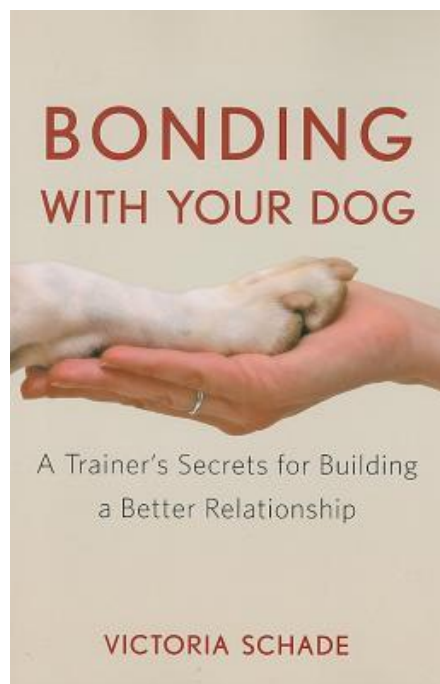




Bonding with Your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship

Victoria Schade

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Bonding with Your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship Victoria Schade
The human-canine bond: a relationship steeped in love with equal parts mutual respect, trust, and regard
In this groundbreaking book, professional dog trainer Victoria Schade reveals that a successful relationship between you and your dog isn't about establishing yourself as the pack leader, but about building a meaningful bond. She explains how this bond forms the core of your entire relationship; if it's lacking, it's the primary source of any frustration you may be having with your dog.

First, you'll take a quiz to help you gauge your current relationship with your dog. Next, you'll learn the building blocks for creating a positive, mutually rewarding bond-from granting privileges to being unpredictable to offering ample praise and playtime. You'll discover how a bonded dog:

Listens to obedience cues

Wants you in her sightlines, even in intriguing environments

Doesn't escape through open doorways

Understands and follows your house rules

Wants to be close to you and work with you

Truly trusts and respects you

Whether you share your heart and home with a puppy, an adolescent, or a senior dog, it's never too early or too late to build a bond to last a lifetime-and this book shows you how.

Bonding with Your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship Details

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From Reader Review Bonding with Your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship for online ebook

Michelle says

I wasn't quite sure what to expect when I picked up this book. Sure, I skimmed the sample and read the reviews--but I wasn't sure if it would give me information that I needed. Fortunately, it totally did!

The bond is something that I think most people misunderstand. It isn't easy to do, and strengthening it (like any relationship) takes work. Victoria Schade gives excellent examples--real-life stories--that illustrate both what a good bond and a weak bond is. Just in the first few sentences, I was nodding my head and I understood. That is a powerful way to illustrate not only how necessary it is to foster a bond, but how much work it takes.

Schade gives great ideas for working on that bond--ideas that just about any teacher understands. Predictability = boring. Fear = less than stellar work. Yes, you need some predictability and consistency--but don't be afraid to have fun! That is a reason you got a dog, isn't?

I feel that these techniques are not limited to dogs. Just about any bond with a pet can benefit from these ideas. If you are willing to put in the effort and time, willing to give, willing to exert your patience to probably the ultimate limits--you can succeed. I am slowly putting into practice several of the things in this book, and it is totally paying off with my 6 month old Shiba. He is a quiet one, but his expectations are clear. Already, I am seeing a huge difference in how we interact. If only I could get hubby on the same page ^_^

Stewart McFarlane says

Victoria Schade. Bonding with Your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship (Kindle Locations 2437-2445). Kindle Edition.

Victoria Schade is a North American Dog trainer who rightly believes that the bond between dog and owner is fundamental to successful training and to a happy harmonious relationship with your dog.

She uses many of the same methods that I use, for the same reasons: positive, humane dog training; based around a quality relationship between dog & owner. This includes the "running away" method, for dogs reluctant to come back, and the 'what's this' on getting your dog's attention on walks, ie finding interesting smelling stuff on walks and showing the dog, also, constructive squirrel chasing (ie you decide when and which squirrels can be chased and the dog follows your lead), and hide and seek. I use all these methods with my dogs, just as I did with my Irish Setter, Paddy, my first rescue dog, over 30 years ago.

