

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HOUS TRAINING AND MORE

I am devoting an entire chapter to Houstraining. There is no doubt houstraining is one of the most formidable topics to address. The rescue groups and animal shelters concede this is one of the most prevalent reasons dogs find themselves surrendered by their owners. Animal Cruelty agencies also admit this is a major reason dogs have been abandoned to their yards or tied up outside. Behaviorists and veterinarians list “various houstraining issues” as being among the most common inquiries they receive. Consequently, houstraining deserves a requisite amount of attention in any behavior book. Granted, you can provide people with the ABC’s of basic houstraining. There are countless books, articles, and information which address the topic. With all this information available, you have to ask WHY houstraining remains one of the most overriding “behavior” issues when viewing the entire gamut of canine behavior.

My feeling is this is one of the most misunderstood (by owners) topics, THE primary consideration for most people having a dog live IN their home. They may not realize houstraining carries such import and gravity when they initially or spontaneously acquire a pup/dog. However, the reality is houstraining can be the “kiss of death” for the pups/dogs!! People want to bring dogs into their home, but do not realize what it means to houstraining a dog. As much as people want a dog in their life, as much as people love that cute, irresistible pup, as much as people’s heartstrings are tugged by the dog they see at a shelter, as much as someone may want to do all the right things when they get a pup or dog, as much as people love having the dog in their lives.....when the houstraining does not go according to what the owner’s expectations are and the dog messes in the house, this is not acceptable for many people. The bottom line is when people think they are ready for a pup or dog, they do not factor in IF they are ready to deal with the reality of a pup or dog urinating and or defecating IN their home!!!

People are fine with all the issues presented by an infant and a toddler as regards potty training. But, for some reason they are unable to handle a dog having many of these very same issues. Please do not misinterpret what I am saying. I am not trying to equate an infant or toddler in importance with a dog. What I am trying to convey is, we choose to have a child or infant and we deal with all that means. However, we also choose to bring a pup/dog into our home and expect the impossible from them. Even more disconcerting for me is when people are unable to handle their dog having a normal bodily function in their home! We put diapers on an infant. We give months of training and patience to potty training a toddler. However, when a pup or dog is not houstrained in a matter of days or weeks...the owners just cannot handle these things happening IN their home.

If you think I am being extreme in my comments, realize the types of things I hear repeatedly. For example, we love the pup/dog, but we just CANNOT have them using the bathroom in the house. I am not sure what these people expected when they got the pup/dog. Let’s be totally honest here. Think about having an “infant” in your home and NOT using diapers! Let’s consider a scenario where no diapers were allowed. Would humans still have children? Of course they would, this is propagating the species. And,

our species does want children. In the scenario of a society that does not allow diapers for infants, a family having a child would KNOW what they are in for. They would take measures to some how, some way make this work as best they could. Parents would find ways to protect their furniture. They would be super vigilant about when to do whatever it would take to ensure naturally occurring bodily functions were tolerable and occurred with the least amount of damage to the home and furnishings. Parents would find ways to make it all work in the best interest of the infant and the parents and their home.

I know this sounds very farfetched and hypothetical. Yes, it is for our culture. But, it is reality for many cultures in some foreign lands. They do not get rid of their infants or tie them to a tree because they “soil” the family’s living quarters. Why? Because this is their child, this is their culture; this is what it means to have a child. My point in presenting this is IF you chose to take on the responsibility of bringing a pup or un-houstrained adult dog into your home, it is INCUMBENT on you to fully accept what that means in the reality and totality of your decision. You must know and accept what you are in for when you make this decision. It is not acceptable to say you have to get rid of a pup/dog because they have naturally occurring bodily functions.

The only explanation I can come up with for why people are so appalled and un-accepting of the naturally occurring bodily functions of a dog versus an infant is a dog is viewed as a dog. This is exactly as it should be. Meaning a dog is absolutely different than a human infant. They are a different species. This is precisely my point! They are a dog, they are a different species. We are the ones who bring them INTO our living quarters. We are the ones who demand and expect they should not, cannot, will not urinate or defecate when their naturally occurring bodily functions dictate. This is even more unrealistic and irrational when you realize they are genetically wired to be a dog. When you consider they speak/understand “dog” and you speak/communicate in a foreign language “human”, for them to ever be able to somehow “get it” is rather remarkable.

Consider that pups will have a similar frequency of bodily functions as infants. Pups are basically infants. How many parents have changed a diaper and five minutes later, the diaper is soiled again! There is no difference in the naturally occurring bodily functions of an infant and a very young puppy! So, what is the difference? You expect this from an infant and you understand why this occurs. Additionally, a child is a child, a dog is a dog. I will acknowledge all of that. In fact, those aspects make my case for me. If you expect all of that from an infant and understand why it occurs, you should have that same level of knowledge and understanding of what it means to bring a pup/dog into your home and what is guaranteed to occur. If you are not prepared to do this, you are not ready to get a pup.

Let’s look at adult dogs you might get from an animal shelter or rescue group. This is no different than adopting or fostering a toddler who has never been properly or successfully “potty trained”. When you bring this toddler into your home, you know and expect they will have issues and accidents. You know you will have to do all the right things to get them properly potty trained. Again, this is no different than adopting an older dog who is

not fully or successfully housetrained. Dogs only learn housetraining by patterning behavior. Consequently, even if they were housetrained in their previous home, they may well not be in your home. You have a different schedule/routine. You have to give them the chance to “adapt” to the new schedule/routine. Give them a chance to become patterned to your schedule and routine. If they have never been housetrained, you have to start from scratch. This means training your dog as if they know nothing and has no concept of what you are asking. You go back and train them as if they are a puppy. You take them out more often than you could imagine they would possibly need to go. The key is to stay ahead of the accidents!

My approach to housetraining ANY dog is called *HOUSETRAINING...CPR*. The CPR of my housetraining method means **CONSISTENCY, PATIENCE, and ROUTINE!** Granted, many owners feel they need real CPR when their beloved pup/dog has a potty accident on their new carpet. Whether your carpet is new or not, housebreaking is a crucial need for ALL owners who share their home with a furry canine. The fundamentals of my approach will primarily address “puppy” housebreaking. However, the philosophies, theories, and methods presented cross age barriers and will apply to most housetraining situations. Even if you have an adult dog who has never been completely or successfully housetrained, you will be able to housetrain them successfully using my methods. As mentioned above, this will mean going back to square one, starting from scratch as if the dog knows NOTHING! The only variances will be the time frames presented because adult dogs do have larger bladders than pups. However, you will not want to stretch the time frames inordinately. The fact remains they do not understand housetraining. When someone says they have a 2 or 3 year old dog who is almost housetrained or pretty much housetrained, the reality is they are still having accidents. If they are still having accidents, they are NOT housetrained. What they do “understand” is skewed. Consequently, you will want to TRAIN them from scratch so what they end up understanding at the end of the process is correct.

Aside from what I have already addressed regarding why housetraining is a topic of such critical import, I need for you to realize housetraining is usually THE very first circumstance you and your pup/dog encounter in the realm of communication and learning. This means, housetraining is usually the first situation you tackle in “teaching/training” your pup/dog. If talking about a pup, this is more critical than you may conceive. The manner you approach “teaching and training” will lay the FOUNDATION for how your pup “learns to learn”. Moreover, you speak human, they speak dog. This is your first opportunity to lay the groundwork for how you and your dog will communicate throughout your relationship. I have already covered the “patterning” aspect of the dogs being able to live so closely with a completely different species.

Housetraining is almost always the first “communication and learning” situation an owner and their pup/dog share together. This lays your groundwork. This begins your foundation. When you bring a pup/dog into your life, I ask you to seriously consider HOW you intend your life together to unfold and develop. Do you want to lay the communication groundwork, build the foundation of your relationship with your dog and all the years before you on “sinking sand”? OR, do you want to build and develop a

foundation for communicating from day one. A foundation of patience, understanding, respect, and fairness that will only grow stronger with every passing day for all the years you will spend together? The decision is yours.

Okay, now that I have laid the “groundwork” for this chapter, let’s start get started!

It is best to begin by understanding some basic facts regarding the pups/dogs and their fundamental nature. Even though the dogs live with us in our homes, they are still dogs and are governed by the innate and genetic nature of being a dog. In the dog world, the dogs just go whenever and wherever the urge hits. The only variance to this is they do not want to potty where they eat and sleep. The dogs do not have bladder control as people know it. In the first days and weeks after bringing them home, they do seem to make an effort to go “to a spot”. This is not a defined spot per se, as witnessed by watching pups playing, then taking two steps and squatting. If they are sitting or lying down and the urge hits, they get up take two steps and squat. All they are really doing is just moving out of the immediate area they are in when the “urge” hits. They do not know one place is correct and another is not. Rather, it is just doing what a dog does. Take an adult dog playing in the yard with you. They can run, chase their ball, and on one of the runs back to you they stop take two steps off their path an squat or go over to a tree and hike their leg. Then, they continue on into you with their ball. This is the same behavior exhibited by pups in these initial days.

