

TRAINING DOGS FOR YOUR WELLBEING

By Liz Maitland

RECOVERY Assistance Dogs



Finding Ways to Mental Health



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RECOVERY Assistance Dogs
Humberstone House, Floor 5 Suite 9, 81-83 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, LE1 1WB
www.RECOVERYAssistanceDogs.org.uk
RECOVERY4Wellbeing@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

This book is not just for people training a RAD Dog but also for anyone who needs some ideas about how their dog can improve their Wellbeing. We all need that. This book will not necessarily make you a top dog trainer but it will show you that your dog can improve your wellbeing. Training a dog is definitely a therapy for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Even if at the moment your pooch runs rings round you and all it wants to do is play you can train it and let it be the change in your life. At the heart of every yappy, naughty, little puppy is the desire to be a working dog. Dogs really want to please you but they need to know how to do this. Have you got a power struggle with your pet that needs to be transformed into a working team relationship that is better than a successful marriage? Yes, well read on.

The writer, Liz Maitland, has been successfully training RECOVERY Assistance Dogs for Mental Health since RECOVERY Charity started this project in July 2004. She has grown up with dogs all her life. Her mother's life revolved around dogs.



LIZ WITH MILLI & MIMI

When Mental Health problems started to invade her life at age 19 she remembered how dogs had helped her feel loved. It took another 23 years of a steep mountainous climb towards healing while a disrupted childhood and a traumatic young adulthood threatened to destroy her. Her dog Milli has helped to keep her well and for the past 8 years, since 2009 when Milli was a pup, Liz has not felt suicidal. This must be one of the highest recommendations for a dog and evidence that, as many people agree, a dog is a better companion than any human partner.

The Charity was founded in Oakham, Rutland to campaign for freedom from force and fear for Survivors of Mental Health problems. One of our main aims was to educate the wider public about how people can recover from Mental Health problems by allowing them to have choice and control in their lives. We spread the word by weekly Fundraising at Street Collections on Saturdays talking to anyone who would stop and listen about discrimination and how everyone has equal Human Rights whether they have a Mental Health label or not. At the beginning we recognised that very few people were interested in this subject and in the early 21st Century few people would stop and talk to us. This was not a good foundation for a Charity set up by Survivors and we knew we would need to do further campaigning before people would accept Assistance Dogs for Mental Health.

By 2010 we were starting to notice an improvement in peoples' attitude. This was partly due to our persistence but also due to the Social Services including Mental Health in their Personalisation Services. These are all about people getting a Support Plan, a Personal Budget paid by local Councils and the individual being able to choose who would help them with their Health and Wellbeing needs. We began to realise that dogs were brilliant for Mental Health. The Mother of one of our founder members had Alzheimer's and the dog was helping her to keep out of hospital and have a purpose in life. The dog was called Mimi and the owner refused to go anywhere without her. Mimi and Milli were the first two RECOVERY Assistance Dogs to help their owner. The new Project to train RAD Dogs (they were originally called PAWS – Pets As Wellbeing Support – Dogs) was set up at the Love Dogs Show at Peterborough in July 2011. It had taken 7 years of campaigning for the public to recognise that it was possible to recover from Mental Health conditions and that dogs could definitely help with this.

CHAPTER 1

CHOOSING YOUR PUPPY OR RESCUE DOG

“Scientists are proving that dogs are more like us than we ever thought possible”¹ in ‘Secret Life of Dogs’. Dogs have undergone a transformation from predator to pet. With some many types and breeds you should be able to find a dog for you. Apparently Golden Retrievers are for those well educated, terriers will make you laugh and pugs are for the well-heeled. While Cocker Spaniels are the love of my life what is for you? It might be that family dog that you loved as a child.

It is the dogs that establish the relationship from the word go as a Puppy. They will make eye contact and bond with you making that instant connection to help you fall in love. It is like the sacred gaze; they love to look at you. Dogs learn by watching us from an early age, listening to our words and wondering

¹ ‘Secret Life of Dogs’ ITV Show 07.02.17.



at what we do. If a dog is to be a team with you they will follow you everywhere. They will copy you and help you to stay calm or be the person your want to be. What gives a dog the courage to help us like this? They feel safe in our company; we are their security, as they cannot open a door or a tin without us. They trust us to make the right decision for them.