I agree with everything she says, except where she is critical of dog-human play-fighting/wrestling. She gives an extreme example of a client, a hard drinking, man's man type guy who seems to only relate to his Bernese Mountain Dog, by wrestling with it; and he does it as soon as he comes in from work, so the dog was immediately hyper. Actually I have noticed a lot of macho type guys are like this. This was an extreme case; and he encouraged his drinking/card game buddies to do the same. Result; the dog was out of control, couldn't relate to people without being boisterous, and frightened off most women. Clearly, dog and owner needed remedial action.

If used sensibly, play fighting with your dog is OK, if it is the right kind of dog, and if it is done appropriately and used as part of the learning & bonding process. As I indicate below, I used top play-fight

with my Irish Setter, often as part of his reward in training. He had the right kind of gentle temperament to enjoy it, without getting violent. Also, because he was the only other male dog I had, and he needed male bonding. He would not play-fight with my bitches as they were too small delicate for him. Having said that; I don't play fight with my German Shepherd, Pepsi, partly because I am older and less fit, and if he accidentally bit me in a play fight, I would probably need a blood transfusion; but mainly because he has three other male dogs to play fight with.

I paste below from my chapter on Paddy (Ch 5, OF MICE & ZEN) on how play fighting can be used constructively and positively as a part of training and bonding.

Standard obedience training with close heel work and long stays, and recalls of a few feet, will quickly bore the brains out of a Irish Setter. As adolescent learners they have to be made tired enough to actually focus on the trainer, and they work better at a distance. Paddy became brilliant at send aways, as any good sheepdog or gundog should be. And because his recalls were a preparation for a controlled send away, he eventually became good at those too. Getting him to come back off the lead had to be built up by a combination of recalls on the long rope or extendable, and then I used some high fenced shale tennis courts at the University, where I could let him off, and he couldn't get out and disappear on me. These were also useful since there were few distractions like wildlife or other dogs to detract from his training. Ten minutes maximum were spent in these enclosed areas. The real test came to when he was off the lead and in open country. Would he come back there, surrounded by rabbits interesting smells and other distraction?

The trick is to make sure you are doing something at least as interesting as the potential distractions.

So I tried to do the early recalls when he was in the middle of a field not around the edges, where more animals are hiding. If he looked like ignoring me, then clearly in his sight-line, I would run away in the opposite direction while calling him. Most dogs when they have bonded with their owner/trainer cannot resist chasing them if invited. My sprinting was pretty good then, as I was playing football twice a week. Usually he would be onto me in seconds. His reward for catching me was lost of praise and maybe a short tussle or play-fight, which he loved. Some trainers would disapprove of the last phase, believing it encourages aggression or dominance struggles; but in my view for a basically good natured dog, that should not be a problem.

In term of the sequence described, you have just appealed to a set of basic dog instincts. These are: first to follow or hunt another animal which is running away. It may be prey, it may be another pack member. The point is dogs like to chase things, so turn this to your advantage and incorporate it into the training. Then, second having "caught" you, he gets rewarded with another pleasurable experience and further bonding, through the playfight. Provided that you know your dog, and the play-fight doesn't get out of control and turn aggressive, and provided you remain the boss, and make sure that you metaphorically "win" the fight, then no harm is done. When two dogs who are friends play-fight, if left to get on with it, they can be seen getting quite rough. Then if the play gets too rough they will scale it down and usually just have a break and flop down together. Puppies in a litter do this all the time with their siblings. Dogs who like to play-fight are getting great exercise together just in the tussles. This quickly tires them and they know when to break and take a breather. With a good natured dog like a setter, or most labs and retrievers, I see no harm in play-fighting with their trainer or with their dog-friends. Paddy was a dominant, but gentle dog. So long as you the trainer are in control and can calm down the dog when needed, then there is no harm in play fights. It is basically about you being the leader and calling shots, in this case deciding when the tussle ends. When I was training his send ways and recalls and rewarding him with a tussle, Paddy was easily calmed down, set in the down position and sent away again. The trick was to end the recall with another pleasure to the dog, usually with another send away.

Of Mice and Zen. Animal Encounters in the Life of a Wandering Buddhist

Getting back to Victoria Schade's book: she makes the important point that when you do obedience training, as soon as the dog has the hang of basic commands, use them all the time in different situations, that is what they're for; to make dog better companions to have out and about and at home.

A down stay or a re-call in the garden or a controlled obedience class, is not the same as a down stay in a market or a park with many tempting distractions. But you should build up to the latter. Though I would never leave a dog in stay unsecured in a dangerous place with traffic and hazards.