However, when the pups have to go, they WILL just go within the parameters of “trying” to not go where they eat or sleep. In the dog/dog world, this is not difficult to do because their environment is the great outdoors. The frequency that the pups have to potty, even in this environment, is governed by the size of their bladder. As the dogs mature, their potty habits will be somewhat modified when circumstances dictate to accommodate “marking” necessities. But, the dogs still elementally just “go when they gotta go”. *Note: I will discuss marking behavior in the human/dog environment later in this chapter.*

It is humans having the dogs live with us in our “living quarters” that has spawned the concept of housetraining, one place is acceptable and one place is not acceptable. If you truthfully look at the basic nature of the dogs, you will realize the concept of housetraining is a very complex thought process. Even when the dogs are somehow able to grasp the idea, for them to accommodate this human/dog world requirement places physical demands on the dog that are contrary to their basic nature. This is why I believe housetraining is actually contradictory mentally and physically to the dog species.

Anyone who brings a pup/dog into their home must recognize the full extent of what it is we are asking of them. True understanding demands that you be reasonable and realistic in your housetraining expectations. You will be required to fully acknowledge and accept your role in housetraining your pup or dog. This will mean modifying your expectations to the age of your pup which dictates their bladder size (capacity). You will have to be aware of the conceptual GAP from what you are asking the pup/dog to understand and what their basic nature and genetics tell them. This will highlight the significance of your need to be consistent, patient, and provide a routine.

If you have children, you already have the most necessary information and don't even know it! HOUSETRAINING your pup/dog directly correlates to potty training a toddler. You must be consistent and patient. You must use a routine to help achieve the end result. And, YOU must shoulder the entire responsibility for success or failure. I tell people when a pup or dog has a potty accident, it is NOT THEIR accident. It is YOUR accident!

While potty training a toddler the parents constantly ask the child, "If they need to potty". Even when the child says they don't need to go, the parent will "insist". The basis for this is the parent staying AHEAD of the accidents. The parents know how long it has been since the child went to the bathroom, they know how hard they have been playing, they know when the child has just waken, when the child has eaten or drank something. The parents know and stay aware of the bathroom needs of their toddlers to ensure they will "access" the bathroom before the child has an accident. This is precisely what owners should be doing with their pups/dogs.

It never ceases to amaze me that so many owners expect that their pup/dog will be housetrained in a matter of a few days, weeks, or months. This is an expectation placed on a different species and one which has NO grasp or understanding of what is expected of them, much less why. The toddlers DO understand the concept of potty training and the why. They are just not capable of mentally or physically being successful, if left on their own. Parents do not expect a child to be fully and successfully potty trained in a matter of a few days or weeks or months. Unfortunately, owners expect this from their pups/dogs.

I have people call me on a Sunday after picking their pup up on Friday evening and they want to know WHEN their pup will be housetrained. Almost as incredulous are the owners who tell me their pup/dog is doing well in their housetraining, except periodically, they will have an accident right in front of the door! Then, there are the owners who want to know WHEN their 8 or 10 week pup will start to let them know they need to go outside to potty. I guess the owners expect the pups not only have a full grasp of housetraining, but have also determined a communication system to let their owners know they need to go outside. After all, they have had the pup for a whole two weeks. Let's not forget the owners who are distressed because they let their very young pups stay outside for 30 minutes or an hour. After all of that time outside, surely the pup has done all their business and could not possibly need to potty again for 2-3 hours!

I am sorry if this offends anyone. However, I have heard all of these scenarios or similar scenarios hundreds of times. Even if I did not have an understanding of dogs, I would still have some sense of how unrealistic and unfair all of these expectations are. As an owner who is preparing to housetrain a pup/dog, I am placing certain "realistic" demands on you. I ask you to grasp and understand the following aspects that should govern and will affect YOUR success in housetraining. Remember, your pup/dog CANNOT be successful if you are not successful in your housetraining program.

- 1) Your pup/dog instinctually knows only, "when I gotta go potty, I just go".

2) Parents spend the first many months of their infant's life feeling as though all they do is change diapers. As a new dog owner, be prepared to feel as though all you do is "potty" your pup.

3) Pups have very small bladders and no bladder control as we know it.

4) The concept of one place to potty is acceptable and one place to potty is unacceptable is a very complex human thought process. Moreover, it is contradictory to the basic nature of being a dog. Consequently, potty training a pup/dog is actually "pattern training" as opposed to them truly understanding the concept.

5) A parent who "potty training" a toddler shoulders ALL of the responsibility for knowing WHEN and how often their toddler need to take a trip to the bathroom. Pup owners MUST shoulder ALL of the responsibility as well.

6) When pups/dogs have an accident, it is NOT THEIR accident. It is YOUR accident!

7) When the pups/dogs do potty in the house, they do NOT know they have done wrong. They haven't. They have only done what comes naturally. All they can possibly know/sense is their owner is unhappy with them. There is no way a dog's mind could possibly connect that a naturally occurring bodily function is wrong.

8) Pups/dogs speak and understand "dog". How can they be expected to communicate in "human" when they need to potty, UNTIL the owner has bridged the communication gap between the two species?

9) You must be consistent. You must be patient. You must create a routine for the pup/dog to be pattern trained.

10) Your pup's/dog's success in housetraining will be directly proportionate to your success on your responsibilities to the process. If you are only 80% on your part, your pup/dog will only be 80% successful.

HOUSETRAINING BASICS

There are specific times the pups WILL absolutely need to go potty. (*Note: Keep in mind that this method for housetraining applies to older dogs as well as pups. However, some of the time frames would be slightly adjusted.*) It is essential for you to keep to the potty schedule needs of your pup. IF there is a chance you may get on the telephone, visiting with friends, reading a book, watching television, working on the computer, or any other activity when the time can get away from you, I recommend setting a kitchen timer to keep YOU on schedule. I promise your pup's potty needs will wait for no one or nothing! The "absolutes" you can COUNT on include:

- * Within 10 minutes of eating, they will have to urinate.
- * Within 30-45 minutes of eating, they will probably have a bowel movement.
- * Within 5-10 minutes of drinking water, they will have to urinate.
- * During play sessions (with you, another dog, or by themselves), pups will need to urinate approximately every 10 minutes. You better watch the clock, because this will occur. As the puppy matures, this time frame will gradually increase incrementally.
- * During play, the dogs are just like children, they forget...until too late. They play hard, and suddenly, they will stop, take 2 steps and squat!!!!
- * Immediately upon “waking” (night sleep or day nap), they will have to urinate. They may not be able to make it to the door so, you may need to carry them.

Be sure you fully understand these potty needs and ensure you accommodate those needs. Be ever vigilant of these scenarios and react appropriately...get your dog outside! Remember, if they have an accidentit is your fault, not theirs.

YARD POTTY PEN

Hopefully, you fully understand how complex the concept of housetraining is for a dog and that it is contradictory to the basic nature of being a dog. Giving all due respect and acknowledgment of these facts tells us we need to do whatever is necessary to help them somehow grasp the concept of one place is acceptable to potty and another is not acceptable. I have found the “yard potty pen” to be one of the most useful tools to help set a foundation for any level of understanding or patterning of behavior to occur. First I will describe the potty pen, and then I will explain why and how this works.

Purchase a dog exercise pen (from a pet supply place) or buy some galvanized wire to create a pen in the yard. The pen should be 4'x4' to 6'x6' in size. The sizing is not locked in stone. The concept is a “secured, separate, and defined” area in your yard. It should not be large enough to become a “play area”, but must be large enough so the pup can walk around to stimulate their bodily functions. This is especially important for pooping. Many pups and dogs have to walk around to be able to accommodate the final process of the poop moving on through their system.

My male Westie, male GSD, and my Chow/Keeshond mix did not need to walk around much. My female Westie and my male Golden Retriever had to walk a bit to finish their business. Now, this could be back and forth in a small area. They just had to be able to move around. Both of these dogs continued this same physiological behavior into adulthood and throughout their lives. I travel extensively with my dogs, so I have ample opportunity to observe their potty behaviors since it occurs on leash at hotels. What I observed with both of them is when they needed to poop; they would walk back and forth or in a circle. They would begin to assume “the position” (as I call it), then they would walk a bit more. It was not uncommon for them to repeat this behavior several times before they were successful. My point is to make sure your potty pen is not too large, but large enough for them to move around to stimulate their system.

