HOW TO TRAIN DOGS THAT STRUGGLE WITH DOG-DOG INTERACTION WITH THE POWER OF 3-MINUTE GAMES,

THE UNPREDICTABLE



Tom Mitchell & Lauren Langman

IS YOUR DOG UNPREDICTABLE?



Aggressive Naughty Stubborn Reactive

Unpredictable Chasey

Distracted Hyper

Having an unpredictable dog can limit your freedom and it can be really stressful. There are going to be times where countless people around you are telling you:

"This is the way it has to be."

"If you're going to make this better, it's going to be really difficult and time consuming."

"You're going to really have to limit your dog."

"You have to do terrible things to your dog to get results."

You can move from a stressful world to a stress-free world without force, intimidation or use of any scary tools.



Check out our Reactive Dog Strategies podcast to unlock even more of our top tips!



DOGS ARE HAVING CONVERSATIONS EVERY DAY

Your dog has conversations with you - and with everything that they encounter in their environment - every single day. Sometimes those conversations go quite smoothly, uninterrupted, unbroken, seamless and effortless.

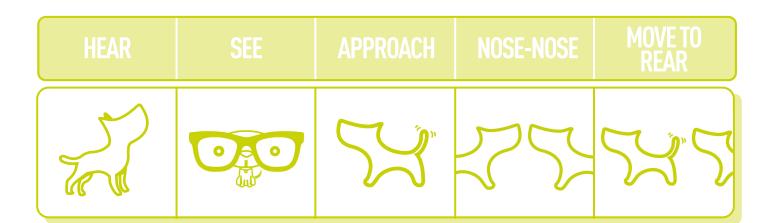
Other times these conversations are awkward, uncomfortable and can cause a lot of stress for everyone involved. It is these uncomfortable conversations that help you recognise when part of your dog's interaction chain is broken. A broken part of the interaction chain sticks out like a sore thumb.

INTERACTION CHAIN?



The interaction chain is the way in which all dogs interact with the world around them and while this chain is similar regardless of what the interaction is with, for the purpose of this playbook, we are going to provide the dog-dog interaction chain. Believe it or not, your dog is very familiar with this chain. Dogs are born knowing the interaction chain. This is something that we do not need to teach them. However, it doesn't mean that they know how to perform this chain seamlessly. Interactions in their lives, events that may have not gone well as perceived by your dog, may have caused a disruption in the chain.

In the **Training Academy,** we have thousands of students that have utilised the 300+ game library to their full advantage, reshaping their dogs brain to perceive events in a much more optimistic and desirable way. This is how we know what we do works because of the thousands upon thousands of owners around the world that have seen success with their Naughty but Nice (NBN) dogs. Their dogs were unpredictable, frowned upon by people that misunderstood their behaviour and through the power of games their behaviour has been transformed.



WHAT COULD A BREAK IN THE CHAIN LOOK LIKE?

SEE/HEAR



Your dog sees or hears the other dog. Remember, this could be a person, another animal, but for this playbook we are focusing on the dog-dog aspect. If your dog struggles immediately here, this is the part of the chain that is broken. This includes flight – trying to get away, pulling on lead in the opposite direction, whining, tail tucked, etc. It could also include a display of lunging, barking and growling, whether in frustration or in fear.





If your dog appears to be fine when seeing/ hearing, but struggles as the distance lessens, this part of the chain might be broken. Some examples could be: a dog that lies down and freezes during the approach. Another example would be a dog that quietly observes, but then gets stiff and growly on the approach. A dog could also bark, lunge or growl at this point, also. This is all information.

NOSE-NOSE



If your dog gets stuck at the non-nose part of the interaction, this could display as growling, stiffening, hackles up, tail up, rolling over, licking incessantly without the ability to disengage, and more. Getting stuck in one part of the chain doesn't necessarily look unfriendly – sometimes it can be hyperactive friendliness that also means that your dog is stuck. No worries! There are solutions!



