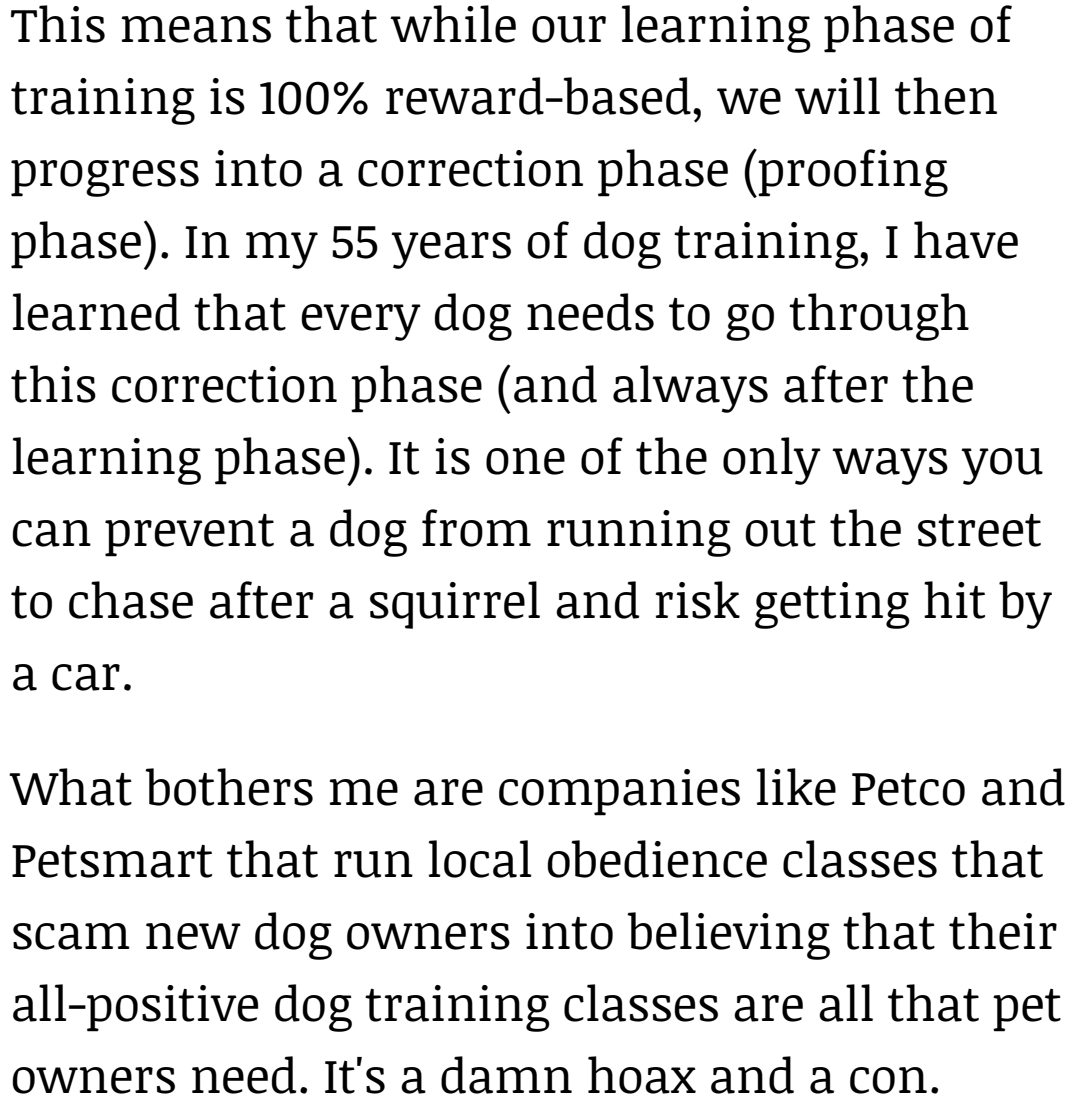
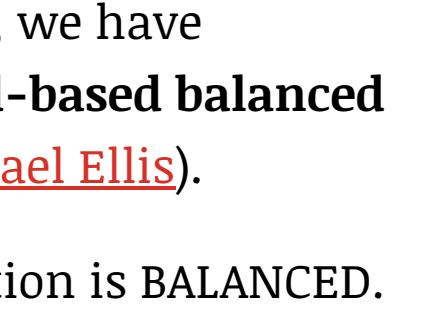


# Petco and PetSmart All-Positive Dog Training Classes are a Scam

By Ed Frawley



I am in the process of turning our DVD titled [The Power of Training Dogs with Markers](#) into an [online course](#). Since 2003, we have considered ourselves **reward-based balanced** dog trainers (thanks to [Michael Ellis](#)).

