



**ROWDY  
TO  
ROCKSTAR**







# STEP 1

Why?

does the dog react?

What?

are the triggers?



# Why ?

## Is It Happening?

- Dog and/or handler is nervous or afraid
- Dog is under-socialized
- Dog is over-friendly
- Past negative experience
- Dog is overly friendly or generally excitable
- Dog is concerned or frustrated by the leash restraint





# What ?

## Are The Triggers?

Common triggers are:

- Other dogs/animals
- People
- Movement-cars, bikes, skateboards
- Noises-barking, leaf blowers, garbage trucks, construction, kids playing





# Are We Reinforcing The Behavior?

## External Reinforcers

- SPACE! The trigger responds by moving away or the handler moves the dog away.

## Internal Reinforcers

- Dog enjoys it!
- Dog gets to blow off steam

The Result is a Vicious Cycle ➡



DOG  
BECOMES  
OVER  
EXCITED

DOG  
BEGINS  
TO BARK,  
LUNGE

BEHAVIORS  
ARE  
REINFORCED

BEHAVIOR  
BECOME  
A HABIT





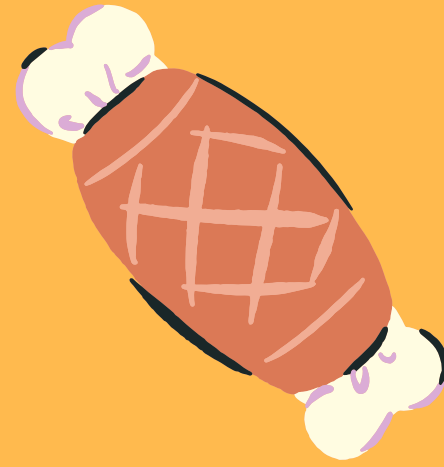
## **STEP 2**

### **Management**

Change the Scene & Flip the Script

DO NOT continue to rehearse  
unwanted behavior

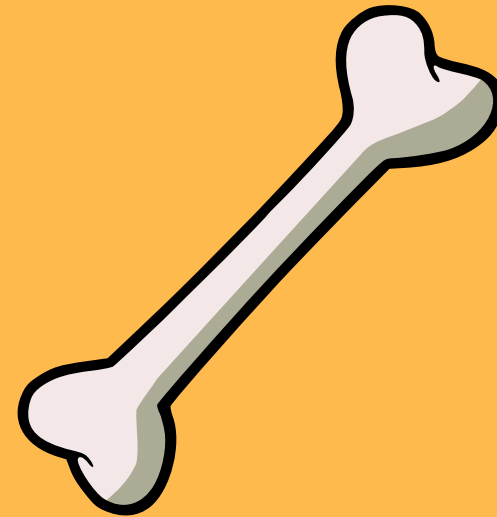




# ARE WE MAKING IT WORSE?

## Change Begins At Home

- Feeding Time
- Play time
- Walks
- Greetings
- Comings & Goings





# CREATE COOPERATIVE HABITS

Emphasize calm, self-control & moving away from the source of excitement all day, every day.

- Yielding Space
- Wait
- Place
- Leave It
- Out





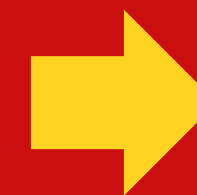


# CHANGE THE WALKING PATTERN



Limit the dog's ability to  
continue blowing up on  
walks.

In the beginning, it is often best to  
discontinue normal daily walks and  
substitute training walks instead.







# STEP 3

**Build Alternate Behaviors**

...focus on the handler

**Introduce Tools**

...better communication



# Create All New Habits

Take TIME to build NEW HABITS  
Fully PATTERN them to OVERRIDE OLD HABITS





# OPTIONS



- ➡ Incompatible Behavior = Do This Instead
- ➡ Divert = Move This Way Instead
- ➡ Counter Condition = Feel This Way Instead







# Build Better Behavior Choices

- Search or Get It
- Heel
- Look
- Let's Go or Come
- Down or Sit








# **A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE**

## The "Get It" Game



# BENEFITS OF THE GET IT GAME

- Searching is innately reinforcing, thus **ADDING VALUE** to the treats, rather than simply giving a treat.
- The conditioning of the cue develops **ANTICIPATION** for the reward. Anticipation=more dopamine. **HORMONES DRIVE BEHAVIOR!**
- As the dog continues to search, it extends the time it takes to acquire the food resulting in more **DOPAMINE** and making it **LESS LIKELY** that the dog will shift focus back to the trigger. 
- **The placement of the reward is consistent with our overall message of moving AWAY from the trigger.**
- Can be used for counter-conditioning and makes a great diversion when needed, due to the **CONDITIONED EMOTIONAL RESPONSE** to the search game.
- Signals the other dog that they are not a threat.



# TIPS!

- Walk in new and novel areas to start with
- Use verbal prompts (let's go, get it) followed by physical prompts (leash) to teach the dog to focus on you
- Avoid superstitious associations (the trigger makes something bad happen)
- Be aware of and sensitive to your dog's threshold.

**DO NOT** move on until the **NEW BEHAVIORS**  
are firmly **HABITUATED**



# WHY DO DOGS PULL?

There is **ONLY ONE** reason why  
dogs pull on the leash...

**BECAUSE WE FOLLOW!**





# **HORMONES DRIVE BEHAVIOR!**

Different forms of +R can produce very different effects, not just behaviorally but also physiologically and emotionally.



