

HAPPY DOGS - HAPPY PEOPLE

If you have ever watched the Dog Whisperer show on National Geographic, you know that Cesar Millan is a magician with the dogs. He can turn any dog, no matter how ferocious or how unmanageable into a calm obedient dog.

Wouldn't you wish that you could do the same?
Now here's where it becomes interesting - you can!

What the Dog Whisperer is working with is energy and a deep, deep understanding of dog psychology. He just knows what makes dogs "tick" . Or rather not freak out!

He has launched a concept called the Dog Fulfillment Formula. - What? you may ask. Fulfill a DOG? - Yes! fulfill a dog. Now why would you need or even want to do that? It's just a dog?

Weeeeell, no! It is not JUST a dog. IT is a living, breathing, highly intelligent, social creature with a huge need for togetherness, challenges and exercise. All dogs are like this. All dogs. Period.

Just think about the dogs that are Seeing Eye dogs or other kinds of service dogs. Imagine what they have had to learn, and they did it! Or the rescue dogs, imagine the discipline and the rigorous exercise that is needed for these dogs and their humans to do the tasks they do. The Police dogs, the K9units. The herding dogs. By the way, have you seen the show with the Border Collie who knows more than a hundred words and who can deduct to get the new toy when a new word is said?

So if you have a dog, you have a creature that is capable of the most astonishing feats. But most of all he/she is your responsibility and looks to you for fulfillment of all his/her needs. And what are those?

Well, most people know that dogs need food and water, that is a given. But they also need shelter - from the rain and from the sun in our part of the country.

But these things are just the absolute bare necessities. Giving your dog these things will keep it alive, but not happy.

Your dog will be a frustrated dog and will most likely give you problems - either with barking or digging or being aggressive or any other constellation of problems.

If you want to be happy and have a fulfilling relationship with your dog - you want your dog to be happy!

So how do you keep your dog happy?

Cesar Millan's Dog Fulfillment Formula is like this:

EXERCISE,
DISCIPLINE
AFFECTION.

In that order.

Exercise: Walk the dog at a brisk speed at least 45 minutes a day.

If you cannot do this yourself, find someone who can do it for you - a grandchild, a student, a friend.

Dogs have a lot of energy. Now, there are different levels of energy in the dog world. These go from extremely high to very low. Depending on your dog's level it will need more or less walking.

Discipline: A dog needs boundaries and limitations. (Do not jump on the couch, do not use the bathroom inside etc.) If the dog is not given boundaries and limitations, HE/SHE will give you boundaries and limitations!?!?

Affection: Many people shower their dogs with affection. There is nothing wrong with that. That is why you have a dog, right? But make sure that the equation is not lopsided. To ensure that the dog is balanced it needs exercise and discipline before affection. Affection is for the human - according to Cesar.

Affection given at the wrong time can actually be bad, and perpetuate a problem that you would like to get rid of. But do give your dog affection after walking and making sure that he/she knows the rules.

Thus, what I am trying to say, is that having a dog confined to the back yard 24-7 is like having a dog on death row. I'm sorry human, but seen from a dog's point of view, this is the truth.

Now, please hang in there with me. Let me explain:

It is very easy to understand how the dog must feel - just imagine that you yourself were confined to one room in your house 24-7. You could never go out or leave this area. Wouldn't you start climbing the walls, digging, screaming (barking) or be totally frantic? (I would!)

Nobody's perfect, and maybe your life is such that it is impossible for you to walk your dog as much as you want to. Like I stated in the beginning of this writing, find someone who can help you. And then walk with your dog as much as you can. The more exercise your dog gets the happier and calmer he/she will be. 2 times a week is better than never etc. etc. - you get my drift?

So I hope to see you on the streets of Carlsbad with your dog happily following you! See you out there!

For the love of the dogs.

Anita Ricka

If you have a question about your dog that you would like Anita to help you with please email her at happydogs@mywdo.com

She will answer your question in her monthly column Happy Dogs - Happy People.