toward dogs.

"Cue," not "command."

In old-style dog training, people issued commands and expected their dogs to obey. When a dog didn't comply with a command, they were considered disobedient and was perhaps punished. The modern approach is to give the dog a cue to let them know what you want them to do. When a dog doesn't respond appropriately to a command, it's easier to acknowledge that they might have misunderstood it, or been distracted.

What's the difference? Cues offer dogs opportunities to perform behaviors for the possibility of reinforcement, while a command offers the possibility of being punished if their response is not what was desired. The change from saying "command" to saying "cue" doesn't produce this change in perspective — it simply reflects it.

"Confused," not "bad."

When dogs don't do what we want or have asked them to do, it isn't unheard of to hear them described as misbehaving or bad. Using derogatory terms to describe a dog who is unsure about what we want puts all the blame on the dog and none on the people.

It's far better to consider them "confused" or "uncertain" — they weren't able to be successful at that moment out of confusion, uncertainty, or insufficient training rather than to slap on a negative label after an undesirable response.

What's the difference? Suggesting that there was a barrier to success (such as a distracting smell or a lack of

training in a particular context) as opposed to calling the dog bad, stubborn, or resistant shifts the viewpoint from the dog giving you a hard time to the dog having a hard time. It's also a good way to reframe your interaction with your dog and to increase your empathy with them.

Don't blame the dog — instead, figure out how to help them succeed.

"She," "he," or "they," not "it."

Many times, animals are referred to by the pronoun "it," the same word we use for inanimate objects like chairs and washing machines, which is pretty impersonal. Using a pronoun such as "he," "she," or "they" makes it more personal, acknowledging that the dog is an individual, living being.

What's the difference? Using these pronouns better reflects the close relationship and the emotional connection you have with your dog. Today, almost everyone uses a gendered pronoun, rather than the impersonal "it." As "they" becomes a more common pronoun for both individuals and for groups, it also carries a more personal connotation even though "they" is used for both living beings and inanimate objects.

"Mix," not "mongrel."

There are a lot of terms for dogs who do not belong to a specific breed. Some people consider the term "cross" appropriate for a dog who has two purebred parents of different breeds and use "mix" or "mixed breed" for dogs whose ancestry includes more than two breeds. Both of these terms are descriptive, and many consider them neither positive nor negative but simply factual. However, "mongrel" and "cur," which reference dogs of unknown or highly diverse ancestry, are considered to be derogatory.

What's the difference? Using terms for dogs of complex or unknown ancestry that imply anything bad about such dogs is problematic because it suggests some dogs are inherently inferior or less valuable than other dogs. Interestingly, "mutt" used to be considered a rude way

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How You Talk About Your Dog Matters (continued)

to refer to a dog who was not purebred, but the term has been elevated to one of affection and respect. In fact, many use the term with the most positive of connotations. Again, language matters.

"Well-trained," not "compliant/obedient."

When people talk about a dog who is compliant or obedient, there's an implication that the dog is responding to force or power, neither of which is helpful in a loving relationship. On the other hand, if a dog's behavior is admirable and the explanation is that the dog is well-trained, that conveys a much more positive feeling.

What's the difference? Saying that a dog is well-trained suggests that the dog has learned a lot, and that someone has taken the time and effort to teach the dog how to behave. It is so much more pleasing to think (and say) that the dog knows what to do and does it rather than to assert that the dog is being coerced to act a certain way.

"Parents, not owners."

People who still refer to themselves as their dog's owner are viewing the relationship quite differently than people who call themselves their dog's guardian, pet parent, or best friend.

What's the difference? The idea that dogs work for us is not the same as the notion that they are members of our family, just as children are. There is a big difference between being a parent of your dog and being your dog's owner. How you describe the relationship between yourself and your dogs is an indication of how you think of that relationship.

Language matters when you're talking about your dog. So, choose words thoughtfully and enjoy the benefits of more loving, more caring relationships with your BFF.