Okay so you've chosen what breed of dog. Now you need to be sure about whether you would prefer a Puppy or a Rescue Dog. If you do have problems with stability, staying calm or even Mental Health problems then training a Puppy can be challenging. But if you can stay the course then love hides a multitude of sins and the bond between you will be unbroken. A good local Dog Training Club with Kennel Club listed Status so you can do a Puppy Foundation Assessment, a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award will help enormously. If you would prefer a Rescue Dog then you must be careful to make sure that, especially if you need to improve your wellbeing, that your new companion has not been traumatised themselves. One needy dog is not good for a needy human. It stands to reason that if you need support yourself then it would be easier for you to find a dog that is able to give you the comfort and attention you need. If you go to a rescue centre they may not know what its experiences have been like. It might be better to be able to meet its owners and see what its environment was like and what the reasons for the change in home are. Some good websites may help you find the dog of your dreams. Some of our Assistance Dogs have been found on www.Pets4Homes.co.uk. The pros of a rescue are that if you get them at 6 months of age they will definitely be house trained and may have learnt a few skills.



Maybe you would still like a Puppy. Then some knowledge will help you choose the right one. The discipline and socialisation that a puppy receives by its mother and peers during the 7 weeks before it goes to its forever home is important. When you go to visit your new pup make sure that it is coming from a home similar to yours. It should have a certain amount of peace and cleanliness. The pups should have been introduced to as many controlled experiences as possible. Things like the outdoors, hoovers, children, the washing machine, a radio, shouting can be scary to your pup but it is easier if Mum is around for reassurance. If you look at the www.thePuppyPlan.com it will give you an idea of the sorts of things it should be finding out about.

So you have arrived at the house all excited about seeing this new companion that will change your life. Make sure you are armed with some information to help you make the right choice. In 'Think Dog' John Fisher clearly identifies how to make the best choice. Definitely the breeder may be able to help you decide if they know the puppies well enough. Also seeing the mother will help you to visualise how big and what they may look like. You could ask a bit about their character too as any problems could be hereditary. If you need the dog for your wellbeing or as a RECOVERY Assistance Dog then it will need the character for this. You can change behaviour by training but you cannot change character. So how can we know what their character is like? Mr Fisher says that the three pass levels will test for sociability and resource guarding. A Pass Level 1 dog that is "very sociable, easy to physically handle, content to go with the flow"² is the dog to aim for you to work with as a team. If you get the Level 2 or even worse Level 3 dog you might have a challenge about who is

² Think Dog by John Fisher, p. 19.

boss rather than working together. Level 2 is the puppy that is sociable but in a pushy and demanding way. While level 3 is the one that is too independent and determined to be in charge and get what it wants.

So you need to do a bit of a test in controlled conditions to see what Level your prospective puppy is. Some of these tests you could do with a Rescue dog as well. The three tests look at sociability, handling and resource guarding.



Sociability – This is about being in a quiet environment and letting the animal come to you.

- A Level 1 result would be the Pup or Rescue Dog that seems keen on getting some attention, fuss and cuddles. Even if the dog is a little shy at coming over at first but then likes the attention. Then stop the attention. If the dog stays with you calmly and quietly then this is the dog for you.
- Level 2: the dog is very hesitant and unwilling to come towards you. Seems too scared.
- Level 3: This result would be a dog just not interested in you but keen to explore the room in a self-confident way.

Handling – You should pick up the Puppy or allow the Rescue Dog to stay on the ground and examine it gently all over.

- Level 1: This dog would enjoy the contact, look at you occasionally, being relaxed and quiet.
- Level 2: For this result the animal might moan or behave as if it is in pain with some wriggling movements and effort to get out of the situation.
- Level 3: This would involve barking, growling, stiffening and turning away of their body.

Resource Guarding – Bring some soft toys, the dog's own food and a high value dog or puppy chew.

Play with the toy (tugging and moving it along the ground), give the dog its own food stroking it while it is eating and finally give the chew and see the reaction when you attempt to take it away. Always make sure that you are swapping the chew for another treat so that the puppy is not upset.

- Level 1 – the animal that engages in the play with the toy but then lets you have it back. This Level would be for the dog or puppy that is quite relaxed about food it will let you stroke it while eating and is fine about you taking the chew away & happy to get another treat. It may move away but will come back.
- Level 2 – Is the dog that is rough or mouthing you rather than the toy. This dog might ignore your attempts to take food off them, eat faster or run off with the treat.
- Level 3 – Any freezing with the toy, leaning over it or growling is this Level. With the food it might become quite aggressive at your intervention trying to snatch it back or growling. Even though you are kindly offering another treat.

