

Day-One Dog Training

Making Delivery Trucks Vanish & Other Amazing Dog Magic!

By Howard Weinstein

Can little dogs make big UPS trucks disappear? Our smart Welsh Corgis Mickey and Callie mastered this wizardry as puppies (and without so much as a day at Hogwarts School with that Harry Potter kid). Your dog probably does similar astounding feats.

Here's how it works.

Most puppies quickly grow accustomed to the sounds of passing cars, and consider them no cause for alarm. Ahh, but the first time that big, brown truck lumbers around your corner – *that's* another story. The rumbles, rattles and squealing brakes will bring all but the most relaxed dogs to "red-alert" status. They *bark, bark, bark*, rush to the window, and see Big Brown stop in front of the house.

The UPS guy climbs out, package in hand. And your dog is thinking, "*Ohhnooooo!* He's coming right up the walk. It's an invasion!!" More barking.

And then the UPS guy rings your bell. Even *more* barking. You go to the door, open it, and take the package. Then, unless the UPS guy moves in with you (which rarely happens), he returns to his truck while your dog continues barking. But now your dog is thinking, "Hey, *look* – it's working!" So he barks some more.

The UPS guy gets in his truck and drives off. And your dog thinks, "*I made that happen!* I saved us from the noisy monster."

Now, the *next* time the UPS truck rounds the corner, your dog starts barking as soon as he hears it. Only there's no package for you that day, so the truck rumbles on past your house. And your dog thinks, "*Wow!* I'm getting *really good* at this!" The same goes for other big, noisy vehicles: dogs bark, trucks leave. Simple as that.



Our first Corgi, the amazing Mail Order Annie (co-writer of our book *Puppy Kisses*), believed the only reason she got fed is because she used her doggie mind-control powers to *make* me dish out the kibble. Thirty minutes before her standard meal-time, Annie's "stomach clock"

would go off and she'd begin staring at me. She'd keep it up until I'd finally go into the kitchen and feed her.

Callie carried on that tradition in her own way, casting meaningful glances from me to the food closet, and she'd continue until dinner was finally served. Callie didn't know I'd feed her and Mickey anyway, even without her psychic urging. Once dogs make the apparently-logical connection between *their* actions and the desired results, it's pretty hard to convince them otherwise.

Knowing this gives us a better understanding of why training works. If my dog thinks she can get what she wants (*attention*) by jumping on people (*annoying behavior*), she'll keep doing it. But if I teach her she can get what she wants by sitting and looking cute (*good manners*), she'll do that instead.

Dogs are creatures of habit. They tend to generalize from their experiences (both good and bad). That's why *we* have the power to shape those habits, correct bad habits, and modify behaviors involving such tricky problems as fear and aggression.

So, if you think dogs don't think, *think again!* Your dog regularly makes connections between cause and effect. Use that knowledge to *good* effect and help your dog learn to be on his best behavior!

Howard Weinstein is the author of ***Puppy Kisses are Good for the Soul & Other Important Lessons You & Your Dog Can Teach Each Other*** (available from Amazon.com, or direct from Day-One Dog Training).

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