Some of her students were apparently rather dim, and it never occurred to them to use the obedience training in everyday situations, they thought it was just for the class! This tells me they were not doing enough with their dog, out of class. The "obedience class" mentality is why I gave up standard obedience training back in 1966. It seems to me that training dogs to perform pointless tasks to absolute precision, for competitions they will never enter, is the height of futility. I personally would not want my dogs doing precision obedience style heels with their noses glued to my knee. I have 8 dogs for start and only two knees. More practical to me is a good stop fast "stop" when the dog is moving away at speed. Pepsi, my GSD did a very good one this morning. We were out on a remote farm track. I was busy photographing some flowers. A farmer in a truck came down the track towards us. I greeted him as he passed, and realized he knew me and the dogs. Pepsi is friendly and started to follow the truck, just being curious. But I didn't want him getting the others to follow, as the track is narrow, so I gave him the halt command and he stopped dead. Because he had stopped the rest of the pack did too. I strolled up to them and gave jerky treats all round. I make a point of chatting with farmers and field hands, and let the dogs make friends. It is their land or place of employment, so it is good to be friendly and make it clear you are doing no harm. Also, if one of the dogs decides to go awol or do some independent exploring, and encounters these people, then they are less likely to harm the dog. Besides, rural Thais and Cambodians are friendly and like a chat with a foreigner who speaks their language. Farm work in the heat can be pretty tedious, and most like a break and some entertainment from a mad foreigner who is dressed like a farmer, carries a stick and knife, and walks with 8 dogs.

Victoria Schade's book is particularly good on car training skills. In fact her whole focus is on practical skills which enable the dog to be a great companion anywhere.

You can make them do a sit stay as s/he waits for food, then give the food as a reward.

You can vary, it and let them be out in garden then re call them to get the reward ie supper or combine & and make them wait/stay a good distance away then call them to you to eat...ie dont waste meal times, they are great training opportunities

If someone comes to the door you can use it to train the dog to sit. or lie quietly when you open it rather than having the dog fly out & go nuts

You can induce people to come & call and brief them to ignore the dog if he is jumping about and or barking.

A well timed sit, or down which he holds will earn him praise and attention. That is what s/he craves; tell visitors particularly that s/he only gets attention from them when he is good.

Sometimes the quiet sit is ruined because the dogs gets excited by the praise and goes mad again; this is common in puppies, you just have to gauge and moderate the praise, so it doesnt set him off. You can always repeat the sit and start again.

One of the problems in raising a dog in Thailand is the stupidity of many Thai people in relation to dogs. Thai men think it is great fun to encourage a large friendly dog to jump up at them. It is a macho thing, rather like the play fighting client with the over boisterous Bernese. My own GSD is big and friendly, so he is often encouraged to jump up in greetings. Fortunately he has the intelligence to know only to jump up to men who he knows, usually Thais. He will never jump up at a woman or child. My Mother in law excepted, as she likes being jumped up to, and his front paws rest on her shoulders, so she is not forced back but down. Not

all dogs are so smart or discriminating; so when someone is hurt, a dog gets the blame, not the idiots who encouraged it to jump up in the first place.

Other irritations are that Thais who feed stray dogs, do so randomly, and will just throw the food down, so the dogs are competing and fights develop. I feed stray dogs, but I either do it individually by hand, or create a distance between each dog, to avoid fights. This type of laziness and carelessness applies to the majority of Thai dog owners. Most never take their dogs a walk or take it out with them, and any kind of training, is of course, way too much trouble. Most would not know where to start. Their interaction with their dog is minimal. Most Thai dogs are simply left to wander on the roads in extreme danger, due to the stupidity of most Thai drivers. Drivers on a 300 yard stretch of quiet road near our house have killed 5 dogs in the past three months. Or the dogs sit outside their homes, or are confined permanently in yards, gardens or cages, bored stupid. Owned dogs will be fed a few scraps, but Thais rarely bother to provide fresh water for the dog. It is expected to find its own or drink from stinking drains and puddles. This kind of ignorance and negligence, especially in a permanently hot country, makes me very angry. I spent part of New Years Day taking a tiny stray puppy to the vet. Its skin was burnt and bleeding from having boiling water thrown on it. The vet is convinced it was deliberate, as the burns are extensive. If I got hold of the scum who did this, they would not be seeing in another New Year.