Place the pen where it is easily accessible to you, possibly right off the edge of the patio. This will allow you to place the pup/dog in the pen and not have to walk out into the yard. Depending on the weather, this can be an important consideration. Keep in mind you will be placing the pup/dog in the pen and getting them out of the pen. You may be able to do this by lifting them in and out, so keep in mind the “height” of the pen when you decide on what to use. Factor in the breed of pup you have. Depending on the breed, some pups can get fairly large when you consider lifting them in and out of a location. There are some pet exercise pens that come with a door or gate. You may need to consider spending a few extra dollars and get one of the pens with a door or gate. The pen needs to be one that is physically feasible for you and the pup for the duration of the housetraining program which can be several months.

When deciding on your yard potty pen, you want to be sure it is convenient for you since you will be using it frequently (okay, constantly) during your housetraining. The reason I stress “convenient” is that there will be times it is hot, cold, rainy, windy, all different external situations. Additionally, there will be times when you are tired, busy, feeling lax, or short on patience. So, if the pen is inconvenient because of one or more of these considerations, you may try to “stretch” the time between potty breaks or you will be more impatient waiting for the pup/dog to do their business. This will be very detrimental to your overall housetraining program. So, make sure you have a very convenient pen that you will use no matter what the circumstances.

It goes without saying that you will want to keep this pen “picked up” on a very regular basis. It is best to not pick up while your dog is in the pen. Wait until they are back in the house or at least out of the pen playing in the yard. My preference is to clean up as soon after they go as possible. This keeps the area clean which is good hygiene and lessens the opportunity for poopeating behavior. Also, with pups it is always good to keep a close eye on their output. If something occurs out of the ordinary, you would want to pick it up immediately in a baggie so you can take it to your vet for a fecal exam. Also, this prevents the pup from accidentally walking, sitting, or lying in their poop. While some people feel you need to leave the poop so the pup will be drawn to wanting to do their business, the “draw” is still there because poop occurred in that area, whether it is still physically there or not. Remember, your pup/dog has an incredible sense of smell.

Using a confined, secure, and defined potty area (yard potty pen) serves multiple purposes. The most important aspect is the potty pen creates a very specific, concrete differentiation of one place is acceptable and one place not acceptable, if it is used properly. This provides a “clearer picture” to the pup/dog of what you are wanting from them. The pen allows a more consistent, defined structure that aids the pattern training necessary for housetraining. The pup/dog will become patterned to pottying in one place. They will come to realize and even expect access at specific times. This is what lays the groundwork for them developing bladder control. This is different than just letting the pup/dog out in the yard. The potty pen is a defined area they will gradually come to associate with a specific behavior, going potty! This is the essence of patterning a behavior. Also, their body will gradually adjust by developing the bladder control necessary for them to eventually wait until they have access to their potty area. This will

be reliant on your ability to hold consistently to a specific potty routine. *Important Note: The extent of any “developed” bladder control will always be defined and limited by the “physical size” of their bladder. Consequently, never push them beyond their physical limitations. If you do, they will have an accident and you will have set your housetraining program back two steps.*

Many pups can be very insecure outside. All the sights, sounds, smells that excite most pups can overwhelm and intimidate other pups, initially. Some may want to just sit at your feet, not wanting to leave your side. If they are doing this, they can't potty. The potty pen provides them with a sense of security and safety. These pups will be more at ease and more successful in a potty pen. This also applies to some adult dogs who have not had exposure to the great outdoors. Some rescue dogs who have lived their entire life in a crate or have had bad experiences in open spaces will feel more secure in a potty pen.

One common thing I hear from owners is they let their pup/dog out in the yard to go potty. Then, as soon as they come back into the house, they will potty within 1-3 minutes. Sometimes, this occurs almost as soon as the pup comes in the house. This situation is brought about because the dog gets so excited and involved in the “stimulus” of their yard, they forget to do their business. The other reason this occurs is the pup is loose in the yard. The dog potties when they first go outside, but they walk or run around investigating this wonderfully exciting world of sights, sounds, and smells. All of these things represent “stimulation” of the pup's system. When they come back into the house, the exciting, external stimulus level immediately diminishes. However, their body system has been stimulated and they do have to potty again. Without a doubt, they WILL potty. If you keep in mind the time frames regarding playing, being awake and the frequency of potty needs, you will see the correlation to why this occurs.

The bottom line is, the first thing your pup should do when you take them outside is potty and the last thing they should do before you bring them back inside is to potty. This is another reason why the yard potty pen is so beneficial. If you are using a potty pen, they go into their pen anytime you take them outside. Once they have done their business, you can take them out of their potty pen and they can play in the yard. They can investigate this wonderful world of sights, sounds, and smells. The key is the last thing you do before bringing them back into the house is to place them back in their potty pen.

MORE HOUSETRAINING CONSIDERATIONS

It is crucial that you be patient when you take your pup/dog outside to potty whether it is on leash, loose in the yard, or in a yard potty pen. If you get upset or irritated and demand they “go potty, NOW!”....this stress can cause them to “lock up”. This is a similar phenomenon to what can happen with children. Right before they leave for a trip, parents will sometimes demand a child relieve themselves before they can leave on the trip. This stress, anxiety, and demands cause the child to lock up. They are unable to use the bathroom. However once they get in the car, with the motion of the car and the reduced stress level it is almost guaranteed that within 15 minutes to half an hour, they WILL have to use the bathroom. With the pups, if you over talk them by continuously

encouraging them to potty or try to rush them, you can have the same “lock up” situation.

You do want to praise your pup each time they potty outside. Do not be effusive, loud, screechy, or too high pitched in your praise. This can actually startle or even scare the pups. Your praise should be a quiet, happy tone. I like using treats as a reward for potty behavior. If the praise is done properly and consistently, that alone will work. However, I think the treats add another motivational element. The pups/dogs truly want to please; they thrive on praise which tells them they are pleasing you. They will want to repeat behaviors that please you and elicit your praise. With treats used as an added “reward”, you have just raised the stakes, the importance of a particular behavior. Not only can they please you and get praised, but they get a TREAT!!! I mean, how much better can life get?

Every owner should use crate training as an aid to housetraining. This is for the benefit of the dog and you. If they are loose in your house when you are not home, even in a secured area like the kitchen, they will have accidents during the housetraining period. Every time the pups/dogs potty IN the house, this is *reinforcing* the instinctual nature of the dogs to potty whenever and wherever they are. During housetraining, you are trying to pattern a very complex behavior. If you look at behavior modification in its purest form, every time the pup/dog is able to engage in the previous behavior, you have made modification of that behavior into the desired behavior more difficult. At the very least, you have added time to when the modified and desired behavior is solidly ingrained.

When the pup/dog has too large an area, they will sleep less. They will be more mobile and thereby able to “stimulate” their system through activity. The result is they will have to potty. Just as you would with a child, remove the pup’s/dog’s water about one to two hours before going to bed. Your pup must be given potty access as the absolute last thing they do before going to bed. The Crate Training section will cover all aspects of crate training in depth.

PUPPIES “RELEASING” IN THEIR SLEEP

This is an interesting and relatively uncommon phenomenon which can occur with puppies. Sometimes a pup will have a full bladder release while they are sound asleep. My Golden is my only dog to have exhibited this behavior. The first time occurred when he was about 4 months old. Ryan was very good and had never had a potty accident when awake. One morning when we woke, he had released sometime during the night and was totally unaware of it. About a week later, the same thing happened. This time it occurred during the day while he was sound asleep on the couch. My first reaction was there was a medical issue. I had him checked out fully by the vet and everything was clear. He was not having any accidents when awake and was not urinating with more frequency, which would have signaled a medical issue. The vet mentioned that sometimes pups sleep so soundly and if their sphincter muscles are a bit weaker than usual, they can exhibit this behavior. We put Ryan on some medication (Phenylpropanolomine) to help strengthen his sphincter muscles. After being on the medication for a short time, he had no more incidents of this nature. We removed him from the medication after three months. Since

Ryan's situation, I have encountered several other pups who exhibited this behavior. When everything else has been ruled out as a cause, I mention this possibility to the owners.

Note: The situation I described with Ryan occurred when he was four months old. After the three months of medication, he had no other incidents of this behavior UNTIL he was three years old. We were on a trip and were rear ended by an 18 wheeler and rolled down a hill 4 1/2 times. We all survived, but Ryan was emotionally affected for a time. Within a week of the accident, he was sound asleep on the bed in a hotel and had a full release. I placed him back on the phenylpropanolomine for two months and he was fine for the rest of his life.

