



## A Letter from Sam Kabbel

2010

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### Gift Idea

It is always time to think of creative gift giving ideas! Consider purchasing a gift certificate for training or behavior modification! We have gift certificates available for all levels of training to match your budget. Contact us for more information at 602-324-8948 or e-mail us at:

[info@petbehaviorsolutions.com](mailto:info@petbehaviorsolutions.com).



Dear Friends,

While we have seen some ups and downs, overall 2010 has been a wonderful year! The year started out well with many people looking for help with their pets! In these tough economic times, pets are often the first to suffer. We have all heard about the "foreclosure pets" which are pets left behind when the family loses their home.

Animal shelters have record numbers of intakes and they are filled to capacity. When pets cause problems for their owners, it is common to see the pets surrendered to a shelter or rescue, especially in a bad economy. People are more concerned with feeding their families and keeping their houses so the cost of training is a low priority.

The increase in calls from people wanting training and behavior help for their pets this year was so encouraging and a sure indicator that the economy is slowly beginning to recover and people are feeling more positive.

As many of you are aware, I donated a kidney this year. Dave, the recipient

became a client in 1997 when he adopted an out-of-control puppy. Through the years we became friends. He and his wife volunteered for us, helping with classes and appointments.

In June of 2009, he became gravely ill with polycystic kidney disease, went on dialysis three times a week, and was added to the transplant list. His sister was tested to see if she was a match. Though she was a match, her own health precluded her from being a donor.

I decided to inquire about what was involved in getting tested. I found out it was about 30 hours of thorough medical testing! The donor has to be a blood donor match, have a compatible immune system, be an anatomical match (the kidney and all its attachments have to match perfectly in the recipient's body), and the donor has to be in excellent health. I decided to go through the testing and if I was a match, then I would figure out how to go about taking six weeks off from work to recover!

Of course, I was a match and the surgery was on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Everything went perfectly! With the

support and help of family and friends I was able to handle the recovery time from work. Dave is doing remarkably and is back to a normal life. The kidney was a perfect match for him and his body accepted it perfectly. This was the most life-changing experience I've ever had. It has caused me to change my focus on life and adjust my priorities. I now place a huge value on my health and well-being and value relationships with others in a way I never could before. I feel so honored to have been a part of this.

I am looking forward to the Holidays and spending time with my family and friends as well as my clients. I am so grateful to be doing what I love and helping pets and their families in the process. This holiday season, I encourage you all to make time for those you care about including yourself. I want to personally thank you for your continued support and I hope you have a wonderful Holiday Season!



# 5 Biggest Mistakes People Make With Their Dogs

**1. *Not training your dog.*** Dogs need training and boundaries in order to be polite and well-behaved. Be clear on how you want your dog to behave and the household rules. Think of these common training issues: jumping up to greet people, getting on furniture, stealing food from counters, unruly when walking on a leash, not coming when called, bolting out doors, etc. These are common problems that can be addressed with training and behavior modification. You don't have to be frustrated with your dog!

**2. *Giving your dog too much freedom.*** A dog's freedom should be proportionate to his behavior. Common issues that can arise when a dog has too much freedom include eliminating indoors, marking, chewing, stealing, digging, etc. If your dog is doing these things when you aren't around to consequence or train him, he has too much freedom. While confinement or restriction alone won't alleviate these issues entirely, it will make the treatment program work much more quickly and effectively.

**3. *Not understanding your dog's personality and preferences.*** Dogs, like people, have

preferences. Not all dogs like other dogs, or children, or strangers. Some dogs are environmentally focused by breed and instinct and will therefore be limited in the attention or command compliance they give you while they are engaged in their interests. Training may be limited by their breed, personalities, preferences, experiences, etc.

*"Adequate enrichment and exercise decreases or eliminates many behavior problems."*

**4. *Not giving your dog adequate exercise or outlets for enrichment.*** Dogs were not intended to live a sedentary life

in the confines of our homes. Like us, they can get cabin fever and become restless when they haven't had an outlet or exercise. Restlessness usually manifests itself in nuisance behavior problems such as digging, chewing, barking, pestering, and other unruly behaviors. Dogs need to get exercise as well as negotiate things and problem solve. In other words, they need to think as well as work out. Adequate enrichment and exercise decreases or eliminates many behavior problems.

**5. *Giving your dog everything he wants at will.*** In our crazy, hectic lives, we generally try to do things to make dog ownership easier on our schedules. We have tons of toys available, give them dog doors, and have food available for them

at all times. While this makes it much easier for us and convenient for our dogs, it isn't the best situation. Dogs should learn to do something to get something as a part of their training. They should learn to do what we ask in exchange for a desired resource. Dogs that never have to ask for anything can be difficult to train. While they can learn to sit for treats, if the training isn't incorporated into their routine, it will have little impact. Dogs should learn to sit or down in order to get access to or freedom from things. They should learn to sit and down for dinner, doors to open, access to certain furniture if allowed, access to certain rooms, etc. If your dog is asked to sit before being allowed outside and he doesn't sit, then the door doesn't open which is a consequence for not complying. Dogs that have all of their resources freely available at all times don't need to do something to get something and therefore will likely not be as well trained.

If you avoid these common mistakes it will lead to a much more balanced relationship between you and your dog!



# 5 Biggest Mistakes People Make With Their Cats

**1. Placing the litter box, food, and water in the same location.** We wouldn't want the bathroom to be incorporated into the kitchen and neither do our cats. Cats are fastidious animals and generally prefer to eliminate far from where they eat and drink. If they must be located in the same room, be sure they are on opposite sides of the room.