[RIGHT:] ITA Southern Utah chapter teams Ann McLuckie & Suzie Q, Debbie Hull & Emme, Dave Moore & Caleb, and Julie Stephenson & Annie at a de-stressing session for students at Utah Tech University in St. George.



Help Your Dog Enjoy the Holidays

by Karen B. London, PhD

The holidays bring surprises—both good and bad—and though there’s no way to predict exactly what will happen, we do know that our lives will be different than usual. That’s a given when we travel, take time off of work or have visitors. It can be hard on our dogs when the days have a different flow than they are used to, and the best way to prevent any changes from leading to trouble is managing the situation to help dogs through these trying times.

1. Make use of crates, ex-pens and doors; they’re your friends.

Whether you are visiting your favorite dog-loving aunt and uncle over the holidays or hosting 15 family members, have a plan for keeping your dog away from it all temporarily. If a tempting turkey is on the table or six children under the age of four are running amuck at the family gathering, the temporary solution may be the same—let your dog be somewhere else in a safe, enclosed spot. Crates and ex-pens can be a godsend during chaos, but even a closed door is a gift you can give your dog if trouble is on one side and your dog is on the other. Many dogs need experience to learn to be comfortable when closed off from the main event.

Practice ahead of time if you can by giving your dog a Kong stuffed with something incredibly

tasty that he can’t resist and putting him in a safe secluded spot. When you put your dog in that place for real, not just for practice, give him that same delicious treat so he is happy as well as safely protected from whatever holiday horrors or temptations lurk.

2. Monitor your dog’s emotional state.

Pay attention to how your dog is doing so you know if you must intervene and make any changes. If your dog shows any signs of stress—licking, yawning, sweaty paws, panting when it’s not hot—try to change the situation that is making him anxious. Similarly, if he becomes frightened, do your best to separate him from whatever is scaring him. Fearful dogs may tuck their tails, pin their ears back, lower their body, back away or have eyes that look big and dark or show a moon-shaped white patch on the side. If your dog looks uncomfortable in any way, be proactive about trying to alleviate the trouble before it gets worse.

3. Don’t live in hope and fear.

It is horrible to spend your time thinking, “I hope it will be okay, but I fear that it will not.” Many people experience the misery of

this sentiment during the holidays, and I urge

(Continued next page ...)



Dressed for the season: Daisy Daines (above) and the late Lizzie Richards (below).



Help Your Dog Enjoy the Holidays (cont.)

you to avoid it at all costs. If you are worried about a situation with your dog, assume that it will NOT be okay, and take steps to prevent it. That advice applies whether you suspect that your dog will help himself to the holiday cookies on the table, are worried that he will bolt out the door that people keep leaving open or you have the awful feeling that your dog will bite your niece if she grabs his ears one more time. Move the cookies, stand guard at the door or put your dog on a leash, and for heaven's sake protect your dog from any children who are harassing him no matter how sweet everyone else says those kids are.

4. Give your dog a break.

Allowing your dog some time away from it all is a good idea. It can be overwhelming to be around so many new people, especially in unfamiliar surroundings. If you can, take the opportunity to take your dog out for an extra walk or even to spend some time in a room with just you, relaxing and being pet. Some dogs love some alone time, so providing that break may be as simple as putting your dog in a crate with something to chew on in another room. Other dogs may prefer to have additional one-on-one activities with you. Even dogs who don't need much down time at home on a regular day may be grateful for it during the holidays when everything is different.