OTHER MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some medical situations can cause increased frequency of urination. Previously, I covered some of the more common medical issues which can cause increased frequency of urination. Additionally, some dogs can urinate more frequently and have a lessened ability to hold their urine or control their bowels after a surgical procedure, when anesthesia has been administered, or because of some medications. If the frequent urination is due to a surgical procedure or anesthetic, the problem should resolve in a reasonable amount of time. Generally, this is a couple of days to a few weeks depending on the nature of the surgical procedure.

Some dogs seem to have more frequent urination following anesthetic. Just as people can have a variety of different reactions and after effects from anesthetics, so can the dogs. If this is the case, your dog should return to their normal urination schedule once the anesthetic has fully worked through their system. There are some medications which can cause more frequent urination. If the increased urination stems from a medication, they should return to normal once the medication has been discontinued and it has worked through their system. Do NOT remove your dog from any prescribed medication without consulting your veterinarian! You would not do this with your child, do not do it with your dog. (*Note: Some dogs will also experience diarrhea following surgical procedures, anesthetic, or as the result of some medications.*)

If your dog exhibits increased frequency of urination or diarrhea after a surgical procedure, anesthetic, or when they are on medication, you need to notify your vet, who would determine if this is within normal expectations or if it is a situation that requires further evaluation. In the case of medications, they may determine a different medication would be better suited to your dog.

POTTY ACCIDENTS

When housetraining a pup/dog, you must be very aware of what is happening in your life that can dramatically affect the success or failure of your pup/dog at any given juncture during their housetraining process. Housetraining can only be achieved by "patterning" a specific behavior. If the routine or schedule constantly changes because your schedule

constantly changes, there is NO pattern. If you have been providing a certain routine/schedule and it suddenly changes you have disrupted the very behavior you are trying to “pattern”. This can occur because you are on vacation, your work schedule has changed, your activities have changed, you have guests, you are preparing for a dinner party, you are preparing for the holidays or a major function like a wedding, you are having work done on your home...well, the list could go on and on...IF any of these or like situations are occurring in YOUR life, they ARE affecting your pup’s/dog’s routine/schedule. You are “pattern training” your pup/dog and suddenly there is no routine or a dramatically different routine. There will be accidents! Moreover, you will have to start at the beginning to develop a schedule/routine so you can successfully “pattern train” your dog for desired potty behaviors.

Everyone has heard that IF you do not catch them in the act or just as they are walking away, DO NOT SCOLD THEM because they do not know what they have done. **This is absolutely TRUE!!!!** Unfortunately, my experience dealing with puppy and dog owners is they truly do not believe this OR they are unable to abide by it. I will explain the reality of this statement and other truths regarding potty accidents. Here are some of the most common things I hear from owners regarding potty accidents. I will explain the inconsistencies and erroneous reasoning of these statements.

** The pups/ dogs know they have done wrong. After all, when the owner shows them the spot, the pup/dog shows remorse.*

REALITY: The dogs do not know they have done wrong after the fact. Why? Because for a dog, they have not done anything wrong. All they have done is what comes naturally, a normal bodily function. What they do know is their owner is displeased. The dogs have a tremendous sense of our feelings and emotions. I will explain this further in other areas of the books. For example, how many owners say their dog “senses” when they are upset and their dog comes to comfort them? This is true. It is also true that when you have a wave of disappointment or displeasure, the dogs “sense” it immediately.

In my seminars, I do a demonstration of the dogs’ ability to “sense” our emotions and react accordingly. I always take one of my dog’s favorite toys and make a point to play with my dog at various times during the seminar. When I get to this part of the seminar, I walk over to the toy. My dog will run over thinking we are going to play again. Instead, I stand there and stare at it and make myself feel displeasure (internally). I do not have to point at the toy or say a word. My dog will change from happy play expectation to trepidation. It does not take long for her to “sense” my displeasure. Within a few seconds, her ears go back, she goes low to the ground, and will back away as if she is in trouble.

If someone thinks this is a conditioned response in my dog, they are partially correct. My dog(s) know me and my emotions. They have become “attuned” to my emotional nuances. So yes, you could say she is conditioned to this reaction. But, it is not because she has been trained to react this way. It is because she “senses” my emotions and she reacts according. This is not something I have trained my dog to do for the sake of a seminar. I can get this reaction on any object I choose. Additionally, even dogs I do not

know will have this same reaction. It may take them a bit longer to “sense” my emotions because they are not emotionally “connected” with me. But, almost all dogs will eventually have this same reaction. It is this “sensing” of our emotions that elicits this reaction from the dogs, NOT that they know they have done wrong!! This part of the seminar is very powerful and the attendees cannot escape the reality of what they witness.

** Even when the owner does nothing or says nothing, merely walks into a room, the dogs cower or act as if they have done something wrong. In fact, the owners say they do not even know there is an accident; rather the dog’s reaction causes them to look for the accident or what they have done.*

REALITY: Part of this is explained above. The other variable involved here is the dog is truly conditioned to something being wrong when their owners return. This can be more consistent if the dog has been having accidents in one place. They become “conditioned” to their owners getting displeased when the owners go to that specific area. Consequently, the dogs react from a patterned “expectation” associated with that part of the house. After all, this is where they have gotten in trouble repeatedly.

When questioned, some owners will fess up that the dog can have this reaction and the owner finds nothing wrong. This is when the owner looks around and when they find nothing, they say....oh, good boy....and the dog will become happy again. The issue is that without being questioned, the owners do not remember these instances.

Another undeniable aspect to this scenario is the dogs can become “conditioned” to expect their owner to become displeased shortly after returning home and the dogs will actually go and hide as soon as their owners start walking through the house. If the owners will truthfully look at these situations and this information, they will not be able to ignore the truth of what is happening. The dogs do not know they have done wrong “after the fact”. Their reactions have to do with the owner’s reactions and/or the dog’s conditioned “expectation” of the owner’s reaction.

To further prove this point, look at families with more than one dog. It is very common to have them say when they walk into a room; the “innocent” dog will cower or act “guilty”. Sometimes, the guilty dog will act the same way. However with young pups or adult dogs you have not had in your life for very long will show no reaction at all. When people describe this, they will say the innocent dog acts guilty, but the offending dog shows “no remorse”. What this demonstrates is the dog who knows you the best and knows your emotions, senses your displeasure. It is inconsequential WHY you are displeased, they react to your displeasure. At the same time, the younger or newer pup/dog who has not become as “attuned” to you and your emotions does not initially “sense” your displeasure. Again, I say they are NOT reacting to the “potty accident AFTER the fact”. They are reacting to what they “sense” from you!

*** Some pups/dogs are so smart and they do understand and know it is wrong to potty in the house. How do the owners know this? Because their dog goes to another room to potty when their owner is home.*

REALITY: The explanation for this behavior is two fold. The first one is the easy one. Dogs are drawn to the areas where they or other dogs have pottied. This is why these areas should be cleaned with a product that absolutely works to break down the enzymatic elements of the urine or feces. Next, block off this area so the dog does not have access to the area for a period of time sufficient enough to “break” the patterned behavior. Remember, not only are dogs drawn to areas where they can smell dog potty, they also tend to develop the habit of going in one area. This is like in the yard, observant owners know where their dog(s)’ potty area is.

The second explanation for a dog going into a part of the house to potty where they are out of their owner’s presence and eyesight is even more important. The dogs have not grasped the concept that inside is not acceptable to potty. What they have learned is that for whatever reason, their owners get very unhappy and upset with them when they do what comes naturally, when they potty. The dogs do reason through that they need to not do their normal bodily functions “in front” of their owners! This is not understanding that pottying IN the house is wrong. Rather, it reflects the dog understanding that when they potty in their owner’s presence, they get very upset and/or the dog gets in trouble. Even if the dog is “praised” for pottying outside, the “negatives” they receive for YOUR accidents are more powerful and lasting in the minds of the dog. The overriding impression for the dog is pottying, period, elicits their owner’s displeasure.

If the housetraining process is not clear and complete, the conclusion the dogs draw is pottying “in front” of their owners is not good. Believe me; the negative reactions they receive have a much more significant and impacting effect on the dogs than the occasional praise in the yard. The dog is not choosing to potty in the house as opposed to pottying in the yard. They have not successfully grasped that concept. They are choosing to do what they have come to understand which is they cannot potty in front of their owner because it gets them in trouble. It is not uncommon for these dogs to become hesitant to potty even IN the yard “in front” of their owners. Many rescue dogs who have had severe housetraining experiences in their previous home will not want to potty in front of anyone. I ask you to seriously consider the consequences of getting irritated, agitated, or impatient when you are waiting for your pup/dog to do their business during the housetraining process!!