If the nose-nose goes well, and so do all other previous parts of the chain, but then when both dogs arc in a circle to move to each other's rear an over-reaction happens, you can pretty much guarantee a break in the chain at this step. All the different parts of this chain have a clear transition and getting stuck in the transition can be the reason why your dog displays unpredictable behaviour.

AFTER THE MOVE TO REAR

Typically, this is when the dog's either move into appropriate play behaviour such as play bows, a healthy game of chase, etc. This can also be the point where both dogs choose to move on, having collected the information they needed and having completed the conversation.

Want more TIPS on what TO DO when your dog BARKS, Lunges or REACTS to another dog, person or distraction!

Subscribe to our YouTube

for free training tips and solutions provided every Thursday on common behaviour struggles, including reactivity, pulling on lead, resource guarding and more.

NOW, LET'S PUT IT INTO A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE.

IMAGINE THIS ... THE WALLFLOWER.



Most of us know the wallflower - the person awkwardly avoiding attention at the party. When approached they fumble over their words, they shift away and they avoid eye contact.

That wallflower knows the different parts of a conversation. They know how they start. They know what fills them, both in simple pleasantries as well as the more complex conversations. They also know that a conversation ends. They may also be able to have an amazing conversation from start to finish in a different context.

This doesn't mean that they excel at that very same conversation when put under pressure.

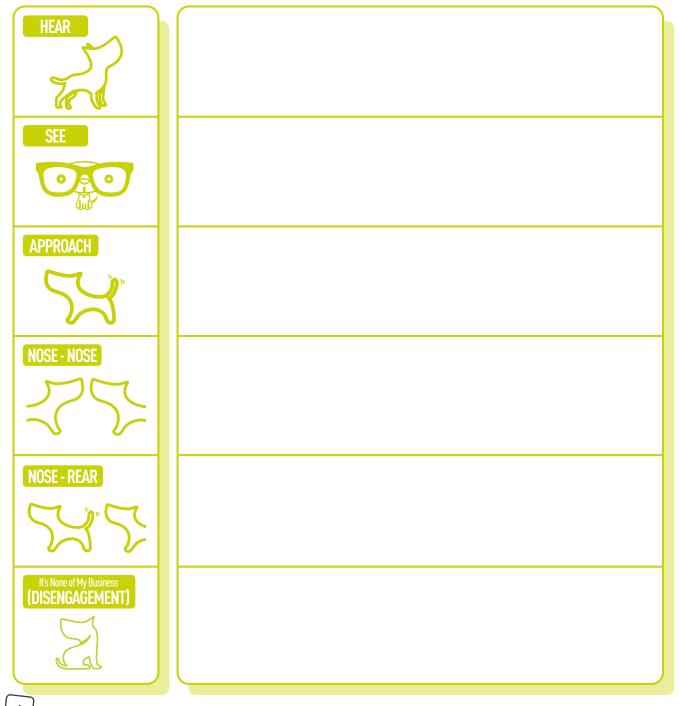
Much like our dogs, who are struggling with a conversation in certain environments (or all environments), the wallflower has a broken interaction chain.

THE GOOD NEWS

Moving smoothly through the interaction chain is a skill that can be shaped, perfected and grown and we can fix the broken chain. We can reshape our dog's brain to allow them to become an expert in communication.

With this information in mind, how adept is your dog at conversation with other dogs?

What have been your observations in previous dog-dog conversations with your dog?



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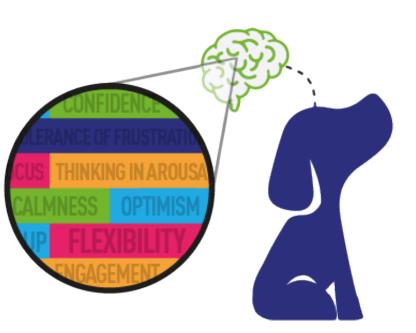
WHAT ARE THE BUILDING SOCIALLY APPROPRIATE DOG?

Every dog has a brain, which is shaped in a particular way with different strengths and weaknesses.

Put another way, your dog's personality is made up of concepts. Building blocks.

When put in a situation, that brain will give an 'outcome' (the dog will behave in a certain way), based on that individual dog's particular strengths and weaknesses.