5. Make informed decisions about whether to bring your dog.

Not every event will be a good match for your dog. If your dog will not have a good time, don't bring him. It's a kindness to avoid situations that will not be positive experiences for him. There are so many reasons that holiday events may not be dog-friendly. It may be too noisy with loud music, or perhaps too crowded or too full of young children who will harass or frighten a dog. Maybe your dog won't be welcome, and it's not fair to put him in a situation where his presence is not wanted. Too much food within reach may make some parties a problem for most dogs. Consider what your dog will face at any holiday festivity and choose wisely based on that information whether or not to have your dog



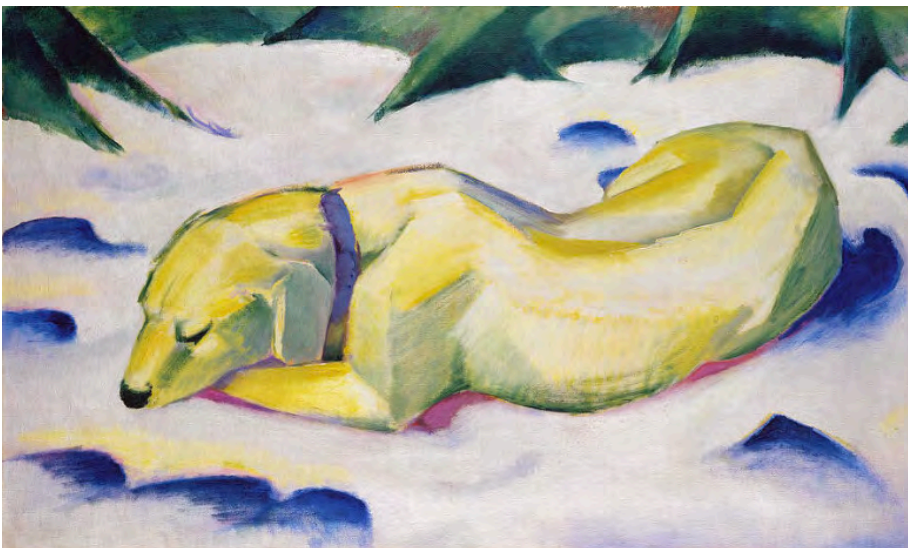
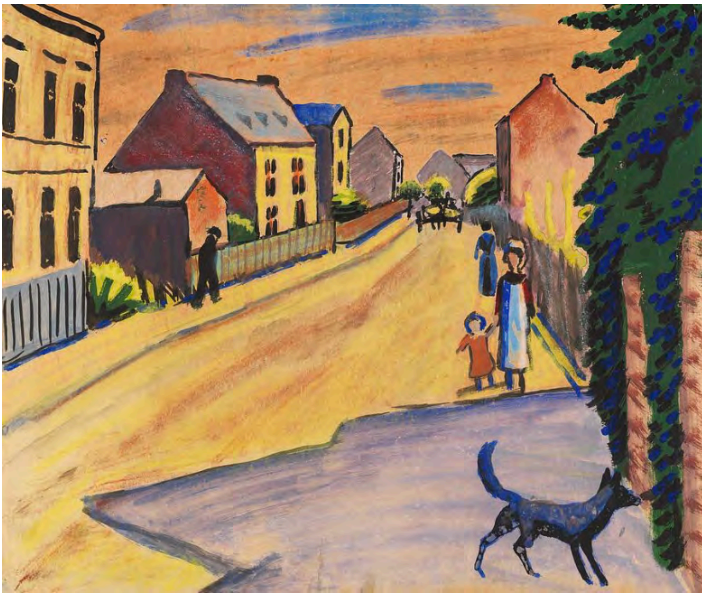
participate.

I want you to have a joyous holiday season, and that is more likely to happen if you are able to keep your dog happy throughout the festivities.

Karen B. London, Ph.D. is a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist and Certified Professional Dog Trainer who specializes in working with dogs with serious behavioral issues, including aggression. She is the author of six books about canine training and behavior, including Treat Everyone Like a Dog: How a Dog Trainer's World View Can Improve Your Life.



Paintings with Dogs



TOP LEFT: Master Bedroom - Andrew Wyeth

TOP RIGHT: Sleeping Dog - Gerrit Dou

MIDDLE LEFT: August Macke #19

MIDDLE RIGHT: Sunset Letchworth with Man and Dog - Spencer Frederick Gore

LEFT: Dog Lying in the Snow -



The Lighter Side



Vet Bill.
Oil on canvas.



Dog family gets a baby for Christmas.