You will know that you have the right puppy or rescue dog when they can literally do nothing wrong and that you love them so much you can forgive them anything. Many rescue dogs become available when they stop being cute puppies and become teenagers. You can get a lovely dog at the age of 6 months that has overstepped the mark and is ready to start again with a new owner.

CHAPTER 2

OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY FOR YOU TO WORK AS A TEAM

If you are going to find a dog that is a success then you are going to have to understand what your dog is telling you. Reading books like Sarah Whitehead's 'Clever Dog' will help you to understand that it is less about you being the boss and more that 'your dog is not an adversary but your ally'³. The best thing about dogs is their ability to communicate, be still in your presence and just love being with you. You will find that training them, playing with them, walking them is all about building the most amazing relationship that could be better than anything possible between humans. If you agree with me on this point then you have a dog that can help your wellbeing.

So what do you need for your wellbeing? You need a dog that can:

- Sit still for long periods of time just being happy it's with you.
- Walk closely to you on a loose lead and not behaving like a racehorse.
- Protect you and help you feel safe without taking over your life.
- Love you, comfort you and help you find some stability through life's ups and downs.
- Be the companion and true love of your life that you have always been looking for.

As if this isn't enough we now have to put in the hard graft to get the dog to be like this. Don't give up as it will be worth it.

Sit Or Lie Still For A Long Period Of Time



MIMI LOVES TO LIE STILL

The best way to train a dog is with treats. This could be its favourite food chopped up (cheese, carrots or bought treats). Another good idea is a favourite mat that you can take around with you or if you forget that just use your coat or scarf. Just drop the treats on the mat and let the dog pick them up. This will help it to settle, stop whinging or barking. It is a good idea to do this 'stillness training' every day for about 10-15 minutes. Keep doing it until the dog just lies down waiting for the treats to be dropped. You can get on with your own things while doing this training so that the dog learns that it is about not distracting you. You can practice this at home and then see if it will work elsewhere later. This will help your dog to know how to behave when you go out to the pub, on the bus, visit friends or if it is an Assistance Dog at the cinema, an event, in the library.

³ Clever Dog, Sarah Whitehead, p. 15, 2012

Walk Closely To You On A Loose Lead

My dog Milli used to be a bit of a Racehorse as she steamed ahead. She would pull on the collar, as she did not like the effect of it tightening round her neck. Can you blame her? If you ride horses you will know that if you pull on the horses mouth relentlessly it has the effect of making it go faster. This is the same with dogs. You can use a Dogmatic or a halti harness over the nose if you like but you will still need to train it not to pull when it is taken off. Better to get a harness that fits nicely around the dog's body and then train it to walk on a loose lead. This involves use of a marker word (I use 'good') so that the dog knows exactly when it has performed the right behaviour. So best to start with something simple so that it knows what you are asking. The dog will want to please you but even more important will be how it can get the treat. Every time the dog looks at you, say 'good' and give a treat. You can do this sitting down so that you are both calm and relaxed. Eventually when you both get the hang of it you can stand up and do the same thing. When you start to walk make sure the dog



MILLI LOOSELEAD WALKING

doesn't walk in front of you by using the word good when the lead is loose or the dog is looking at you. You will find if it is looking at you it will be staying close and ready for the next word 'good' and then the treat. Make sure that you give the treat from the hand that is nearest the dog. It helps to put the treats in a pocket or treat bag and only reach for the treat after you have said the marker word. It takes a bit of practice but eventually you may want to move on to using a clicker instead of the marker word. All good fun and it has worked with Milli as now she walks beautifully to heel. Also I have taught her to come to touch me when I say touch and this is really reassuring and reminds her that she is walking with me for our wellbeing and must stay close.

Protect You And Help You Feel Safe

This is all about feeling safe in your own home as far as I am concerned. When I had Mental Health problems, I recovered from them about 21 years ago and since I have had Milli I have not felt suicidal, I found it scary being alone in my house. The great thing about dogs is they do not like you feeling scared and they will do anything to make you feel safe. So they will smell someone outside long before you hear a sound. This means they are a great early warning system. By the time the doorbell goes they are barking big time. I get my dogs to touch me when they are barking as this helps them and me to calm down. Then once Milli has stopped

barking this means that she is in the right mood to help me meet this person at the door. When training your dog to protect you in your own house you might need to put them in another room before opening the door if they won't stop barking. This is for everyone's safety. Then once they have learned that they can only be part of the door opening if they are quiet you might allow them to be present. This is a real treat for you and them as they can be really useful.