Let me add one additional note. Some insecure dogs or dogs who have been jumped at some time by another dog can feel overly “vulnerable” when they have to “assume the position” required for them to defecate. This can cause them to have to go behind a tree or bush or the side of the house to accommodate this potty need. If it is not possible for them to do this in the yard, they will tend defecate in the house in another room. I have watched this with dogs at hotels. The owners will say their dog will not defecate on leash. I recommend the owner turn their back to the dog and usually the dog will be successful. If this occurs with your dog at home, leave them in their potty pen and go back into the house. Or, if other dogs in the household are making them feel unsafe when “assuming the position”, let the dog in training out by themselves when it would be time for them to do big potty.

** Supposedly, some dogs potty in the house out of “spite”.*

REALITY: The dogs are not capable of the emotion of “spite”. This is uniquely a human emotion. The one thing I know is the dogs are TRUE to their feelings. Whatever they exhibit is real and truthful. Granted, the dogs can engage in a behavior that is out of the norm for them. When this occurs, the dogs are communicating with us and they are being honest in what they are saying. The issue is we attach a human emotion to it, “spite”. To be fair to the dog, you should examine what has happened and try to look at the situation through your dog’s mind and heart. If you know your dog is upset or agitated over something and they have a potty incident, this occurred because of the real emotions of the dog. These emotions are stress or anxiety over something that is or is not occurring in their pack environment or something that has recently occurred in their pack environment.

Stress and anxiety can cause a dog to potty or act out, just like a child. Stress and anxiety can stimulate them to have to potty just as with humans. When we are experiencing stress or anxiety, we invariably make more trips to the bathroom. This is an internal physical reaction to the stress and anxiety. The same is true of the dogs. As for the “acting out” aspect, I cover this in more detail later. Consider that a child experiencing stress and anxiety often engages in inexplicable behaviors, like bed wetting. They are not being spiteful or rueful. They are having a physical reaction to stress and anxiety in their lives. The same can be true of the dogs.

** The owner goes into another room, closes the door and the pup/dog potties right outside the door.*

REALITY: When the dog does this, it is from stress and anxiety caused by being separated from their owner. All they know is their owner is there, just separated from the dog by the door. Some dogs have more of an issue with this than others. And, it is very common for puppies. They become very distressed when they cannot get to you. They can hear you and smell you, and know you are there. Their stress and anxiety is from not being able to get to you or be with you. Remember, I have explained the dogs need to be “a part OF, not apart FROM” their pack. Consider that even dogs who are able to handle this situation will often just lay right outside the door sleeping or snuffling. Most owners really enjoy their dogs wanting to be near them in most situations. They will even talk about their dogs being their little shadow or following them everywhere they go. However, many owners lose sight of this when they go into a room and close the dog outside the door. You can get your dog to acclimate to this situation, but you have to help condition them to being able to accept this scenario. This is harder with pups because they become “fearful” when alone and the stress and anxiety caused from their fear can stimulate their system and they will have an accident almost immediately.

** The pup is outside, but potties shortly after coming inside.*

REALITY: This is a very common occurrence. I have already covered this situation. No

matter how long the pup has been outside, if they do not potty right before re-entering the house they WILL potty shortly after coming inside where the external stimulus is lower than in the exciting environment of the yard which is full of all sorts of sights, sounds, and smells to be investigated. They may have pottied a half dozen times, but if they have been walking around checking things out or playing or running around, you call them to come inside...the last thing they will think to do is to squat right before coming inside. When young children are very involved in some activity, they don't remember to go potty. This is why the parents constantly "remind" them. You should do this with your pup/dog when housetraining. Again, the yard potty pen helps with this as you would place the dog in the pen as the first thing when they go outside, and then remove them from the pen to play in the yard. You must be sure to return them to the potty pen as the last thing right before bringing them into the house.

** Owner is home, pup is crated. The pup barks, cries, whines, and potties in their crate.*

REALITY: This potty incident occurs because the pup is awake and their system is being stimulated by the barking, whining, and restlessness in their crate which is created by the stress and anxiety of being separated from their pack. The same thing will occur when you have been gone for a time, return home, but take several minutes to get to the pup to let them out of their crate to go potty. In this particular instance, you are even more assured to have a crate potty accident because in addition to the excitement level of the dog stimulating their system when you return, they most likely have been asleep and have just waken which is a guaranteed time the pups WILL have to potty.

** The pup is doing well on their housetraining, but has an accident right by the door.*

REALITY: Hello!! If they have been doing well on their housetraining and they have an accident right by the door, what does this tell you? They are starting to get the idea that they need to go outside to potty. However, they have not determined how to communicate (signal) their need to you. All they do know is to go to the door. They cannot imagine why the door is not opening!!! They cannot hold any longer, so they release. At this juncture of the housetraining process, you have dropped the ball. Your pup/dog is getting a "glimmer" of understanding and you are not doing your part to build on this glimmer of understanding. Their "glimmer" of understanding is recognition that the door has something to do with their potty needs. What they do not know is how to make the door open or how to get you to open the door. When your dog has an accident right by their potty door....YOU have messed up big time!! You have missed a prime opportunity to BUILD on their "glimmer" of understanding. Additionally, you have allowed your pup/dog to experience (once again) the behavior of pottying IN the house. This further confuses them because they have started to understand one aspect and yet, they are unable to complete the action they don't fully understand or grasp. Talk about throwing a "kink in the works", you have just lost valuable ground in helping them to understand. You have further confused them. Now, imagine if you corrected or scolded them for this accident. My gosh, they were TRYING!!! You messed up. Moreover, they went to the door, the door did not open and they could not hold it any longer. You can bet they will think twice before they go back to THE DOOR that caused them to get in

trouble. Does that make sense? I sure hope so!

When your dog has an accident by the door, you should be excited that they are right at the threshold of “getting it”. And, you should actually be ashamed of yourself. The truth is YOU did not fulfill your part. The pup/dog cannot make that door open. All they know is it should open, but it doesn’t and they are confused. They have to be thinking...guess I didn’t really know what this was all about. It is amazing enough that your dog has started to have any grasp of the housetraining concept. This is the time you should be even more vigilant on your part. At this point, you have the golden opportunity to reinforce the dog is correct in the assumptions they are making. You can know you are entering the final stages of solidifying their full and complete understanding of housetraining, IF you will do your part and react appropriately. OR, your inaction (not opening the door) will tell them they really don’t understand what it is you want. It is all on your shoulders.

** The pup will squat right in front of the owner, looking right at them.*

REALITY: When this occurs, the owners believe the dog is being stubborn or being spiteful. This is prime example of the dogs “trying” to communicate their needs and beginning to get the idea. What has happened is the pup/dog has begun to realize their owner is in some way associated with their potty needs. At this stage, they do not have a clue what that connection IS. They just know there is a connection. So, when they realize they have to potty, they come to you and potty. Believe me, this is a far better scenario than the dog feeling they have to leave the room to potty. If your pup/dog does this behavior it says you have been doing something right because the dog has associated you and your “pleasure”, as opposed to your “displeasure”, with their potty needs.

At this stage, you should realize you are not watching the clock closely enough. This behavior tells you have the first glimmer of real understanding in your pup’s/dogs’ mind. Use this glimmer to build on. Watch the clock more closely. Watch your pup/dog more closely. When they are playing or doing whatever, when they walk up to you and look at you, immediately say good baby, let’s go outside and go potty. Be quick about it. Depending on the age of the pup, you may only have a split second window of opportunity before they will have no option but to release.

I wish owners would be excited when this scenario occurs, instead of viewing it as a negative. It is truly a positive. This is often the very first stage of the pup/dog starting to make the connections you want them to make. This is a very tenuous and fragile point. If you react to this behavior in a negative manner, they will not want to engage in that behavior again. Understand the behavior I am talking about is YOU being involved in their potty behaviors. Remember, most owners want their dog to “signal” they need to potty. This should be seen as the pup/dog making their first attempt to in some way “signal” you to their needs. Even if they do release in front of you because you didn’t respond quickly enough to the thought process they are just beginning to have, you can still “preserve and reinforce” this thought processes. This means reacting in a positive manner, so they will want to come to you again when they realize they need to potty.

Note: When this situation first occurs, do not expect the pup/dog will be capable of this

every time they need to potty. Just like a child, they will get too involved in something and not think to do this. Moreover, this thought process is not solid enough, nor has it occurred enough for it to become a “patterned” behavior.

Now, you are probably saying, is this lady crazy! I am supposed to be excited because my dog looked at me and squatted right in front of me!! That is exactly what I am saying. As I said before, this indicates the dog has made the very first and elemental connection of you being important to and a part of their potty needs. They may not know how or why, but you are connected. It is up to you to grab onto this opportunity, build on it, and begin the next crucial steps in the housetraining process.

