



Consider the following trainer and behavior consultant methods and skill sets that separate the best from the rest, including the red light qualities to avoid and the green light qualities to seek out in your efforts to find an emotionally protective, humane dog trainer or behavior consultant.



Red Light Training & Behavior Consulting Methods

Avoid the following harsh methods that motivate the animal to behave using aversive stimuli:

- Leash/collar jerks, pops, or over-tightening
- Physically forcing the animal into place
- Loud noises, like a shake can
- Spraying the dog
- Physical punishment, including slapping, hitting, pinching, shaking, biting, or throwing items at the dog
- Using intimidation or confrontation to gain compliance or dominance/"alpha" status, such as yelling, staring the animal down, or doing alpha rolls or alpha downs (physically pinning the dog down on their back or side)
- Advocating methods that are too dangerous or high risk for guardians to safely use on their own
- Using "mixed" or "balanced" training methods that blend punishment and rewards. This can increase confusion/uncertainty and escalate conflict and anxiety

Note: Just stating that the training or consulting uses rewards isn't enough information. Ensure that all training and consulting tactics used with the dog are free of fear and force-based methods, rather than a blend or mix of methods.





Green Light Training & Behavior Consulting Methods

Methods employed by humane trainers and behavior consultants may include:

- Treats, food, toys, play, and attention
- Using management tools like leashes, baby gates, and exercise pens to make a behavior you don't want less likely to occur
- Teaching the dog the behavior you *do* want instead of punishing what you *don't* want
- Training at a pace that keeps the dog interested and wanting more
- Monitoring and responding to the dog's body language (dogs that are stressed out or scared will have trouble learning)
- Working with veterinary professionals, including board-certified veterinary behaviorists, to help pets suffering from more intense behavior issues
- Helping you meet your dog's needs in a way that fits into the life you share





Red Light Explanations of Animal Behavior and Learning

- Relies upon concepts like pack theory and dominance to explain behavior and motivation in dogs
- Uses explanations like “dominance,” “pack leadership,” and having to be the “alpha” or “boss” when explaining relational dynamics and behavior of dogs



Green Light Explanations of Animal Behavior and Learning

- Teaches owners to better understand their animals through a scientifically based understanding of animal behavior and learning theory
- Encourages healthy practices that protect the physical wellbeing of animals, including enrichment, ongoing veterinary care, and advising veterinary oversight/intervention at the earliest signs of a concern or change in health or behavior
- Teaches the importance of teaching and rewarding right behaviors



Red Light Body Language and Trainer & Behavior Consultant Response to Fear, Anxiety & Stress

- Animals show excessive signs of avoidance, fear, anxiety, or stress.
- The trainer or behavior consultant overlooks or fails to address signs of distress or mistakingly categorizes high-stress body language (such as cowering, immobility, ears back, mouth closed tightly, shutting down) as a good sign.



Resource: Find a free dog body language guide video at fearfreehappyhomes.com



Green Light Body Language and Trainer & Behavior Consultant Response to Fear, Anxiety & Stress

- Dogs display happy, relaxed or alert, and interested body language cues
- The trainer or behavior consultant keeps stress levels low for human and animal participants to ensure both are in a relaxed enough state to learn and for training to remain successful
- If animals display signs of fear, anxiety, or stress, the trainer or behavior consultant adjusts their approach, the interaction, or the training environment in a way that helps the animal to remain comfortable and calm
- Accurately identifies body language signals and teaches clients ways to better read and respond to their animal's body language cues



Red Light People Skills

- Relates well to your dog, but not you
- Makes you feel judged or belittled
- Yells or uses abusive language
- Is impatient or reluctant to answer questions or repeat instructions
- Is hard to understand or relate to



Green Light People Skills

- Relates and communicates well with you and your dog
- Is patient and encouraging
- Lets you know when you've done a good job
- Keeps your stress levels low
- Can adapt his/her teaching style to meet you and your dog's needs
- Provides clear tools and guidelines for successfully bringing training into your home and everyday life with your dog

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