Have you noticed that some people have space invading issues? That they stand far too close and it is quite intimidating. Dogs do a wonderful blocking movement so that your safety and dignity can be preserved. More about that later.

Love You, Comfort You And Help You Find Some Stability

Since I have had Milli trained as my RECOVERY Assistance Dog I have felt more stable than I have ever felt in my entire life. This is because dogs can spot things that we cannot predict. Then they will communicate by becoming agitated and block your path and tap with paw or nose. Dogs have a 'theory of mind'⁴ they can consider the perspectives of others. They can pick up warning signs and let a human know. Dogs do closely observe us and have an ability to put themselves in our shoes. Often this is linked with what they want this might be food, affection, willingness to please, interest in fun or games. Dogs can learn their toys names. My dog Milli is able to fetch her toys by name. We can have great fun while she keeps me laughing as she fetches the right one and then the wrong one on purpose. So do dogs have more intelligence than a two-year-old toddler? I would say so because of their tremendous ability to communicate. They don't need words to tell us what they want. This is a benefit for us as it means more peace in our minds. This is for two reasons. One is that because



dogs do not talk they have more stillness in their minds. This can be shared with us as our chatterbox minds are more still with a dog around. Also when we spend time with a dog we are charging our batteries, as we are not talking endlessly to them as we do with our human friend. Maybe even our hearts beat at the same speed as our dogs.

When the dogs are trained as RECOVERY Assistance Dogs they have to pass a Level 1 Access Test and this involves the dog letting its owner pass through the door first. All dog owners should know about this, as it is brilliant for wellbeing. It stops all

that anxiety and race for the door as the dog politely acknowledges that since it is you that opens the door then you should go through it first. Well that is how it feels when really you have trained the dog to sit and wait at the door to let you go through first. If you can get your dog to sit and if it waits when you tell it then you are on a winner at the door stakes. If your dog doesn't know those cues now is the time to teach it some manners as well as the cues.

Milli does a wonderful job in comforting me when I am tired of life or upset. Before I had her I regularly felt that life was not worth living. Now I live in shalom and peace. If I raise my voice or tears come to my eyes she instinctively knows how to make me feel better. If we are out and about she will keep touching me with her nose or paw until I feel more like myself. Sometimes I will kneel down and she will jump up and put her paws on my shoulders, cuddling me and licking my face. This never fails to immediately transform my mood and makes me laugh out loud. At night my panic attacks have completely stopped as Milli seems to sense my anxiety before it appears and comes to reassure me by tapping and nosing my hand or my face. We are definitely winning and Milli has found peace for me in a world that does not understand how to help.

Be The Companion And True Love Of Your Life

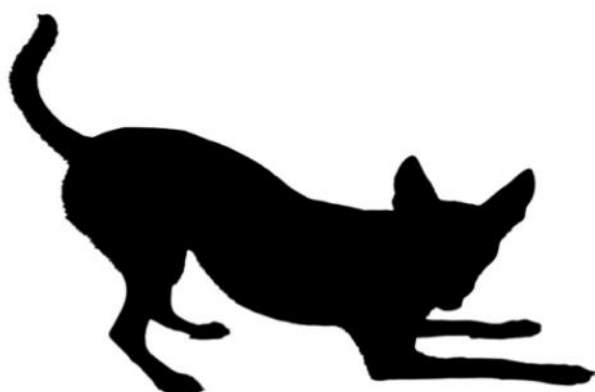
Having a Mental Health problem that is being treated by a Psychiatric System can be a living hell. A RECOVERY Assistance Dog can help you find a way out of this. Often a dog can communicate while all other human lines of communication have failed. Most people feel they know what a Mental Health problem is when they do not have quality of life or the wellbeing they used to know. This can be caused by challenges in human relationships. If a dog is properly trained it can be the companion

