THE GAME SHOW *Hack*

> **Dogs, like kids, find themselves in a world they are trying to make sense of. They do not automatically understand the rules, and what kinds of behaviors are "right" in that environment vs. "wrong" as every family is going to be different.**

Each home will have their own sets of such ground rules that need to be established for a sense of stability, agreement, and thus safety in the social group. It is our job to help our dogs to understand how it all works in the simplest, most logical & humane way possible.

The Game Show Hack gives us the perfect model to follow in our approach to providing this critical clarity for our dogs!

Game show hosts don't ever get mad, raise their voice, chastise, intimidate or threaten their contestants when they get a wrong answer. The game show host controls the game, the rules, the prizes, the dynamics and the situation. They are benevolent – "wrong answer, better luck next time, Bob". Game show hosts are very happy and supportive when a contestant wins! The rules of the game are always consistent as well. The outcome in response to "right" or "wrong" answers is always the same, irregardless of whether the "answer" was given purposefully or accidently.

WHEN to use it

Best used for teaching puppies and new dogs the house "rules" (do's and don'ts). Even the kids can get involved with this one! This hack can be used on a daily basis so that over time the dog will learn very predictable patterns for what brings him/her success. And because we are always encouraging and have a non-threatening tone, we create an environment for puppies to be successful and willing to continue trying.

HOW to use it

When teaching your dog the rules of the house, be benevolent, encouraging and upbeat, even when they get it wrong. A "Nice try, but better luck next time" approach with your voice, demeanor and body language. Just as a game show host would respond to any contestant. You still set the rules and guide the game but do not intimidate, yell at, or discourage your dog (ideally do not engage energetically or emotionally, with eye contact or too much conversation either). When he gets it right, recognize his success and pour on the "points" (prizes he desires) and praise!

Equipment

The only equipment needed are a drag leash (a leash the dog wears in the house) and an agreed upon set of rules in the household (list of "right" and "wrong" answers) so there is no confusion for the dog/puppy. Write them down and hang them on the fridge if necessary. Also make sure you know what your dog finds rewarding so you can be ready to celebrate the wins!

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Step 1:

Determine what the house rules are going to be. Everyone in the household needs to agree to the rules. Consistency is key to providing the kindness of clarity that's necessary for your dog to "win" at the pet life.

Step 2:

As you move through your day and observe your dog's natural choices in his home environment of the "game show", catch all of his "right" answers by responding with his "ding ding!" winning sound (click, "yes!", "good job!" or other consistent host response) and your great enthusiasm for his "win"! Conversely, when the dog behaves in a way that is not consistent with the rules, step in with your "wrong answer" buzzer sound (oops, uh-oh, eeh) and pick up the end of the drag leash and walk the dog calmly and slowly to the "lost a turn" spot (ideally just behind a gate) or in some cases simply prevent access to the "prize". The lost "turn" only needs to last 3-5 mins, but it is important that he doesn't get another "turn" until he is calm and quietly waiting *(see "Get a Grip Hack")*

Step 2:

Repeat with all of your dog's natural "answers" in his environment, remembering the importance of being entirely consistent and modeling the effect of your favorite game show host!