That outcome may or may not be appropriate. Perhaps your dog chooses to bark, or pull on the lead, or chase a jogger down the street.





Sometimes the way your dog's brain is shaped is not currently compatible with the behaviour or outcome you would like them to give you in a certain situation. That's not to say that the outcome is 'wrong'. Your dog is not displaying a 'problem' behaviour – they are just displaying 'dog' behaviour, determined by the current shape of their brain. In fact, what would be viewed as a weakness in one situation may well be a strength in another!

In the wild, a pessimistic wary dog who sees a bush rustle and gets themselves out of there pronto is much more likely to survive than the optimistic dog, who sees the bush rustle, imagines it might have something tasty or interesting to explore, and ends up being eaten by the bear!

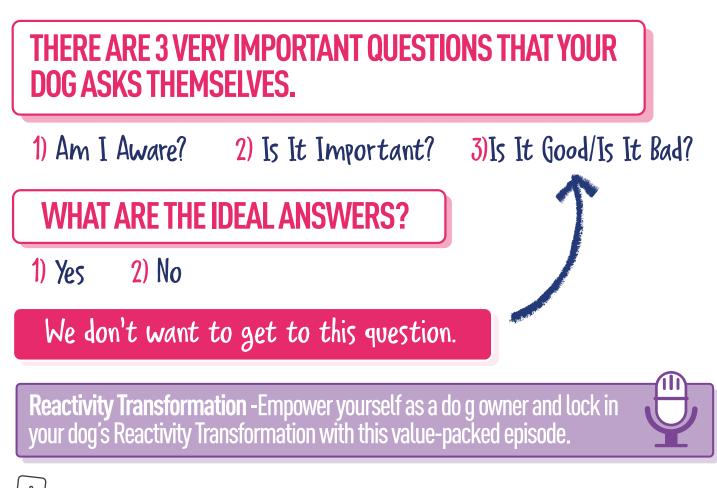
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BUILDING BLOCK #1:

Optimism is the understanding that if something happens - if something novel or ambiguous happens - that there is absolutely nothing to worry about. Pessimism is the opposite of optimism.

Pessimism often assumes and prepares for the worst. Pessimism is all about survival in situations where decisions can be life and death. In a world that has changed with their domestication, dogs still have a brain that encourages pessimism for survival. Our dogs can display behaviours that we deem inappropriate. However, for dogs, they are entirely appropriate behaviours.

Optimism and Pessimism can be situationspecific. For example, some dogs are more optimistic when off-lead vs. when they are on-lead. Their behaviour will change based on whether their choices are restricted by the lead, vs. if they have freedom of communication and the ability to increase or decrease distance of their own accord.



OBSERVE YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOUR

Measuring progress is key.

With this in mind, are there situations where your dog is more optimistic than others? For example, at home, is your dog braver than when they are outside? Does your dog respond with confidence and joy with people that they are familiar with vs. offering an entirely different response to strangers?

HOME with you		\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	$\overrightarrow{\Box}$
HOME when guests arrive	$\stackrel{\frown}{\frown}$	\bigtriangleup	\overleftrightarrow	\swarrow	\bigtriangleup	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow
DAILY WALK		\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow
VET'S Office	$\overrightarrow{\Box}$	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	$\overrightarrow{\Box}$
CAR Ride	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow
OTHER:		\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow	\overleftrightarrow

For the following environments, rate your dog's current level of Optimism on a scale from 1-10.

This is all information to help you measure your progress. With games, we can reshape our dogs brains to respond differently to situations by focusing on the building blocks (what we call concepts) that need strengthening. We prepare them FOR the situation, instead of putting them IN the situation so that when faced with what has previously over-faced them, they are ready, they are prepared, and so are you.



GIVE YOUR DOG AN OPTIMISM BOOST

GAME #1 - A TO B

A to B is a game you are going to develop. This is work you will do at home first and foremost. This game gives you a strategy for getting your dog out of a tricky situation. If your dog is likely to do something at the end of the leash that is undesirable, the idea of "reward what you do want" and "ignore what you don't want" is not going to work in that moment.