When we talk about housetraining a pup/dog, we are talking about having a dog give conscious thought to a naturally occurring bodily function. Again, this is the basis of potty training a child. When you get that first very small “glimmer” of a connection in the dog that there is something conscious about pottying, you have the most essential element to housetraining your dog. Take it and run. Build on it. Be ever more vigilant and consistent in watching the clock and getting your dog outside at the appropriate times. If you “err”, err on the side of taking them outside more often than you imagine they could possibly need. Stay “ahead of” the accidents. This is the point the owners should “see the light”, recognize what is occurring mentally with their pup and make the most of it.

** How long will it be before my pup/dog will let me know when they need to be let outside to go potty?*

REALITY: It is amazing enough that the pups/dogs EVER understand the human concept of housetraining! To expect they will one day just determine a way to “alert” you without some training and reinforcement from you is beyond reason. Unfortunately, this is what many owners expect will occur at some point. Even more absurd is when owners want this to occur within a matter of a few days or weeks of bringing the pup/dog into their home!

When you first bring a pup/dog into your home, they do not know your language and you do not know their language. Bridging this inter-species language barrier takes time. The dogs only know how to communicate as a dog to other dogs (dog speak). Moreover, the dog/dog world does not provide the dogs with an understanding of the human concept of housetraining. So, if they initially cannot have an understanding of one place is acceptable and one place is not acceptable and if they have not even begun get any sense of understanding your language (human speak) and you have no grasp of their language (dog speak), there is no possible way they can communicate a need to you that they don't even understand, yet! Does this make sense?

Let's consider one other aspect of communicating their need to you even once they do get the idea. People expect the dog should go sit at the door and “bark”. Excuse me, but how many owners work very hard to train their dog NOT to bark in the house and often even in the yard! Okay, now we have a pup/dog who may just begin to understand they need to go outside to potty. How are they supposed to let you know? Bark? Well, except for the

very vocal dogs who probably bark more than their owners want, the dogs may well have started to understand they should not “bark”. What is the dog supposed to do? Are they supposed to go stand or sit at the door or scratch on the door and wait for the door to open? If you are on the phone, you may well not notice. If you are in another room, how can you “see” their signals? Bottom line, most dogs do try to signal once they truly understand. The problem is the owners do not see or recognize the dog’s signal!

There are a few dogs who eventually develop a particular “bark noise” that their owners recognize as their “potty vocalization”. These are the exceptions rather than the rule. But, even these dogs are not capable of this “refined” vocalization EARLY in their housetraining process. This is why I highly recommend the BELLS method or other noise signal devices. I will discuss these a little later in this section. Granted, many of us have managed some how, some way to housetrain a dog without all of this information and these recommendations. When I think about these scenarios, it is baffling to me HOW the dogs were able to accommodate what we desired. And yet, many did. By the same token, there are countless people through the years who were never able to successfully housetrain a previous dog, or at least not completely. Whatever level of success many of us experienced in years past is testament to the dogs’ desire to please and their inexplicable ability to somehow accommodate our desires. However, in this day and age, there is no reason to go through the housetraining process in the manner it has been done previously. There is more information, more understanding, and better methods, more access to information and successful methods and understanding for the owners. We should all take advantage of the wealth of information and knowledge available. This will make our lives and the dogs’ lives much easier during housetraining and other training ventures.

** Many owners will say they “never” had this much housetraining their previous dog(s).*

REALITY: In some rare instances, this may be true. The previous dog may have been “the exception rather than the rule”. There may have been older dogs in the family who taught the pup by example. However, in most instances, what I find to be the reality is it has been many years since the people have had a pup. When people have older dogs or have lost a dog and now have a pup, these people’s “memory” is of the adult, trained dog. They lived many years with a well behaved adult, aged, more sedate, and pretty much trained dog. When I speak with them and they say their other dog never did this or that or was not this hard to train, I question them about specifics. Invariably, the owners will eventually realize and admit they did go through a lot of similar behaviors with their other dog. It had just been so many years; they had not remembered those aspects of raising that particular dog. When they think back, they chuckle and acknowledge...YEP, their other dog was indeed a “pup” in every regard and in every pup behavior.

*** The pup/dog has been doing well, but suddenly backslides and is pottying all over the house.*

REALITY: There are a couple of reasons owners can make this statement. One is the pup/dog did start to have success and the owners got too LAX on their part. They

expected more than the pup/dog was capable of at this point in time or in the houstraining process. Meaning, if a young pup is beginning to get the idea and shows some success, the owner thinks they can HOLD longer than feasible based on the physical size of their bladder. If the pup/dog manages to give a signal the owners “happen” to recognize as a potty need signal, the owners expect the dog fully and completely understands and will always “remember” to give the signal. As with children in potty training, this is not reality! What I have found more times than not is the owners start to see some level of understanding and success and then they expect too much or don’t pay as close attention to the clock as they should..

I believe it is at these precise stages of the houstraining process that the owners should actually increase their role and vigilance. The pup/dog is right at the threshold of understanding. The owners can take extra measures to lock in the behavior and solidify the dog’s understanding OR they can set their entire program and process back tenfold. This is completely up to the owner. How the houstraining process progresses at this stage is solely dependent on HOW the owners respond or not. If you step up your role, your vigilance, you will be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. If you become lax or cavalier in your role, you will set your program back.

Another consideration is the owners change the pup’s/dog’s schedule routine. When a pup/dog has come to expect a certain schedule and suddenly this schedule/routine changes dramatically, this can cause accidents. The pup/dog can become accustomed to having access to their potty area at certain times. If that access is not provided when the dogs mentally and physically have come to expect it, they will most likely have an accident. Remember, one of the key elements to houstraining is “routine”. Also, keep in mind the most overriding aspect of successful houstraining is based in “pattern training” the dogs. When this pattern is “disrupted”, the dogs will still have the pattern for the behavior. They will potty when their pattern/routine dictates, whether potty access is provided or not. It is essential you recognize this aspect, especially during the houstraining process.

To me, one of the most unfair and emotionally traumatic things we can do to our pup/dog we are trying to houstrain is to make a major error in their routine. This is especially true when the dogs have “gotten it”. They are doing their absolute best to abide by our rules and then we end up forgetting to watch the clock or getting hung up at work. If this occurs, you should have a back up plan. You should have someone who can come and accommodate the dog’s potty needs.

This is true of adult dogs who are completely houstrained as well. Can you imagine what the dogs go through when they are fully houstrained and one day something happens and they have to go beyond what their physical bladder capacity is. They know they have to go. They know they can’t go in the house or their crate. They hold and hold and hold. I cannot even conceive of the physical and emotional anxiety the dogs experience before they have no option but to release. Then, the dog is devastated that they have released. Let me add one medical concern when this situation occurs. If you place your houstrained dog in the position of having to repeatedly “hold” way beyond

their “limit”, you are risking a very good chance that they will develop a bladder infection or urinary tract infection (UTI).

Speaking of medical situations, the other consideration when the pups/dogs have been doing good in their houstraining and suddenly begin having frequent accidents is “medical”. Many pups/dogs can develop bladder infections or urinary tract infections (UTI). Additionally, with bitches they can develop vaginitis. In little girl pups, this is called “puppy vaginitis”. The key to these medical situations is “suddenly”. To be honest, these are relatively common with young dogs.

What will often happen is they will be doing very good on their houstraining. They wake up one day and seem to have to urinate almost constantly. This is seen by the owners as “accidents” and something has gone awry in the houstraining. The truth is the dog has most likely developed one of these medical conditions. I have to say that for whatever reason many vets will tell the owners that this is a “behavior” issue.

As a behaviorist, these situations are almost assuredly medical. To me, the indicators are so clear and specific. If your dog has been showing significant success in houstraining and they wake up one day and literally seem to have to potty every five minutes, I will almost guarantee you that one of the medical issues is in play! Now, what I am talking about is they are literally pottying constantly! When I say constantly, I do mean constantly. This can be accidents in the house or the dog needing to go outside constantly and still having accidents.

I am going to say something now that is not intended to be a slap at the veterinarians. But, it is what I have experienced in hundreds and hundreds of cases. When this situation is described to me and I ask additional questions to ensure the owners and I are truly talking about the same thing, I will tell the owners to take the pup/dog to the vet and have them checked for one of these conditions. Nine out of ten times, the response I get falls into one of two categories. One response is we just had the dog checked and the vet said the dog was clear when checked for these conditions. OR, after our conversation, the owner will take the dog to the vet to check for these conditions, the dog is checked, and the owner is told the dog is clear. I am not sure why it seems to be difficult for the vets to diagnose these conditions, but it is. I am talking about bladder infections, urinary tract infections (UTI), and additionally for little girls, vaginitis or puppy vaginitis. Maybe, the owners are not clear in what they describe to the vets. But, even considering this possibility, IF the vet does the appropriate tests...why does it come through clear?