⁴ 'Secret Life of Dogs' ITV Show 07.02.17

and true love of your life that you have been looking for. The Dog Training itself is a therapy, as it will give you a purpose in life, an aim and something to do regularly that will change your life forever. Playing with your dog is a great way to create a bond. It is also the best way for your dog to realise that training is fun. If your puppy is biting or mouthing you teaching it to play with toys and to chew them will stop this. Here are some ideas for playing:

1. Get some fluffy toys of different sizes for puppies and harder toys for older dogs.
2. Practice playing regularly as at first they have to learn to do this, using treats might help.
3. Pretend to be prey: Moving the toy fast along the ground, hiding it behind furniture and making it reappear, playing tug and letting the dog win.
4. Encourage reluctant players: Be childlike with laughter and silliness (squeaky, fun noises and energetic movements), be enthusiastic, not controlling and keep it fun. Be quieter with dogs that are timid.

Milli's favourite game is catching treats or toys in her mouth. This is quite a skill and is best to start with treats. She shows how much she loves it by doing a play bow (bowing forwards so that the backside is in the air and the front legs are low along the ground). She also loves fetching her toys for me if I scatter them about the room. She knows the names of about 20 toys and I call out the



name of the toy and she will fetch the right one. We laugh together when she gets the wrong one and she has to take it back and get the right one. Some of the Assistance Dog training comes from playing games first. Now I am teaching her to fetch other things for me like my keys, mobile phone or a newspaper.

Another way that dogs can help your wellbeing is when you need some Social Inclusion. This is when you need to get out the house to talk and meet other people due to loneliness or boredom. Dogs are top notch for this. They will make sure you get

out the house for a walk. Once you are out the dogs are a fabulous way of meeting other people and creating an atmosphere of love and peace around them. It's a great treat when a Survivor has had a challenging life of troubled relationships to get a resource that can help them relate to others that they can take to shops, cafes and restaurants with them. What gives me the most joy is when people congratulate the dogs and I on their behaviour. The words "they are good as gold!" is so satisfying and makes all the money spent and hard work worthwhile. Thank you if you are one of those public that have made positive comments about our Assistance Dogs.

Even people, who have agoraphobia and cannot get out the house without another human, with some practice and training of a RECOVERY Assistance Dog, are finding new independence. A RAD Dog is trained not to go up to other people without being asked to. We do this by teaching the dog to touch us. First of all we practice this regularly atleast once a day for 10 minutes with treats until they have learned how enjoyable touching is. This can help to reassure the dog and you in challenging situations. See later in the next chapter how we train the dog to touch us and to turn away from other people that are distracting them from their job.

CHAPTER 3

JUST WHAT SKILLED ASSISTANCE DO YOU NEED FOR WELLBEING?

Do You Need Regular Reminders To Focus On The Moment And Be Grounded?

You do not have to have Mental Health problems to agree that it is impossible to control your mind. Sometimes the mind over tires us with its continuous chatter and it is difficult to focus on the moment or the task at hand. Dogs can help you with this. We train them at RECOVERY Assistance Dogs to tap their owner to remind them to be still and to associate with what is going on around them. Some dogs will do this anyway as they can sense how you are feeling and will do anything to make sure that you are stable. They would prefer your mood to be not too excited (high is what the Professionals call it) or too low. Whatever a dog does to help you we can develop further with training.

So if you want to train your dog to help you be centered. You can use the Touch Procedure:

- If you put your open hand out at your side your dog will probably come up to sniff and touch it.
- When it touches your hand use your Marker Word ('good') or clicker (you can buy this at your local pet shop and it is like taking a photo of the correct behaviour). This will remind them that this is what they must do to get a treat. So you are shaping the desired action.
- Then reach for and give them the treat.
- Do this regularly every day or evening until it becomes a fun and desired activity. It might take a few weeks or months even.
- Now you can use the cue touch and point to where you want the dog to touch you. Maybe on your leg either with its nose or paw. Sometimes (especially if it's a big dog) people prefer the dog to touch with its nose. However if you need to be tapped quite hard to help you then the paw is better.
- If your dog does a high five with its paw this is quite a good place to start. You can then quite simply move on to them tapping your leg.
- The next step is getting the dog to come and tap when your phone alarm or timer goes off. Eventually you can programme the timer to go off regularly and, as long as you reward the dog with treats until it is fully trained, it will happily tap away reminding your mind to be still and focused.



SAM DOING A TOUCH REMINDER

Do You Need Regular Cuddles To Get Up In The Morning?

