
American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) states:

"The AVSAB recommends that veterinarians not refer clients to trainers or behavior consultants who coach and advocate dominance hierarchy theory and the subsequent confrontational training that follows from it. Instead, the AVSAB emphasizes that animal training, behavior prevention strategies and behavior modification programs should follow the scientifically based guidelines of positive reinforcement, operant conditioning, classical conditioning, desensitization, and counter conditioning."

"The old method of training was to assume dogs were trying to be dominant if they didn't behave. As a result we would use force until they gave in rather than addressing the underlying emotional state or cause (such as fear or rewarding of inappropriate behaviors)."

Dr. Sophia Yin

Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist, UC Davis

"You can lead with force, like Saddam Hussein, or you can be a benevolent leader to your dog by choosing a style more like Gandhi's. Your approach will determine the type of relationship you have - and whether your dog acts out of intimidation... or respect."

Tamar Geller

Author/Trainer to Oprah Winfrey's dogs

"The force-free movement gains momentum every year and a sure sign of this is that many trainers in the other camps resort to murkier and murkier euphemisms to disguise their more violent practices and retain their market share. Stressed dogs aren't "shut down," they're "calm." It's not strangling, it's "leading". To co-opt a word like whispering for arcane, violent and technically unsound practice is unconscionable."

Jean Donaldson

Director of San Francisco SPCA Academy for Dog Trainers

Behavior experts from UPenn, Tufts, UC Davis, Bristol University (UK), American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB), The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC), American Humane Association (AHA), Whole Dog Journal and Live Science have released position statements and/or published articles denouncing "whispering" type methods and warning of the significant risks of physical and psychological harm these methods present to both people and animals.

WHAT YOU
SHOULD
KNOW

ABOUT

DOG
WHISPERING

The Truth about “Dog Whispering”

“Whispering” includes kicking, jabbing, hitting, flipping, pinning to the ground, electrical shock, choking, asphyxiation and pinching dogs as a means to “train” them.

Did you know “dog whispering” is not a method or an ideology recommended by a single reputable humane organization?

Are you aware that many so called dog “trainers” that practice whispering have no legitimate training in the science of animal learning, but instead rely on reading a dogs mind?

Did you know that quite a few whisper “trainers” have been brought up on animal abuse charges for the harsh and painful methods they use?

The science of dog behavior and learning has a long history of legitimate study. Modern dog trainers apply this science to implement humane and efficient training and behavior protocols.

The SCIENCE of Dog Behavior and Learning

It has been proven that dogs learn by association and consequence, also known as classical and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning was discovered in the late 19th century by Ivan Pavlov. Operant conditioning was investigated by E.L. Thorndike (1898) and later refined by B.F. Skinner (1938).

Dogs view the world as either safe or unsafe and make decisions accordingly. Dogs live in the moment, don't have intellectual morality and aren't capable of feeling guilt or formulating plots out of revenge. Guilt is a complex emotion that involves recognition of and remorse for one's own mistake. Dogs are not biologically capable of this, nor are they trying to dominate us. Dominance is not a personality trait but a description of a relationship between two or more animals and is related to which animal has access to valued resources (food, mates, etc.).

People are much more obsessed with rank than dogs are; yet we are obviously the more dominant species. We have thumbs, credit cards, we can open cans, drive cars... We can even have our dogs euthanized if we so desire. The MYTH that dogs 'know better' & are trying to dominate us is often used as an excuse for using force or pain.

Why is science sometimes ignored and violence chosen over safer, more effective, humane techniques?

Studies have proven that punishment is reinforcing to the punisher. That means that the actual act of punishment makes the punisher feel better.

In a famous 1961 experiment, Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram devised a study to measure the willingness of participants to obey an authority figure who told them to do something that went against their conscience. This experiment has been reproduced and modified somewhat in the years since 1961, but virtually each trial produces the same results: around 60% - 65% of the participants actually pushed the button that was supposed to deliver the maximum 450-volt shock!

We live in a world where people want the quick fix. Despite the better advice of real behavior experts, despite the obvious side effects of using force/pain, despite that nagging inner feeling that “whispering” just isn't right, despite the repeated warnings of “DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME” – here we are, in the middle of a major setback in what was 40+ years of progress in understanding and shaping dog behavior. Don't be fooled by TV.