In these situations, the pup/dog will continue with the problem or continue to increase in the frequency of urination. The owners will re-contact me saying the vet has cleared the dog and they are doing everything they know, but the constant urination is continuing or increasing. At this point, I will tell them to have them retested OR get a second opinion. In every single case where I have been convinced the problem was medical, it has been proven to be the case. Sometimes this is the initial vet doing test again and this time it shows positive for one of these conditions. Other times, the owners take their dog for a second opinion and the condition is correctly diagnosed. Now, in fairness to the vets in

these cases, possibly the condition was able to be detected because it had progressed further. Regardless, as a behaviorist, it concerns me that these medical conditions which seem so apparent based on what the dog is exhibiting appear to be sometimes difficult for vets to diagnose, at least in the early stages.

Bottom line, if you have a pup dog who has been successfully holding to a specific routine and regimen and literally from one day to the next they are urinating almost constantly, I would strongly suspect a medical condition. The most likely culprits are bladder infections, urinary tract infections (UTI), and add vaginitis or puppy vaginitis for female dogs. *Note: Other medical conditions can cause this behavior presentation, but these would be good starting points if there are no other outwardly physical symptoms.*

If you have an adult dog who has been housetrained for some time and they exhibit this same sudden onset of behavior and they have no other outward physical symptoms, there is a good chance they have developed one of these medical conditions. However, keep in mind that adult and especially older dogs (geriatric) dogs can develop many other medical conditions. Do not arbitrarily discount anything. When your dog has been good for many months or years, and suddenly they are having potty accidents with no discernible emotional or routine/schedule reason for the incidents, you truly need to have your dog checked out medically!

HOW TO HANDLE HOUSETRAINING MISTAKES

When dogs potty, they are doing what comes naturally...nature calls. Initially, they do not understand your ground rules. Inside versus outside is a foreign concept. It is a human concept, not a naturally occurring dog behavior. When the dogs have to potty, they just go whenever and wherever they are. It is up to YOU to teach them that outside is desired and inside is not acceptable. If they have an accident and you do not catch them IN the act or AS they are walking away, do not scold and do not let them see you clean it up. Scolding is verbal. Spanking or other physical methods do NO good at all. I firmly believe physical corrections are unfair and unwarranted in the housetraining process. Moreover, the dog will not associate being spanked or other physical corrections with the potty behavior. If they do not understand what you are wanting, if they do not understand this terribly foreign concept, if they have no understanding of having done anything wrong, how can they possibly associate your physical corrections with the behavior? All they will understand is you are angry and you are hurting or scaring them. This is why many owners will ask me WHY their pup or dog runs from them or hides from them. The pups/dogs have come to associate YOU with hurting them or scaring them for seemingly (to them) no reason whatsoever. They cannot reason there is a "certain behavior" they need to avoid to prevent this from happening to them. All they can do is avoid the person causing them this distress.

Note: The running away or hiding behavior I refer to is caused from their fear of being hurt or scared. This is different from the common puppy behavior of trying to teach you their chase game which I discuss in the COME, ROVER, COME section. It is very easy to tell the difference from a fear avoidance reaction and the chase game.

If you catch the pup/dog in the act or immediately after (walking away), you can scold them, show them the problem, further scold them. Do not go overboard because they really do not yet understand. Be firm and stern, NOT ANGRY! Above all, be reasonable in your scolding. You are building the foundation of them eventually understanding. As soon as you have given a reasonable verbal scolding, you take or carry them to the door to go outside. At the exact moment you stand or turn to go to the door, all negative feelings and reactions from you must cease. You must be HAPPY and EXCITED!!!! You want to create a very distinct and dramatic difference between scolding them for an undesirable behavior and the desirable behavior which pleases you. You want to show them that one action displeases you, but a distinctly different behavior makes you very happy. You will want make an immediate and significant shift in your emotions, your voice tone, and your physical interaction with your pup/dog.

Remember the dogs “sense” so much. They truly do want to please you. They are instinctually motivated to want to do whatever makes you happy and pleased with them. You will want to use a happy, upbeat, encouraging tone and say something like, “let’s go outside, and let’s go potty”. Unfortunately, many owners feel they must scold or physically correct the dog all the way “to and through” the door because they are really driving their point home. If you SCOLD them all the way to the door AND AS you put them outside SCOLD, “you get out there and do your business!!!!”...you have created more confusion than you can imagine. You have just told them that “inside” is bad AND if they are to believe your voice and actions, then “outside” is also bad. At this point, all they can fathom is that pottying period, anywhere displeases you. When this is what you communicate to your pup/dog, where in the heck are they supposed to potty!

When your pup/dog has a potty accident, you must realize this is NOT THEIR accident. Their potty accidents are completely YOUR accidents. Remember, you are the one who carries the sole responsibility during the housetraining process. You must be consistent. You must be patient and understanding. You must follow a rigidly defined routine (schedule). Their success or failure hinges 100% on YOU! If you are only 80% on your part, they can only be 80% successful. Give full credence to the complexity of what you are asking your dog to grasp and help them in any and every way you can. If some aspect of your program is not working, then your program is flawed in some regard. The pup/dog is not capable of determining what the flaw is or how to correct or improve it. The owner must do this. You will have to look closely at what you are doing, how you are doing it, when you are doing it, and even why you are doing what you are doing. If you look at the situation with full understanding of the housetraining process, and your role and the dog’s role in that process...you should be able to determine what needs to be changed or adjusted to help your pup/dog be successful.

RING THEM BELLS, A NEAT TOOL!

You can train dogs to RING BELLS to signal they need to go outside. Almost any dog at almost any age can learn the bells method. This is a 3-tier process and is fairly easy to teach. The bells method is very exciting and useful. Go to a craft store and buy 2 large

(2" diameter) bells. Tie them to a long shoestring about 4" to 6" apart. Use the larger bells in case the dog happens to chew one off so they cannot swallow it. Put a nail or hook in the wall, right by the door you use to take them out for their potty breaks. Hang the bell strand. EVERY TIME and I do mean EVERY TIME, you open the door for the dog to go outside, and YOU ring the bells. Tap the bells moderately so you do not scare or startle the dog. This is especially important for pups. When you ring the bells, say "outside, go potty, outside" AS you open the door. Go outside with your dog and when they potty, say "outside, potty, good outside, good potty". *Note: There are some commercial products that provide something for the dog to touch with their nose or their paw and a noise/sound is emitted. Some of these products can be used in place of the bells and achieve the same result.*

Within a short period of time, the dog will begin to associate the sound of the bells with the door opening. In this initial phase of understanding, they have still not connected the bells with having to potty or to signal they need to potty. Remember, it takes quite sometime for the dogs to grasp the houstraining concept. What they will understand is that ringing the bells causes two things. One is they get Mom or Dad's "attention". The other is the door "opens". For this first level to be successful, you have to ring the bells every single time you open the door. You can use the bells whether you are using your full yard, a yard potty pen, or walking the dog on a leash. Keep in mind you ultimately want the bells to be the dog's signal for needing to go outside to potty. This is why you have to ring them every time you let the dog out to potty.

I will also reinforce that you should be with them when they are let out to potty so you can praise and reward (treat) the potty behavior when it occurs. Even if you are out in the yard playing or doing yard work or sitting on the patio or talking to a neighbor over the fence, you should have treats in your pocket and you should keep your eye on the dog. Why? If they are out lose in the yard playing, they will be stimulating their system and they will potty periodically. You will want to be able to reinforce and praise their outside potty behavior every time it occurs, whether randomly or because it is a scheduled potty break. Don't miss any opportunity to praise, reward, and reinforce their outside potty behaviors! The more often you are able to reinforce a behavior, the sooner it can become an understood and patterned behavior.

The next tier of the bells method will be the most crucial and the most exasperating for you. The dog will "ring them bells" literally every five minutes. WARNING: This phase is guaranteed to drive you insane! However, if the bells method is to be successful, you have to find a way to live through this stage. This means you must be consistent, patient, and follow through with the routine. You must take the dog out absolutely EVERY TIME they ring the bells. What happens is the dog has determined the bells mean they get your "attention" and the door opens. This is very exciting for the dogs. If you follow through every time they ring the bells, this phase should not last more than a few days. Unfortunately, this is too long for some owners and they end up ignoring the bells or give up on them altogether. It is your choice. Do consider that IF you can survive this stage, your dog will learn to only ring the bells when they do need or want to go outside. They

will have an effective way to signal they need to go outside which is what most owners truly want. You have to decide if you are willing to withstand a little inconvenience and irritation for the end result. The owners who survive this stage with a modicum of their sanity have a reliable communication avenue for their dog's potty needs. I can assure you the results will be more than worth the effort.