If you lie in long enough in the morning your dog will get fed up with crossing its legs and will do anything to get you up so it can go out to relieve itself. So how will your dog get you up? What we do not want is barking, as this will be upsetting for you and the neighbours. So you could train your dog

to tap you as above or to pull the duvet off you. Of course if you find it difficult for the dog to sleep in your room or on your bed this would not be possible.

Could You Do With Some Freedom From Anxiety And Fear?

You need a protective pooch that will block that man who is standing too close. I have taught Milli to stand in front of me when people stand too close. Usually this is when someone is ordering me around or trying to influence me. Many RAD Dogs are trained to block either from the front, side or back and it is useful in a crowd or just to feel safe. Some people feel so intimidated by the intrusion of people wanting to stroke their dog that they train the dog to stand behind them. Milli has learned to ignore people's advances and turn to me when I say touch, please read below. Training a dog to stand where you want it to:

- Get a largish treat and put it between thumb and forefinger. Keeping it close to the dog's mouth move it slowly so that the dog moves. When it moves click or use the marker word and give it the treat.
- The trick is to move your fingers no faster than the dog so that the dog's mouth is almost locked on the treat.
- Eventually you will be able to move the dog to exactly the position you want with the treat. If you want the dog to be ready to walk off with you (on to the side). Use a wide sweep so the dog turns in a clockwise circle for the left-hand side so it is sitting close and facing the same way as you.



- When the dog is trained to move into position (front, side or back) then you can dispense with the treat. You still need to keep your thumb and forefinger together as though you had a treat. The good news is that now you can move your fingers quite quickly to get your dog into place.

I find this manoeuvre very useful on a busy tube and to get Milli into a safe position where no one is going to tread on her. Also if you are in a Supermarket or Pub you need to make sure that your dog is not in the way of people. This moving her with a pretend treat in your fingers will make sure that she is lying or sitting beside you and out of everyone's way.

Your dog has a list as long as its arm of ways to help you with wellbeing. Many of these come from its desire to protect you and help you feel safe. Have you noticed how your dog will often bark before the doorbell rings? It can smell the arrival of someone and probably knows whom it is. This is quite comforting because all the noises that usually disturbed me now have no affect, as I know that if the dogs are quiet all is well. I have even trained Milli to bark on cue. This took quite a long time up to 6 months and was speeded up with the use of a clicker and strongly scented bacon chews. But it was worth it. It is now a bit of a party trick but can be useful to get someone's attention and gives me more control of when they bark and when they don't. To teach barking on cue:

- Get a friend to ring the doorbell or have an electronic one that rings everytime you unplug it. When the dogs bark say 'good' and give a treat. Avoid making the mistake of reinforcing when they bark on their own accord. I have a feeling that dogs understand eventually what you want

because they put 2 and 2 together and make 4. They will notice that you are getting them to bark on purpose.

- This is the point when you can start to use a cue word like 'talk' or a hand movement they will recognise.

Keep practising regularly until they realise that you want them to bark in the most surprising circumstances. They will give you a look that says 'surely you don't want me to bark now?' Then they will just do it to please you knowing that the best treat is to make you happy.

Is Social Inclusion A Target On The Horizon That Only Your Dog Can Help You Achieve?



As people comment on your beautiful and well-trained animal you will get the buzz that comes from feeling that you belong and are accepted. Having good human relationships is so good for wellbeing and your dog can help with this. But if you take your dog everywhere then among all the ups are some downs. One is if (perhaps I should say 'since') you have a particularly adorable dog like Milli (she is a golden Cocker Spaniel a bit like 'Lady' in 'Lady and the Tramp') then many people want to say hello and cuddle her. It can become too much and I have to protect her and myself. She has to pass her Silver Kennel Club Good Citizen Award where an unknown person has to examine her all over so we have to make clear guidelines about what is acceptable. When someone wants to touch an Assistance Dog they usually ask and then most of the time I say: "No she is working and I need her full attention". However some people, bless them, will just aim to stroke her without asking. This is when we do the Social Inclusion Touch. Someone is heading towards touching Milli. I say 'touch' and the dog turns away from the person and comes to touch me. This is reassuring for me and usually the person then says something understanding like "Oh I see she is an Assistance Dog perhaps I shouldn't be touching her". This helps me to have a little more choice and control in my life. Obviously this needs to be learnt and practiced to get it down to a fine art. Teaching your dog the Social Inclusion Touch is about:

TURBO & SOCIAL INCLUSION TOUCH

- Getting the dog used to the touch procedure as explained above.
- The next step is about getting the dog to turn towards you and touch you without the distractions of people wanting to say hello. Everytime the dog turns towards you then the use of the clicker or marker word at just the right moment (as soon as it turns its head) will shape the behaviour that you want. Then the dog walks up to you to get a treat.
- Then have a friend walk up to the dog and call its name. At this point your dog should be more interested in you as you say the cue 'touch' mainly because you have a big bag of treats.