The keyword in that description is BALANCED. This means that while our learning phase of training is 100% reward-based, we will then progress into a correction phase (proofing phase). In my 55 years of dog training, I have learned that every dog needs to go through this correction phase (and always after the learning phase). It is one of the only ways you can prevent a dog from running out the street to chase after a squirrel and risk getting hit by a car.

What bothers me are companies like Petco and PetSmart that run local obedience classes that scam new dog owners into believing that their all-positive dog training classes are all that pet owners need. It's a damn hoax and a con. Every dog that has gone through their classes can be put into an environment with so much distractions (another dog, a squirrel, kids playing around, etc.), and it wouldn't be able to perform a simple recall.

Don't get me wrong here. We 100% believe in marker training. But a correction phase needs to come after that. If you are interested in ensure that your dog minds you completely, regardless of distractions, view the insight I've put into my [marker training online course](#). I make it clear that marker training (reward-based training) is only the beginning, not the end of the dog training program.

The goal of my course is to introduce new dog trainers to the world of reward-based training in dogs. Reward-based training is simple but it is not easy. Learning to correctly apply the concept of markers will set the stage for all of the dog training videos and courses we have produced since 2008. This includes the series we have with Michael Ellis.

Marker training goes by a number of different names that all mean the same thing. The following are often used interchangeably in dog training communities:

1. Clicker Training
2. Reward-based Training
3. Conditioned Reinforcer
4. Bridge
5. Verbal Marker
6. Moment Marker
7. Marker Training
8. Clicker Training

In laymen's terms, marker training is a way to bridge the gap in time between the instant my dog does the right thing and the time it takes me to deliver a reward.

Reward-based training is one of the most powerful systems of training dogs that I have seen in my 55 years of owning, breeding, and training working dogs. In its most basic form, it's a method of communication that is very clear to the dog. They learn the marker language quickly and when its done correctly, our dogs love training.

In the 1990s, I was pretty vocal about how stupid I thought clicker training was. Boy was I dead wrong. Those comments were made from a position of ignorance and a lack of understanding. I didn't understand the details of how reward-based training worked nor did I know how it changed the relationship between my dogs and their outlook on training sessions. In 2003, I went to my first training seminar with Michael Ellis and was introduced to the concept. It only took one seminar for me to realize how stupid I had been and I was hooked.

Once trainers grasp the concept of reward-based training and develop perfect timing, their dogs become problem solvers and they love the work because they understand the communication system.

The concept of markers can be applied to every level of animal training. It can be applied to 8-week-old puppies or 11-year-old rescue dogs. Because it is a purely positive method of training, its 100% non-confrontational which is why it can be a tool to work with dominant and aggressive dogs. This system builds or repairs the bond between handler and dog.

## We Are Not All-Positive Dog Trainers

Training dogs with the reward-based methods is hthe best way to train a dog. But this work must be balanced by introducing corrections into every advanced training program.

Thirty-five or 40 years ago, we used to call this the "PROOFING" stage. That simply meant that the dog needed to learn to comply under distractions. In the proofing stage, we gradually increased levels of distractions to a behavior that we 110% knew the dog understood. When it failed to comply, it got a correction that fit its temperament and the situation we put the dog in. The goal being to get a behavior change that resulted in compliance.

All-positive dog trainers believe that dogs never get a correction for anything. That only works in sterile environments.

To get 100% reliability on recalls under every conceivable distraction requires a dog to go through a correction phase of training.

Trainers or training companies like Petco or PetSmart that advertise all-positive dog training are a hoax. The best advice I can give is don't buy into their advertising scam. Their training only works halfway.

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