

HOW TO PICK A DOG TRAINER

Unfortunately, you do not need any type of certification to become a dog trainer. There are 'organizations' that dog trainers can belong to but membership does not necessarily mean the person can train dogs and unfortunately, many trainers just talk a 'good game'.

When searching for a dog trainer, ask him/her what he/she has done with his own dogs. Just because his dog is well mannered, does not necessarily mean he can train your dog. I not only I teach my own dogs basic behavior but also I am constantly competing with my dogs at obedience and Schutzhund competitions. I put my methods of training to the test of knowledgeable judges and expert trainers each time I trial. Also, I have clients who compete with their own dogs, therefore, my talents and techniques are being tested by knowledgeable persons under whom my clients trial. [Don't forget to read Beth's complete resume and visit her Success Stories page].

I have seen/ heard many trainers brag about what they can do or what they have done and I have heard trainers use big psychological terms for certain dog's behavior that was very incorrect. Their resume should speak for itself. I don't want to hear about what should be done, I want to see the person work with a dog and even a few dogs and get immediate results. Even though you may not be interested in competition, you want someone who is not afraid to let his peers judge him and grade his techniques. And you want a person who is unafraid to 'show' you what he can do with his own dog and with your dog and still show you a happy, obedient and well-adjusted dog.

Not everyone can take any breed and/or problem and work with it. That is where experience and expertise come into play. A good trainer can work with all types of problems and breeds. And a good trainer will use whatever equipment or reward will work for your dog. Training methods should be adaptable depending on the different situations. Each dog, like each person is different, if a trainer 'pigeon holes' your dog into the same category as all of the dog's he trains, then he will be doing a disservice both to you and your dog. Disregarding a type of collar or reward will limit the training of certain dogs and can de-motivate a dog or worse yet make a dog more unruly.

Selecting the highest price trainer does not guarantee that you will have the best trainer nor does selecting the cheapest price mean the other trainer is 'over priced'. Ask the following questions when looking for a trainer:

- How much experience have you had training dogs?
- What are your accomplishments (dog shows, etc)?
- Have you or your dogs won any trophies?
- Do you train all breeds?

- **Do you train all problems?**
- **Can I see your resume?**
- **Can you give me referrals from clients?**
- **What accomplishments have your students achieved?**
- **What methods do you utilize (positive only, correction and positive, clicker, adaptable to each dog's behavior)?**
- **What type of equipment do you use?**
- **What is your experience with aggressive dogs?**
- **What is your area of expertise?**
- **Can I watch you train a class?**

And:

- **Observe if the dogs in the class are happy and obedient.**
- **See if the trainer is attentive to problem dogs and if the problems are addressed and solved.**
- **See if the trainer is taking an active role in the training of the dogs or just commanding the 'owners'.**
- **See if the dogs enjoy class and want to be there.**
- **See if the trainer's dog is attentive to it's handler, waiting to work or to be asked to work.**