All this could take 2-3 days, weeks or months as it all depends on how good you are at shaping and using the clicker at just the right moment. Above all it takes perseverance and time to practice. I usually do one training at a time and I do it every evening after work for about 10-15 minutes. Make sure that the dog is doing what you ask. All good teachers know that if you ask a young person to do something you have to be sure that they will agree and be able to do it. Otherwise it is no point asking them. Ask them to do something simpler and build up slowly to the final outcome that you would like. Only when the dog knows how to do the Social Inclusion touch will I stop teaching it regularly and start on something else. Then you can go out and practice in the Shopping Centre. Eventually your dog will be your real wellbeing partner that will do all this for just the love of being a team with you without needing food treats.

CHAPTER 4

SO WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR DOGS



FUNDRAISING AT BRENT CROSS, LONDON

Every Saturday at RECOVERY Assistance Dogs we go Fundraising, all over the UK, to spread the word about how people can recover from Mental Health problems. I have learnt to really enjoy telling people about how dogs are the nearest thing to God on this earth. This is reflected in their unconditional love, their will to be with you all the time, their desire to be still in your presence and help you with the stillness in your mind. Dogs are Spiritual Beings that want to help us to be one with each other, to show us how to be still, do nothing or be focused on

task, not to worry about the past or fret about the future and above all to enable us to be stable with great Mental Health and Wellbeing. If you have a fabulous team with your dog you may agree with me. Okay I had better support this rather tall order with some facts.

Dogs, like all animals and children, are really good at contemplating (sitting still and doing nothing). They will help create a presence of peace in your home and wherever they go with you. So this is the reason that Level 3 in training a RECOVERY Assistance Dog is learning how to do Centering Therapy. This is a way into contemplation and having a still mind that will improve the quality of your life and give you that peace of mind that is the basis of all wellbeing. RECOVERY's Centering Therapy⁵ is a small booklet all about this transforming power of stillness. This practice has no aims and objectives. The only thing that you need to do is just show up, if possible twice a day for 20 minutes morning and evening. My day is never so good when I forget to recharge my Centering batteries. To do Centering Therapy:

- You have to sit up in a quiet place where you are not going to be disturbed for 20 minutes.
- Sit quietly with eyes closed.
- You choose a sacred word (mine is 'Mother') that will remind your mind to be still.
- Everytime you have a thought say the sacred word (not aloud).

⁵ RECOVERY's Centering Therapy, Liz Maitland, 2014.

- Do not try to stop the thoughts but let them come and go.
- Recognise that those recurrent thoughts can be healed in the silence.
- At the end of the therapy keep eyes closed for 2 minutes.

You do not need to believe in God to do this but it may help you to know that Thomas Keating (the founder of Centering Prayer)⁶ says that your mind will only be still because it is in God's presence.

Dogs, because they do not talk, have still minds. The great thing about spending time with your dog is that you will not be talking so much so your mind will have a greater chance to be still. Also getting out in Nature and walking with your dog can help to clear and order your thoughts. All these things can make you and your dog an expert in wellbeing.

CHAPTER 5

SEE HOW YOUR DOG FITS ON THE WELLBEING SCALE.

Could your dog really be a RECOVERY Assistance Dog and help you or someone else recover from Mental Health problems? Do this Survey to find out. On a scale of 1-5, please rate your current status on the Wellbeing Scale. We encourage you to take this Survey before you train your dog and again after you have done all the training recommended in this book. Let us know about the progress you have made.

Does your Dog help you to be a Spiritual Being?

SPIRIT	V.Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	V. Satisfied
1.Relationship with Dog	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sense of purpose in life	1	2	3	4	5
3.Stillness in Mind	1	2	3	4	5
4.Spiritual Growth	1	2	3	4	5
5.Peace in daily activities	1	2	3	4	5
Add up each column and enter your Total Wellbeing Score_____					

⁶ Open Mind Open Heart, Fr. Thomas Keating, 1986.

