

The Training Between the Ears System

Why YES matters!

Using a marker word like YES, gives us a terminal bridge (TB) connecting a behavior with the reward.

The TBTE System uses the term terminal bridge or TB but you can also call it a marker word :)

A bridge is a point of connection. This connection has to happen within 3 seconds but no sooner than 1/2 second since dogs require process time. Using a TB helps the dog feel as if he's been rewarded already (classical conditioning) and gives us time to grab a treat to reward our dogs.

Think of it as we're trying to create a Pavlovian effect in your dog! We mark "Yes" and your dog has an involuntary appetitive response of 'FOOD!'. This is also like anchoring in a good emotion with that sound/marker word. We want to be able to inject, a good feeling into our dogs to help them perceive their world differently.

Benefits of using a classically conditioned marker word or TB

- Immediately help our dogs emotionally feel more optimistic
- Immediately help our dogs emotionally feel safe
- Redirect attention away from a trigger
- Reward relaxation
- Reward pro social behaviors
- Attach good feelings to something they feel is scary
- Changes their perception outside
- Helps to create a relaxed optimistic mood like positive affirmations for dogs

In essence our dogs will literally feel calmer in situations just by saying YES whether or not they have received a treat as long as we have charged this marker word by rewarding often for things through the 6 Things to Bridge and Reward and through DRR.

Charging Your Marker Word or TB & 6 Things to Bridge & Reward

Follow the 6 Things to Bridge and Reward Handout to classically condition your marker word. Your goal should be to say your marker word or TB up to 200 times a day through rewarding for;

- Calmer behavior than the moment before (DRR)
- Spontaneous behavior you like (like relaxation)
- Improved Behavior
- Coming when Called
- After using an aversive
- When you ask them to do something

DRR, Differential Reinforcement for Relaxation

"You're rewarding for things that don't look like the finished product but you'll make huge steps for rewarding any successful attempt at getting to the desired behavior"

DRR helps to capture a moment in time for the dog by marking 'Yes'. Yes is a marker word or Terminal Bridge (TB) that indicates to your dog a reward is coming. We use our TB or marker word to mark

behaviors we want more of which is typically staying calm or getting calmer. DRR is rewarding for *change in the behavior* not the behavior. You can also reward for the dog thinking of relaxing. Once we mark Yes we then *pause, then toss a treat at the dog (toss a treat on the ground for the overly sensitive dogs).

DRR is the process of teaching the dog one step at a time how to come down from a high emotional state to a lower calmer emotional state. It's successive approximation to a calm relaxed state. The progression usually looks like

aggression > distress > hyperactivity > and finally calm

Behavior is the outcomes of thoughts and emotions. DRR gets them to think about being calmer and like getting calmer. Calmer behaviors happens more if dog is reinforced for thought of behaviors.

Training Plan

Practice as much as possible! You can't go wrong rewarding calm behavior! Make sure to always keep kibble or treats with you for training like during walks, in the car, when guests come over, near their crate, when you go to the vet. You can keep jars full of treats all over the house so you're never without food and also keep your treats in your treat pouch and keep your treat pouch on you at all times. Choose to reward 1 behavior that's calmer and nothing else to teach dog there is a set of behaviors we are going to reward. After 3 times of rewarding that behavior change and reward something even more relaxing because the dog will start to think that is what you want and it will be harder to get your dog to do something else (change something even if it's really small unless that is the behavior that you want).

Signs your dog is relaxing; shaking off, stretching, yawning.

DRR Exercise

Use DRR anytime you want to manage or control their behavior. Teach them how to relax instead of telling them what to do.