I tell people to consider all the hassles, irritation, and frustration of trying to houstrain their dog. Consider all the time and effort it takes to clean up accidents. Factor in all the times you will get upset with your dog, even when you know you shouldn't. Consider the bells provide yet one more "tangible" the dog can associate with outside potty versus indoor potty. If you do a list of the "pros and cons" of using the bells method or not, the "pros" will far outweigh the "cons".

Using a "yard potty pen" can actually help speed up this stage of the bells method. Why? The dog rings the bells. They get your attention and the door opens. And, most importantly, they are placed in their potty pen! This helps them to recognize getting your attention with the bells does not mean you play with them or they get to go play in the yard. The bells will more quickly come to be associated with the potty pen which means potty. When they potty in their pen, they get your praise and a treat. Previously, I explained how the potty pen helps them to connect the outside potty behavior more tangibly and quickly. The pen will also help them correlate exactly WHAT the bells are for more quickly.

Aside from being sure you take the dog outside absolutely every time they ring the bells, the most important key is you must NEVER lose patience during this phase. You must react positively and reinforce the "outside" behavior. Consistency and patience in this phase will be very demanding on you, BUT your efforts will garner phenomenal results and pay huge dividends. The 100th time your pup/dog rings their bells in a given day and your initial reaction is to throw those bells as far as you can...suck it up, count to ten, smile, be happy and say, "Good ring bells, outside, potty, good outside potty".

The last tier of the bells method is the dog will go to ring the bells, move their nose or paw toward the bells and STOP before they ring the bells. You will almost hear their thought processes. "Hmmm, ring bells...get Mom's attention, ring bells...go outside....hmmmm, I don't really have to go potty...I don't think I will ring the bells". When you reach this point, you will have a dog who has come to understand there is a specific reason and purpose for ringing the bells. At this point, your dog will be very much like the toddler who is "almost" potty trained. You will still want to be there for them to make sure they are successful. This is especially true for pups. Just like a toddler, the pup can get so involved in something they are doing and they forget until it is too late. You will want to stay vigilant and watch the clock to make sure they take their potty breaks when their routine/schedule dictates, when you know it is time, or when their activity level warrants a potty break. You will want to help your pup/dog be successful.

Since it is so crucial to react every time the dog rings the bells, you will not want to give the dog access to the bells IF you are not around to accommodate the process. If the dog

rings the bells and nothing happens, two things will likely happen. One is they will have an accident, especially if they have come to understand the bells mean outside potty. This is similar to a Pavlovian response. Hearing the bells will make them have to potty more urgently. The second can spell doom for the entire process. If the dog rings the bells and the door doesn't open and they don't get access to outside potty, the dog will be confused. It will not take many times of the door not opening and them not getting potty access for the dog to lose the connection between the bells and outside potty. They will quickly conclude the bells must not mean what they thought they did and there is no reason to ring them. This is the basis of "operant conditioning" which says any behavior that is NOT reinforced positively or negatively will eventually extinguish itself. Signaling they need to go outside to potty is not a behavior you want to see extinguished.

If you are going to take a bath or step out to get the paper or run next door, you will want to remove the bells. Of course, if you are doing any of these things, your pup/dog would need to be pottied beforehand. Just as you would not leave a one or two year old child unattended for even ten minutes without them being in a safe, secure environment, the very same thing applies for your pup. If they are in their puppy play pen or their secured puppy play area, they should be okay for the time their bladder and activity level will allow. However, do not take the chance of them ringing the bells and you not being there to respond by taking them outside. Speaking of the puppy play pen and the secured puppy play areas, when you are available to respond to the bells you will want to make sure there is a set of bells provided for those areas. With my pups, I have a set of bells for my backyard door. My pups are not out loose in the den (where this door is) except when I am IN the room with them. Anytime I leave the room, they are in their puppy play pen or secured puppy play area. If I am still where I can hear the bells and respond to them, I make sure I place a set in the puppy play area with the pup.

Another great advantage to using the bells method is they can be used when traveling or visiting friends or family. I carry a set of the bells with me and place them on a doorknob or dresser handle wherever we are staying or visiting. *Note: When traveling with a pup, I always carry a puppy play pen for all the reasons discussed earlier in the book.* The first thing you do when you take the pup/dog inside the new environment is to take them to where you have hung the bells. Ring the bells, use your normal outside potty wording, and take the pup/dog outside to potty. Praise and treat their potty behavior. Be sure to do this a couple of times shortly after arriving. Then, the pup/dog will know where their bells are located and the bells work the same in this new environment as they do at home. When Treasure was six months old, we traveled with my Mom to another state. Shortly after arriving, I had to leave Mom and the dogs at the hotel. My Mom knew all about the bells method and had seen it at my house many times. When I returned to the hotel, my Mom was so excited and so proud of her "super smart grand dog". Treasure had rung the bells for my Mom twice while I was gone. This was Treasure's first experience with a hotel and traveling with her bells. I am not sure if I was prouder of her or if my Mom was prouder.

There is one more phenomenal aspect to the dogs learning the bells method. When you develop this mental process in your dog, they realize they can COMMUNICATE with

you. More importantly, they realize you understand and you respond!!! You will see them begin to build on this “communication” avenue open to them. You will see them begin to find other ways to communicate various things to you. You will see them mentally working through what you are trying to communicate to them. They realize when you do different things, you are communicating and they want to understand what you want of them in all different situations. You will see them offer behaviors and then get excited by your reactions and they will repeat their actions to see if you have the same reaction. They will become more aware of your reactions to their behaviors. You will try to communicate something to them and they don’t have a clue. BUT, they will cock their head, and then try this or that behavior. They know you want something; they just don’t know what that specific something is. It is so exciting when the dogs realize you are trying to communicate and they try their darnedest to determine what it is you are wanting from them.

Some people get irritated or frustrated when they ask something of the dogs and the dogs offer a different behavior. Rather than realizing their dog is trying with everything in them to hit on the “right” behavior, people will get irritated because the dog is doing the wrong behavior. The owners think the dog is just deciding they would rather do something other than what the owner is asking of them. The dog is “offering” all the behaviors they know have previously made their owner happy thinking “maybe” this is what they are asking. Your dog has had the communication avenue opened to them. They know you want something, but you are still speaking a foreign language. You are speaking gobbledygook. The dog is trying to make some connection between what they DO know (behaviors) and what they DO NOT understand (what you are asking). Your dog is going the extra mile. Try to meet them halfway! I have seen dogs go through their entire repertoire of behaviors trying to find the right one. How much more proof could anyone need to be convinced their dog does want to please them!

I ask you to recognize what a wonderful door you have opened for you and your dog. You can pave the path before them and you with gold and build an intricate communication highway system or you can slam the door in their face. When you choose the former, you will enrich you life, your dog’s life, and your lives together.

CLEANING POTTY ACCIDENTS EFFECTIVELY

Potty accidents or house soiling incidents have to be cleaned effectively. The dogs have the most incredible sense of smell. No matter what you use to clean, if it is not thorough and effective the dogs will be drawn to the smell. Even if you pick up a solid stool and there is nothing visible on the carpet, the smell is still there for the dogs. Urine is more difficult because there is a chemical/enzymatic reaction that takes place over time. This is why you can think you have effectively cleaned the urine and weeks or months later you walk in and can smell urine. (*Note: You are most likely to smell the recurrent urine smell on exceedingly humid days or rainy day.*) Many of the commercial products do a good job initially, but over several weeks or months the urine smell will resurface. The reason is they do not effectively break down or prevent the enzymatic reactions of the urine. Additionally, it is common to see a dirty spot develop where you have previously cleaned

up a potty accident. This is because many of the commercial cleaners leave an oily residue which attracts dirt. The product I have found to be absolutely effective is Nature's Miracle, but only when used precisely as directed.

Regardless of what you use to clean, you do want to keep that area blocked from the dog for a period of time. This is especially true if the dog has used one specific area more than once. Make sure the product you use effectively deals with the urine or the poop spot so the dog will not be drawn back to that same area by the smell. Equally important is to keep the area blocked so the dog cannot develop a "patterned potty area". I do not recommend cleaning up potty issues in front of the dog. There are varying opinions on this.

Copyright © 2006 COME, SIT, STAY...Canine Etiquette, I love it when you...TALK DOG TO ME. All rights reserved. Articles and E-book chapters may be printed for the reader's personal use ONLY. They may not be reproduced for any other reason without the expressed, written permission of the author.

DEB DUNCAN
COME, SIT, STAY...*Canine Etiquette*
Behavior and Training Consultations
www.thedogspeaks.com