Does your Dog help you Look after Your Physical Health?

BODY	V.Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	V. Satisfied
1.I have an eating routine	1	2	3	4	5
2. I drink 8 to 10 glasses of water a day	1	2	3	4	5
3.I eat 3 meals a day.	1	2	3	4	5
4.I eat natural, homemade food.	1	2	3	4	5
5.I eat 7 or more servings of vegetables/fruit.	1	2	3	4	5
Add up each column and enter your Total Wellbeing Score_____					

Does Your Dog Help you Keep Fit?

FITNESS	V.Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	V. Satisfied
1. Physical Exercise – atleast 2-3 walks a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My body appearance	1	2	3	4	5
3. My Strength	1	2	3	4	5
4. My Flexibility	1	2	3	4	5
5. My Physical Health	1	2	3	4	5
Add up each column and enter your Total Wellbeing Score_____					

Does Your Dog help you keep Focused?

FOCUS	V.Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	V. Satisfied
1. Positive Mental Attitude	1	2	3	4	5
2. Achievement of goals.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Peace of Mind (Being in the moment)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Gratitude	1	2	3	4	5
5. Ability to handle failure.	1	2	3	4	5
Add up each column and enter your Total Wellbeing Score_____					

Does Your Dog Improve Your Social Inclusion (ability to make and keep friends)?

FRIENDSHIP	V.Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	V. Satisfied
1.Relationship with my best friend	1	2	3	4	5
2. Relationships with my family	1	2	3	4	5
3. Relationships with my friends	1	2	3	4	5
4. Relationships with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
5.My ability to communicate with Strangers	1	2	3	4	5
Add up each column and enter your Total Wellbeing Score_____					

WELLBEING SCALE RESULTS

Well done! Now you can transfer your scores onto each area of Wellbeing: (Spirit, Body, Fitness, Focus, and Friendship)

WELLBEING ESSENTIAL	MY SCORE
SPIRIT	
BODY	
FITNESS	
FOCUS	
FRIENDSHIP	

YOUR SCORE

Score of 20-25: Congratulations! Any high score like this for any Wellbeing Essential demonstrates that your Dog is really enabling you to achieve your potential. You have trained your treasured companion to a high level and is helping you in your personal wellness in this area. You might consider training a RAD Dog for your own Mental Health or to help someone else.

Score of 15-20: Wow, your health and wellbeing practices are doing okay but you have some room for improvement. Look at the areas you are less pleased with and consider some tips and strategies in this book to improve your score next time you take this quiz.

Score of 10-15: So this is an ideal area for you to focus your attention and set specific goals and be creative about how your dog can help you in your struggle.

Scores below 5-10: Anything below these scores means it is time to be the change. Look at the times that you scored below a 2 and consider how your dog can help to improve your quality of life

BIBLIOGRAPHY and RECOMMENDED READING

'Secret Life of Dogs' ITV Show 07.02.17.

Think Dog by John Fisher

Clever Dog, Sarah Whitehead, 2012

RECOVERY's Centering Therapy, Liz Maitland, 2014.

In Defence of Dogs, John Bradshaw

How Dogs Learn, Burch & Bailey

Don't Shoot the Dog, Karen Pryor

On Talking Terms with Dogs, Calming Signals, Turid Rugaas

Canine Body Language, Brenda Aloff

The Culture Clash, Jean Donaldson

Dominance Fact or Fiction, Barry Eaton

Control Unleashed, Leslie McDevitt

Dominance Theory and Dogs, James O'Heare

Excellerated Learning, Pamela Reid

The Truth about Wolves and Dogs, Toni Shelbourne

The Human Half of Dog Training: Collaborating with Clients to Get Results, Rise Van Fleet

No Walks? No Worries! Helen Zulch, Peter Baumber, Sian Rian

Dog Food Logic, Linda Case



MILLI TOUCHING LIZ FOR REASSURANCE & STILLNESS IN THE MOMENT

TRAINING NOTES

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Progress Notes
Choosing your dog or Puppy			
Staying Still			
Looselead Walking			
Play			
Touch			
Move by luring			
Bark on Cue			
Social Inclusion Touch			
Centering Therapy			