



## Major Players in Dog Training

In the beginning there was Col. Konrad Most - arguably the father of modern "traditional" dog training. More...

Most trained military dogs in Germany at the turn of the 20th Century. His book, *Training Dogs - A Manual*, was published in German in 1910, but wasn't translated into English until 1954, the year of his death.

Most's training approach was widely adopted as the model for military training throughout the world, and is still used today for many military, police and service dog training programs. Although his techniques, which rely on collar corrections and punishment are considered and heavy-handed from today's perspective, Most's methods are based on the principles of operant learning that form the basis of clicker training.

Most's training techniques spread throughout the world as his students and disciples immigrated to other countries. Coming to the U.S. were Josef Weber (*The Dog in Training*, 1939) and Hans Tosutti (*Companion Dog Training*, 1948) who opened schools for training dogs in Philadelphia and Boston respectively. (In 1936, Tosutti founded the New England Dog Training Club in Boston - the oldest existing AKC member obedience training club in the country.)

One of Weber's students in the U.S. was Blanche Saunders (*The Complete Book of Dog Obedience*, 1954 and *The Story of Dog Obedience*, 1974). Saunders and Helene Whitehouse Walker are the originators of AKC Obedience trials, and traveled around the country spreading the concept of companion dog training to the public. Among Saunders' students and followers were many of the well-known trainers of the 1950's and 60's, including Winifred Strickland.

Methods probably reached their lowest possible point with the publication of *The Koehler Method of Dog Training*, by William Koehler. First published in 1962, this book contains some of the most revolting examples of animal abuse ever to make it into print. Coupled with an almost total ignorance of the basic principles of learning theory, it is a primer on how to terrify and brutalize your dog into unthinking obedience. Sadly, Koehler's methods are still popular with many trainers today.

Marion Bailey and her first husband, Keller Breland, were graduate students of B.F. Skinner. Leaving graduate school in the early '40's. They started Animal Behavior Enterprises - a business that trained and provided scores of animal species for commercial purposes.

Keller Breland was the first dog trainer to use a clicker - a tin cricket to, as he said, "bridge the time between the behavior and the delivery of the reinforcer." (Quote from a conversation with Marion Breland Bailey). He used the sound to mark the desired behavior when training field dogs and herding dogs work in a field away from the handler. Breland called the click sound a "bridging stimulus."

It's possible that Breland's training approach using operant conditioning with a conditioned reinforcer might have spread beyond his own business were it not for World War II, which solidified the military model in pet dog training. Enter William Koehler, who, like Most was a military dog trainer. A Hollywood dog trainer, his book *The Koehler Method of Dog Training* was, and may still remain, the all-time best selling dog training book, forming the basis for virtually all dog training from the 1950's into the '70's.

Meanwhile, clicker training was being used by Keller Breland with other species. In the 1950's Marine land hired him to develop a training program for their marine mammals. In a matter of weeks, Keller devised the system of marine mammal training that is still in use today. The Brelands worked with many trainers and associates who worked in a variety of locations, including Sea Life Park, which was then owned by Karen Pryor and her husband.

Skip ahead a few years to 1984 when Karen Pryor wrote *Don't Shoot the Dog*, a guide to human interpersonal relations. Serendipitously, the book's title skyrocketed Pryor (well, perhaps 6 or 7 years isn't exactly a skyrocket) to the attention of dog trainers. Pryor met Gary Wilkes—a professional dog trainer and the first person since Keller Breland to use clicker training on a wide variety of dogs in a wide variety of applications. Gary and Karen hooked up to do seminars together and the die was cast for the word of clicker training to spread throughout the dog-training community.

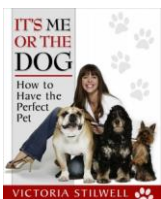
It is through the wonders of the Internet that clicker training has spread as rapidly as it has—else what has happened in less than 10 years might have taken 25 or more.

Why is this history important? Well, history is important - and fascinating. And as this history demonstrates, clicker training is not just some touchy feely, New Age approach to training dogs. Keller Breland used clicker training with dogs over 70 years ago -a decade before marine mammals. But it's taken nearly all this time for the dog training community to catch up. And thank goodness we have. Dogs are the better for it!



Cesar Millan. A lot of professional dog trainers *hate* Cesar Millan, and not just because he's rich. Millan—star of the television show *Dog Whisperer*, best-selling author, and friend of Oprah—believes that dogs need a leader, that leader is you, and that they must be given this information by any means necessary. His emphasis on human domination leads him to recommend, in some cases, rather dramatic techniques such as growling at the dog and rolling her onto her back while staring angrily into her eyes.

Millan himself says, "I don't train dogs." What he means is that he corrects behavior problems that are, at times, quite serious. But in the hands of amateurs, his tough-love techniques can seem harsh. Not long ago, the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior issued a strongly worded manifesto against Millan's so-called "dominance theory." A 2006 *New York Times* article headlined "Pack of Lies" referred to him as "a charming one-man wrecking ball." Such reactions are less a comment on Millan himself than a reflection of the latest skirmish in the canine culture wars. Before Millan, the popular wisdom was that dogs are best trained by giving them treats for good behavior. Dominance was downplayed, physical corrections discouraged.



Victoria Stilwell

Born and raised in Wimbledon, England, Victoria Stilwell is one of the world's most recognized and respected dog trainers, reaching audiences in over 50 countries.

She is best known for her role as the star of Animal Planet's hit TV series *It's Me or the Dog*, through which she is able to share her insight and passion for positive reinforcement dog training by taming some of the world's most unruly pets as she counsel's families on their pet problems. She also served as a judge on CBS's *Greatest American Dog*.

In the early 1990s, Stilwell began her career in pet training when she created her own successful dog-walking company and immediately recognized the need for qualified professionals to help her clients with the training process. While pursuing a successful acting career (working in London's West End as well as in numerous

films, TV series, commercials and voiceovers), she expanded her focus to dog training by learning from some of Britain's most respected positive-reinforcement dog trainers and behaviorists.

After moving to the U.S. with her husband, Stilwell co-founded several successful dog training companies up and down the East Coast, quickly establishing herself as one of New York's most sought after dog trainers. With a particular fondness for rescue animals in need of behavior rehabilitation, Stilwell devoted much of her time and energy to a number of animal rescue organizations in New York and Atlanta, serving as a behavior advisor and giving regular seminars on the subject of dog rescue, training and rehabilitation while becoming one of the leading voices in the field of dog training and behavior.

Stilwell is a passionate advocate for positive reinforcement training methods that enhance a dog's ability to learn while increasing confidence, resulting in a healthy, well-adjusted pet. She is a vocal opponent of punitive, dominance-based training techniques which often result in 'quick fixes' but ultimately cause more long-term harm than good while damaging the owner-dog relationship. Victoria currently resides in Atlanta with her husband, daughter and Chocolate Lab, Sadie.

Featured at the top of the page is newly emerging Mirror Method Group from Hungary. This group of young people have created a new training method in part based on clicker methods. Their You Tubes videos have generated more than 10 million views. See You Tube Videos

A doggy Christmas, A doggy Summer and Az én bajnokom - My Champion



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