Getting back to the main theme of Victoria Schade's book; adopting and bonding with Thai dogs is very easy in one sense; because they are so starved of proper care and attention, they are delighted to get it. They may have some terrible habits, but they quickly become devoted to you. On the habits: one of the litter of 3 puppies I rescued from the countryside, living wild, has disgusting dietary habits. Despite being fed fresh chicken, fish, rice, biscuit, egg, pork bones; all lovingly prepared by me; out on walks she loves eating dried up worms, cowshit and her favourite: horse shit. She is the also the dog most fond of kissing and licking your face. I have explained to her that her eating habits are like taking a girl out to a fancy restaurant, getting her the best food on the menu and the finest wine, and then she gets a greasy burger and coke on the way home; but she just wags her tail and tries to kiss me. Her brothers manage on the regular meals and snacks I use in training, but she likes to supplement her diet. I am assured that earthworms are highly nutritious, and I read that they are basic to the diet of rural foxes in the UK; but I am sure the Brit foxes dig their worms up fresh, not dried up and shriveled. Being a dog lover in Thailand is also heartbreaking, because of the numbers of neglected and suffering dogs. There must be millions of them. I have managed to adopt 8, and take care of 7 others who are basically stray or feral; and I support the work of the Soi Dogs Charity, but it is depressing seeing the numbers of neglected dogs.

I think one of most important messages of Victoria Schade's book is about keeping the training fun, positive and have a sense of humour along with patience.

Her closing tips are quoted below:

Am I doing this right? Feeling overwhelmed by information overload? A few simple questions can help you determine if you're headed in the right direction with Fido: • Is your dog having a good time? This question separates the old-school be-the-alpha approach to living and working with a dog from modern dog-friendly training. Remember: drills are for the military and the tool chest. Your dog will learn more and retain more if you keep your training sessions fun. • Are you having a good time? You're more likely to stick with the program if you're actually enjoying it. • Are you comfortable with the methods you're using? Gut check: Does it feel right? If kneeing Fido in the chest because he's jumping doesn't sit well with you, don't do it. You will get frustrated as you work on your bond. You'll have many, many off days. Plan on some all-out bad days as well. Bond building is not a linear procedure, but one of fits and starts. Before you give up on your dog, take a step back and recognize any progress he's made. (We're so programmed to look only for major successes that the little ones are often forgotten.) One amazing recall out of three? That's a start! Dropping the empty potato-chip bag when you asked? Fantastic! Keeping an eye on you while at the dog

park? Now that's progress.

Great book, clearly written and full of practical, sensible advice. I strongly recommend it to all dog owners.

Steve Berthiaume says

One of the best dog training books.

You will love this book and you and your dog will greatly benefit from it. A must read for anyone wanting to have a better relationship with their dog.

Pamela says

I enjoyed this book the first time I read it. I'm rereading it because it's full of great suggestions for fun things to do with your dog. I've implemented many of Schade's games with my dog Honey and was looking for a few fun things to do that would strengthen our bond and make us more likely to pass our upcoming Canine Good Citizens test.

Jenny says

This book was ok, but honestly didn't tell me anything I didn't already know. Maybe I've been reading/watching too much dog stuff. :) It's also aimed at people who are unsure of the bond they have with their dog, while my bond with Bailey has been pretty solid since she was five months old. Still, a book that I wish some other dog owners would read!

Marília Domingos says

Gostei bastante. Penso que é importante para todos os futuros treinadores de cães terem uma perspectiva mais alargada da relação dono-cão. Não se trata de conseguir desenvolver um cão super obediente, mas sim conseguir criar uma relação boa, uma ligação forte com o cão. Isso é feito através de conseguir estabelecer confiança mútua, respeito, etc. Existe uma variedade de coisas que podemos fazer para aumentar e melhorar a ligação que temos com o nosso cão e este livro demonstra-nos exactamente quais são. Uma boa leitura, interessante, cativante e, ao mesmo tempo, informativa. Recomendo!

Amy Laurens says

Intended to be a practical hints-and-tips book but I found there were too many smug anecdotes for this purpose. I like her approach to training though and found a handful of useful techniques.

Belle Beth Cooper says

Some interesting takeaways but not mind-blowing

I was hoping for more puppy-focused advice but this book more often talks about retraining dogs with existing habits and behaviours. I still found it useful, but didn't learn a whole lot I didn't already know.

