

Dedication

"A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words."

Dee and I are two of those "kind" of people who find joy and solace being with dogs. We are happiest in their company and proud to have earned their trust. We have experienced the deeply civilized "conversations" that happen between well trained dogs and their handlers. We know that we are better people - more just, more open-minded, much kinder and certainly happier - because of the friendship of our dog partners.

The hope of creating such a relationship is why you have acquired your dog and why you are reading this now. But "loving" our dogs doesn't create trustworthy companions. The commitment given by a dog to his human family is the result of humane training and diligent management. It happens when we wholly accept the responsibility to lead, but not to dominate. Humane leadership allows more of the dog's capacity to reason to be used for learning rather than defense and avoidance.

In the recent history of animal training the science of operant conditioning has been applied to dog training by some visionary folks - Karen Pryor, Gary Wilkes, Ted Turner, the Baileys and their many students. They have shown all of us that we can foster the best in dog and handler by using positive reinforcement. Having the science to support our "feeling" that compulsion doesn't foster learning or trust has opened up wonderful new worlds of training.

So the material included in this training manual and in all our classes is about how to achieve the two goals of all training - getting behavior we want when we ask for it and getting rid of behavior we don't want without nagging - humanely and while having fun! In addition to teaching through positive reinforcement, we have placed a very strong emphasis on managing your dog's environment for safety.

This book, the classes we teach, the handlers and dogs we work with are small thanks for the joy we have been given by our dog friends past, present and future. Though we can never be completely worthy of their devotion we can give them immortality by sharing what they taught us.

This work is dedicated to our dogs-forever in our hearts, always at our side, showing us how to live joyfully in the moment.