Instead, you want to have something up your sleeve for those moments where 'getting out of Dodge' is the best option. A to B teaches your dog that when you perform a particular action (sliding your hand down the lead), coming with you is non-negotiable. It becomes a reflex response. A to B is for those situations where you need to get your dog out of a problem quickly - where it is better for them to get out of the situation than remain in it.

Having A to B as a strategy can help you feel prepared for those unavoidable situations you don't want to find yourself in. With a well-honed A to B, you can know, without hesitation, how to remove yourself and your dog from that situation in the best way possible.

Sometimes we can feel anxious, worried or guilty at having taken our dogs into a particular situation. Don't feel anxious! Lose the guilt. Feeling guilty in that moment won't help you BUT feeling capable and able to make the right decision and get out of that situation absolutely will! If in doubt, A to B.

Watch A to B in Action!





Get ready!

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

1) YOUR DOG WEARING A HARNESS WITH TWO POINTS OF CONTACT OR A REGULAR COLLAR

2) A LEAD SINGLE OR DOUBLE-CLIP 3) YOUR DOG'S DAILY RATIONS OR ENTICING FOOD

Hold your lead in the hand on the opposite side of your body than your dog. That means if your dog is on your left, you are holding the lead with your right hand. If your dog is on the right, your left hand is holding the lead. While the video referenced above demonstrates a double-clip lead (and we highly recommend one for control) you can play this game with one lead. The instructions that follow will assume that you have your lead held in your right hand and that your dog is on your left. If the opposite is true, the opposite will be true in the instructions.



Go at different rates of speed (slow fast, moderate, mix it up!)	Practise every day in	Scatter a few steps later	Practise with someone else,
	short, fun sessions to feel	to reduce arousal and to	including anyone that might be
	confident!	encourage unpredictability	involved in your dog's care.
Run and/or walk.	Practise urgency vs. calm and routine.	Scatter several pieces of food after A to B	Scatter a few steps later to reduce arousal & unpredictability
Train the dog in front of you	The cue is your hand sliding	Once your dog is solid in your	Practise without your dog to
- take a break if either of you	down the lead, but a verbal	home, practise in your garden,	be sure you are fluid in your
are struggling and try again	cue just before you start step	on the road outside of your	mechanics before adding them
later (it can be another day!)	1 can be added.	home and slowly start	to the picture.

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BUILDING BLOCK #2: CALMNESS WHAT IS CALMNESS?

The next building block is Calmness. Our dogs make decisions based on a variety of factors. A calm dog is a dog that makes better choices.

Your dog's arousal level is made up of lots of little exciting, anxiety inducing or worrying events that all add up, until their bucket is full and all that 'Naughty' behaviour comes spilling over. As your dog tries to cope with the feelings that have accumulated, undesirable behaviours become their preferred choice, over other options that aren't as obvious to them.

Teaching your dog to have calm default behaviours - a calm existence or a generally calm way of being, keeps that bucket empty as a matter of course. Then, when an exciting, arousing or challenging event happens, the bucket doesn't overflow; it tops up a bit and then, because your dog's brain knows how to be calm it empties right back down again.

When your dog has some great go-to calm behaviours, they recover much more quickly when the inevitable exciting, arousing or worrying things happen in their life. Despite those inevitable events, there is minimal arousal stacking and that is the perfect solution for a dog that often chooses barking, lunging, growling, screaming or other not-soawesome behaviours.

Want more information? Check out our Calm eBook, free for you! You'll discover more information about the Bucket, which is key to your dog's transformation success.



MEASURING CALMNESS CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.

On days where your dog has been stretched by events it may be important to block in a calmness retreat, where you emphasise calmness over the course of the next few days so that your dog's overflowing bucket can empty out.