Michelle says

I will begin by saying I loved this book. It's not a training manual per se. It is, in essence, exactly what it says it is: a book about building a bond with your dog. The entire book is rooted 100% in positive ideals. And not only is it rooted in those ideals, but it also does not buy into the dominance myths (in fact, she calls alpha "the dirtiest concept in dog training:"). Schade is a clicker trainer and she's proud of it. Like many positive trainers that's not where she began. She began with traditional methods she never quite felt comfortable with and discovered the joys of clicker training when someone suggested she try it in order to teach her dog to roll over (something she was struggling with). The dog picked it up amazingly fast and even more importantly, was joyful about it. She was a convert.

The book is broken down into two main sections.

Part I ("All About the Bond") explores what the bond IS exactly. What does a dog who has a good bond with his human look like? How does he act? And more importantly, she offers up several questions to get you to evaluate your bond with your dog (I'm happy to report that my dog passes on all accounts!). It also explores how we undermine the bond (everything from punishing a dog when it comes to you instead of rewarding the recall to not spending enough time with your dog to spoiling the dog to the point at which the dog becomes demanding), some body language issues (especially in regard to people believing they are rewarding a dog when the dog clearly is not happy with this "reward"), and the concept of rights vs. privileges (privileges are those things that the dog has to earn; she makes the statement that a lot of dogs run into problems when people believe certain privileges, like having free run of the house when no one is home, is a right and not a privilege).

Part II ("Build the Bond") gives you several exercises to help build the bond that you're likely struggling with if you're reading this book. Some of these exercises are simply basic obedience (sit, down/stay, recalls). Some of these are ways to stop "naughty" behavior. But most of the ideas are ways to incorporate training in such a way as to make it fun. And I am ALL about having fun with my dog! This was the section that connected with me the most. She has some fabulous ideas on how to play with your dog to help build the bond. I think one of my favourite things was the "magic ball" concept. She punches a hole in a tennis ball and loops a long, 15-foot string for it. Then she tosses it for the dog. And when the dog goes for it, she suddenly pulls it away across the yard. Dogs can't resist the chase and it adds even more fun to fetch. I think it's likely to make my fetch-uninterested dog get more into the idea. This is certainly something I plan to try. My other favourite section was on giving your dog a variety when it comes to walks. In other words, pick a different direction every day. We do this with my dog. But we go further, which she unfortunately doesn't bring up. I'm a firm believer in giving a dog the choice on where we walk. Usually our walks are split between her deciding a direction and me deciding one so that we don't get TOO far away from home. I also love the sections on keeping humor in your training as your dog WILL frustrate you and her somewhat crazy suggestions for stopping a dog from chasing squirrels and yanking your arm out of its socket.

I thought the whole book was excellent. She brings in a lot of examples from her clients, both the clients who

were successful and the ones who continued to struggle. She has a good sense of humor and takes a few digs early on at the "TV dog trainer," which was amusing. She's very upbeat and positive throughout the whole book and she explains pretty well why she thinks that positive reinforcement (and negative punishment, which she does clearly use at times) work well for establishing and cementing the bond.

She and I don't agree on everything. I don't believe tug HAS to have rules unless the dog is completely out of control. I'm not against using flexis for walks. And I don't believe that the dog has to walk right next to you in order for you to have a good bond. She's not asking for heel position, but she wants the dogs to walk with a loose leash right at their owners side. She allows sniffing, but only for short periods and not very far out from the owner. I'm fully content to allow my dog out in front of me, to my side or even behind me at times. She checks in frequently enough on walks for me to know she realizes I'm part of the walk too.

Those are really very minor quibbles with the book. Overall, I think it's an excellent book for building the bond with a dog who you might feel needs a little bit (or a lot of!) brushing up on that aspect.

Maxime says

Started promising but half way through I find it difficult to motivate myself to finish the book as its really not telling me anything new. I bought it to learn more about how trainers solve these kind of problems and not because I have a problem with my own dogs.

But it should be mandatory reading for people who don't get through to their dogs

Lo says

This book is aimed for people who want to make the bond between them and their dogs stronger. I feel like I have quite a nice bond with my dog already (though he could be paying more attention to me on walks...), but this book gave me tips of new kinds of exercises and games I can do with my dog. We've already tried out a few of them and I've seen an improvement in just a couple of days in the attentiveness of my dog.

The book was very positive, both in methods and general feel and it was a pleasurable read altogether.

Eileen says

Excellent.

Loved the mind games. Victoria trains the same way our wonderful trainers at D.O.G., do which made this book a wonderful reminder and was an affirmation to what we have learned.

Amanda Dickson says

This is a fantastic book on building a relationship with your dog based on love, positive reinforcement training, and fun.
