

## Three Perspectives

One of the best parts of being a dog trainer is watching the dogs and owners as they work together over the weeks of class. On the first week most folks are concerned with getting their dogs' attention, while the dogs' only concern is checking out the other dogs. After a few weeks of practice dogs do offer their humans good eye contact, people understand the natural curiosity of their dogs towards other dogs, and the teacher enjoys watching their progress. All parties are calmer and more relaxed. In fact, as the class continues owners, their dogs, and the instructor are happier, and it's not just because owners become more successful at handling their pets or because the pets feel more secure and self-confident or because the trainer sees the improvement. The reason is that the owners, dogs, and teachers look at the world very differently, and part of the point of class is to discuss and explore these differences so that people have a better understanding of canine behavior, dogs are respected for their unique and wonderful natures, and trainers remain practical, non-judgmental and caring.

Let's take a look at three perspectives:

### Owner

Honestly, we really did practice our homework. He did it at home, and now he won't do a

He won't eat these treats, and these are his favorites. He loves these! distractions

He steals food from the table. He barks until I pet him. He steals my socks. Then I have to chase him all over.

### Dog

OHMYGOSH! Look at that cute poodle. "Hey, cutie, I'm over here!"

WOWSERS! That lab is eating **LIVER!!!** Why don't I have **LIVER!!!** I just get the same old stuff. OOH, that poodle is looking at ME! "Hi, Sweetie."

Ain't life just a bowl of cherries!  
"YOOHOO! Gorgeous, where do you live?"

### Instructor

I believe you, but in class there are so many smells noises to distract him. Plus, I think that cute poodle has caught his attention.

If you are trying to get your dog's attention and there are lots of give him treats that he'll absolutely love. Save his regular treats for home. How about moving him further away from the poodle? He can't stop gazing at her.

Dogs are very smart about figuring how to get what they want. Our job is to figure out how not to reward them.  
That adorable little poodle is flirting with him.

He's so smart. He understands everything I say. So why won't he do what I ask him to do? He's very stubborn. Like now. I've told him ten times to look at me. What doesn't he understand about: LOOK AT ME, NOT THAT POODLE.

I know she's smart. She chose me didn't she? But when I try to show her what I want she ignores me. She can be very stubborn. Like now. What is so hard to understand about: I WANT TO PLAY WITH THAT POODLE!

When training your dog Keep your cues short. Practice until you can turn your back to him, give a cue and have him respond. Right now he's fascinated that poodle.