ACTIVE REST

- Crates
 Pens
 Rooms
- Experienced dogs on raised beds

PASSIVE CALMING ACTIVITIES

- Scatter Feeding
 Meaty Bones
 Filled Kongs
- Treat Balls Filled Tracheas Dehydrated
- Treats Scenting Puzzle Feeders

PASSIVE CALMING ACTIVITIES

Feed whenever calm, time feeding with external distractions and if you want to not train at any time pop them in a crate or give them a passive calming activity.



DOG'S N	DOG'S NAME: DATES:				
DAY	ACTIVE REST	CALMNESS PROTOCOL	PASSIVE CALMING ACTIVITIES		
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

(1)

GAME #2 - AEROPLANE FEEDING

Aeroplane feeding is a game that allows you to reduce your dog's arousal. The purpose of the game is to take your dog from a state of potential excitement, frustration or hyperactivity, and to provide them with a clear focus. It is important to practise this game in your home. At the end of this playbook is a tracker that encourages you to expand your dog's understanding of each game through a very clear progression of environments.

This game, when used out and about, should be played when your dog is able to:

- 1. Take food, whether it is delivered directly to their mouth or dropped to the ground. Some dogs will only be able to do one or the other, in which case consider increasing the distance from the outside distractions.
- 2. Be attentive. If their attention is going everywhere else, A to B them out of there. You want them to rehearse the game with confidence every single time. Find where they can do this without constantly disengaging... Set your dog up for success!
- 3. Respond to other cues. This one isn't necessary if they're also able to do the above criteria. In fact, this game may even be the anchor or conversation starter that encourages them to be responsive to any game that follows. Keep this in mind and observe what your dog prefers in environments where they are comfortable, confident and focused on you.

The Aeroplane feeding game can also act as a game that redirects your dog's focus when you are unable to avoid a distraction coming in close proximity. While it is very important to consider the situation and any exit points before taking your dog somewhere, things happen and aeroplane feeding can be the game to encourage calmness. This level of the game is after your dog has confidently and successfully played the game in numerous low-distraction environments and these types of situations where the game is used to redirect from a situation that isn't ideal should be minimised.

This is a powerful game in that it creates stillness in your dog's body and mind when done correctly. Not only can it calm your dog. The game can calm you.

Watch Aeroplane Feeding in Action



GIVE YOUR DOG AN CALMNESS BOOST GAME #2 - AEROPLANE FEEDING

Let's play the game!

Is your dog on-lead and beside you? Perfect!

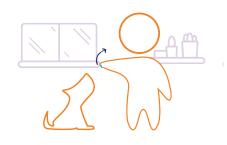
HOW TO PLAY

STEP 1: With your dog directly in front of you, grasp a piece of food between your thumb and forefinger and begin to lower it toward your dog, very (VERY) slowly.

STEP 2: If at any point your dog moves toward your hand, bring your hand back up, reversing its motion.

STEP 3: Once your dog settles, resume bringing the food toward them. Repeat step 1-3 until they do not move toward the food and wait calmly for the food to be delivered to them.







BUILDING BLOCK #3: **DISENGAGEMENT?** - WHAT IS DISENGAGEMENT? -

In terms of the interaction chain, a dog has to learn to disengage from staring at another dog to approach. They then need to disengage from the approach to be able to do the noseto-nose interaction. Then, the next step is disengagement from nose-to-nose to be able to move to the rear. A lot of dogs struggle at the nose-to-nose part of the interaction chain.

This is very common in puppies or younger dogs. For example, some young dogs struggle to go anywhere. They might squirm around the face of another dog. They are unable to disengage from that part of the interaction chain. Just because a dog cannot disengage does not mean that they WANT to be where they are.

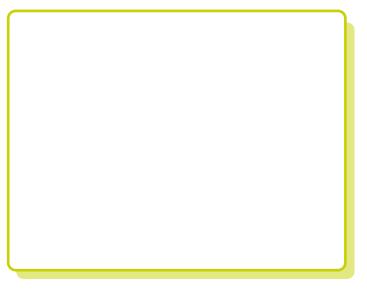
With some, there can be almost visible relief when they're removed from the situation. To reiterate, just because a dog puts themselves into a situation does not mean they want to be there. If that dog struggles with disengagement, getting 'stuck' at one point of the interaction chain can be an indication of discomfort.