**2. Having multiple boxes lined up next to each other when there are multiple cats.** Cats prefer to have a couple options for eliminating especially when there is more than one cat in the household. Most cats are private when they go to the bathroom. They are also quite vulnerable to ambushes (playful or not) while they are busy in the litter box. When boxes are all lined up like urinals in a public restroom, they aren't able to be private or feel safe. It is better to have boxes in different locations within the same room or different rooms altogether.

**3. Introducing a new cat into**

**the household too quickly.** Cats need time to acclimate to another cat. Very few cats readily accept a new cat without some adjustment. It is best to keep the new cat in a spare room with all the necessary kitty amenities for a day or two. Then wedge the door open about 2 inches with

a rubber door stop to encourage limited interaction. Once the cats are interested in each other without acting as if they will fight, then they can have brief time together as long as they are supervised. Once they can be peaceful with each other where no one is a bully and no one is traumatized, they can be allowed together unsupervised. This whole process can take from a few days to a few months.

**4. Not cleaning the litter box often enough.** This sounds so obvious, but it is the most common thing we see that contributes to litter box problems. When using scoopable litter, the boxes



should be scooped daily or twice daily depending on the number of cats in your household. Again, cats are fastidious animals and want a clean area in which to eliminate. Be sure to keep the box itself clean as well since used litter sticks to the bottom and sides of the box. The

box retains odors even when the litter is scooped. The box should be cleaned periodically before adding additional litter.

**5. Not giving your cat vertical access.** Cats like to climb high, hide in "hidey" holes, play fort behind things, jump out from under things, etc. Cats should have a cat tree or cat condo to provide for those needs. If you do not provide appropriate places for your cats to climb and hide, they will create their own. This may include your curtains, piano, counters, shelves of knick knacks, etc. The more outlets cats have, the easier it will be to retain your precious belongings!

*"Most cats are quite private when they go to the bathroom."*

## Phone Consultations

We have been doing nationwide phone consultations for about a year now and the response has been very positive! We are able to help with many issues for both dogs and cats over the phone. This is especially helpful if finances are very limited as well as

for your family and friends out of the area that need help with their pets.

The service only costs **\$35 per half hour** so please contact us if you or someone you know needs help or has questions.



Dogs, like children, go through stages in their development. Training needs change as they mature and as they move in and out of these developmental stages. Often, training is one size fits all – dogs must learn sit, down, stay, heel, and come. While those are the most common and useful commands, dogs need to learn so much more than that and those needs change based on their age.

**Puppies age 8 weeks to 5 months** - Puppies in this age group need to learn bite inhibition, gentling exercises for handling, house-training, appropriate play, how to handle frustration, etc. Puppies have the attention span of a gnat at this age! They shouldn't be expected to be perfectly precise in their commands nor should they be expected to do behaviors for a long period of time. Generally at this age, they should know sit and down on command but compliance will be inconsistent. They will stay until they forget what they were doing, walk on a loose leash until they hear, see, or smell something exciting, and come when it is fun for them.

**Juveniles age 5 months to 1 year** – Older puppies need to learn impulse control, how to turn their play on and off immediately, how to handle and negotiate disap-

pointment, how to problem solve and/or manipulate complex situations, etc.. At this age, they should not be puppy biting anymore. They have a little more attention span and impulse control at this age. Often juvenile puppies get into more trouble because they are bigger, more curious, and less fearful. They should learn the house rules of what is not allowed – like getting on furniture, getting up on counters/tables, etc. At this age, they should know how to sit and down on command as well as what happens if they don't comply (i.e., disappointing consequences - don't sit when I ask, the door won't open or the leash is put away, etc.) They should be able to stay for longer periods of time, but they still lose track of the exercise after a while. They are far more independent at this age so the come command can become a real challenge. You should keep in mind that this is their "teenage years" and they think most things don't apply to them unless it was their idea. They are testing and pushing for as much control as they can have over their lives and consistency in training is

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critical.

**Adult dogs age 1 to 3 years** –

Dogs in this age group are becoming emotionally and socially mature. They can understand complex situations as a result of fully developed doggy impulse control and a longer attention span. They can connect cause and effect well. It is critical to remember that dogs don't have a moral sense about them. They know safe vs. dangerous and what works vs. what doesn't work. They may still test and push boundaries depending on their breed and personality. At this age, it is important to maintain consistency with your rules and provide feedback for their behavior. Adult dogs should know sit and down well – just for the command – not just for treats. They should reliably stay and come provided you have trained them to this level. Walking on a leash should be a pleasure at this age if you have taken the time to train loose leash walking.

**Older dogs 5+ years** – By this age, dogs should be finished making their mark on the world. All the training that you put in should



be maintained in their long-term cognitive memory as well as their kinesthetic or muscle memory. At this age, dogs still need enrichment and still need to think and solve problems. Training is even more critical at this age to keep dogs young, active, and as healthy as possible. Try to incorporate their training into situations they may not expect like when playing with toys, before going for a walk, etc. You should also ensure that their training isn't sequenced as is common for dogs of this age. (e.g., You ask your dog for a sit and they show you their entire resume of sit, shake hands, sit up, down, roll over, etc.) If this is the case, clean up their command response by asking for a behavior and giving them a reward only if they give you the proper response. (e.g., You ask for a sit and they give you a sit into a down into a roll over – no reward. You ask for a down and they give you a sit – no reward.) These exercises are so important to their mental health and are fun for you and your dog.