A squirming, appeasing puppy, though looking happy, does not necessarily want to be stuck beneath another dog or close to a person. This is when you might see urination, squirming, rolling over onto their back, etc.

Another example of a dog that may not be enjoying the interaction despite putting themselves there would be a dog that runs up to a person, directing their attention toward their face. You retrieve them. To them, it was an uncomfortable experience. They couldn't disengage. Why would they put themselves into that situation? Ideally, they'd love to complete the chain. They get stuck. They know the chain. They can't disengage from that part of the chain to complete the rest of the chain.

Disengagement is incredibly powerful and acts as the final step of the interaction chain. There is a need for it throughout the entire chain. We have also found that if a dog struggles at the bottom of the chain (the end), it typically tracks up. This means that if you have a dog that cannot disengage from play or interact with other dogs, they can find pressure in that situation. They don't enjoy it. They start to anticipate that the interaction will be stressful, and then the subsequent links in the chain break before the interaction actually happens.

Does your dog struggle with disengagement? How so?



DISENGAGEMENT -FOR THE SITUATION THE "IN THE SITUATION" DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN.

Dog-dog interaction isn't mandatory to grow your dog's social life skills.

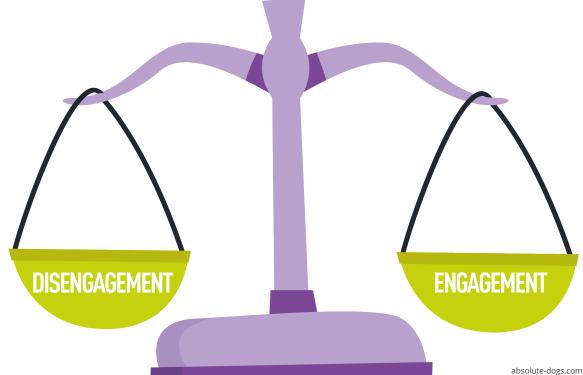
In traditional practice, it was thought that maybe the best course of action would be to put your dog in the situation repeatedly so that they can get used to it. Instead, it can lead to suppression of behaviour which can equate to even more harmful outbursts or exaggerated behaviour.

Instead, preparing your dog for the situation through the power of games, through reshaping their brain so that they are better prepared when the situation does arise - at first in a controlled setting and then in less and less controlled settings - will prepare them to make the best choices.

It can really be almost relieving to realise that you no longer need to put your dog in the situation, that it will not serve you or your dog. You can be your dog's best advocate!

Finding the right balance with disengagement vs. engagement games so that your dog can disengage from the environment and engage with you is key.

Discover more games to empower your unpredictable dog with the Sexier than a Squirrel Challenge with an insane 70% off today.



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GAME #3

DISENGAGE

GAME #3 -DISENGAGEMENT PATTERN GAME

The Disengagement Pattern Game is a game changer for many dogs that struggle with disengagement. Dogs, especially those that struggle in their interaction chain, love a level of predictability. In some cases, predictability can be disadvantageous to you as the owner as predictors can also create anxiety or anticipation about specific events. However, in the case of this game, you are going to be able use a predictable pattern that will give your dog confidence and optimism in the face of what could be a frustrating or scary distraction.

The Disengagement Pattern is a foundation game that becomes a way of life. The biggest gift we can give our dogs when they are excited or scared about something is to let them know that they can disengage and say, 'It's none of my business'. This empowers your dog and it empowers you!

Imagine all the distractions of the world and what it would be like if your dog simply was aware of them but then said, "Nope, that's not for me." Wouldn't that be amazing? Whether it's another dog, a person, a pigeon, a squirrel or even leaves whirling across the path, the magic of seeing your dog disengage of their own accord is incredible!

When rewarding your dog, do not feel restricted in feeding directly to mouth. With some dogs you might need to toss vs. feed directly so that they are catching the generous reward for moving away from the distraction. For some, you may drop the food to the ground and continue walking when their head pops up, feeding along the way.

You want the dog to come away from a distraction expecting a party and that is exactly what this game provides!

GIVE YOUR DOG A DISENGAGEMENT BOOST GAME #3 - DISENGAGEMENT PATTERN GAME

Let's play the game!

Is your dog on-lead and beside you? Perfect!

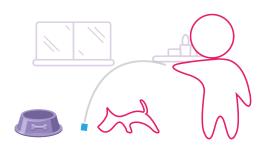
HOW TO PLAY

STEP 1: Lightly toss a piece of food away from you for your dog to eat.

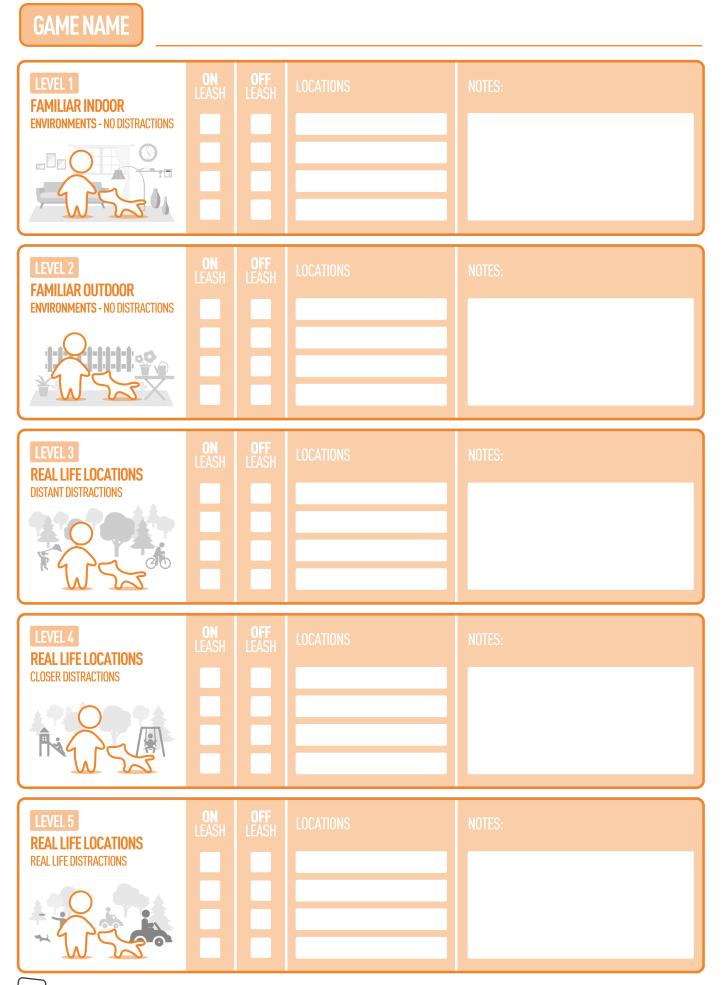
STEP 2: As soon as your dog has eaten and they orient back toward you, start moving away, feeding them multiple rewards

STEP 3: You can add a level of distraction by placing a distraction beyond the treat in step 1, like a food bowl several feet away.





You've got this!



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WHAT DOES YOUR DOGS FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

You are the very best owner for your dog. We hope this playbook has inspired you, that this has given you hope when hope can seem impossible. The thousands of dog owners all over the world that have achieved real-life results through games-based training are why we keep pushing forward, looking for committed owners like you to help you to overcome your dog's behaviour struggles.

Bring your dog-owning dream to life.

PLAY THE

WATCH THE VIDEO (and get the playbook!)

ACHIEVE REAL

HOW TO TRAIN DOGS THAT STRUGGLE WITH DOG-DOG INTERACTION WITH THE POWER OF 3-MINUTE GAMES

Is your dog unpredictable with other dogs? Whether your dog barks, lunges or growls... whether they hide behind you or pull to get away, are socially awkward and uncertain or over-boisterous and concerning to other dogs, this playbook provides you with the solutions you need to identify the break in your dog's social interaction chain and gives you the insight to kickstart your reactive dog's behaviour transformation.