## Dopamine

### The "Feel Good" Hormone

- Food can help to calm or excite the dog, depending on the dog.

## Oxytocin

### Reduces Stress, Increases Friendliness

- Praise may help calm a dog

## Adrenaline

### The Fight or Flight Response

- Toys/play can create arousal or lead to adrenaline





# PLAY ACTIVITIES

- Play is rehearsal for the real world
- Use play to help your dog learn self-control
- Only choose activities that help your dog learn to make good choices when excited







## STEP 4

Introduce NON Triggering  
Distractions

practice CALM movement  
away from the distractions





# **NON TRIGGERING DISTRACTIONS**

Anything that is of  
interest to your dog,  
but has a positive  
association for them.





# TEACHING AND REWARDING CALM

- ➡ Something Triggers The Dog
- ➡ Teach Focus on the Handler
- ➡ Reward Low Arousal





# STEP 5

Confront Controlled Triggers

Keep setups under threshold





# HANDLER AWARENESS

- **WATCH THE BODY LANGUAGE**  
Be aware of their fuse- how fast they react to triggers
- **WATCH YOUR TIMING**  
Be sure to redirect BEFORE they react
- **DOES THE DOG ANTICIPATE THE REDIRECT**  
Do repetitions moving away from and returning to the trigger



# Focus on Changing the Pattern

## THE AGITATION SNOWBALL

### The 5 L's

LISTEN  
LOOK



Something Triggers the Dog

LOCK



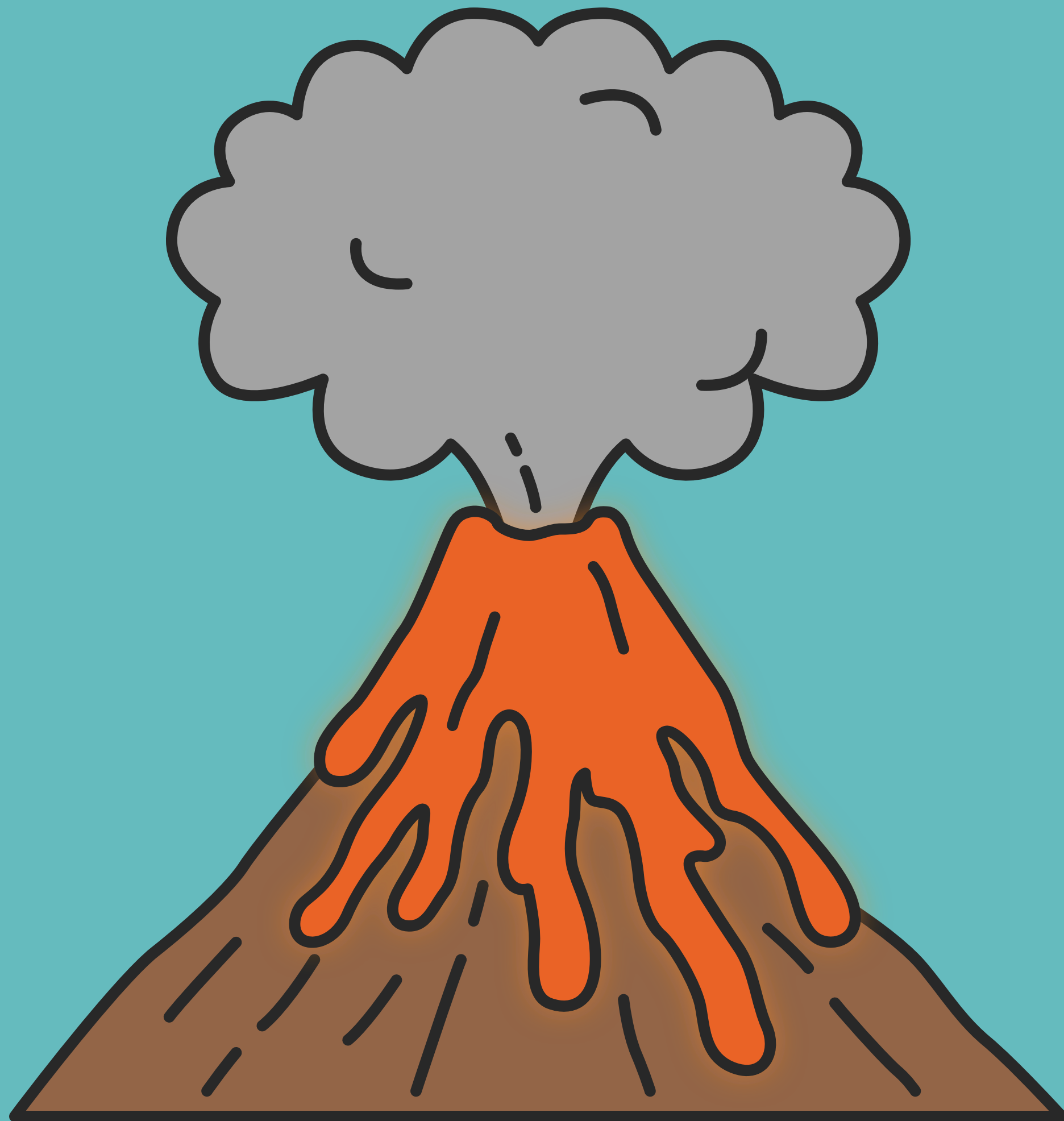
Dog Becomes Aroused

LOAD!  
LAUNCH!



Dog Explodes Forward!!







# UNDERSTANDING THRESHOLDS

## HOW INTENSE

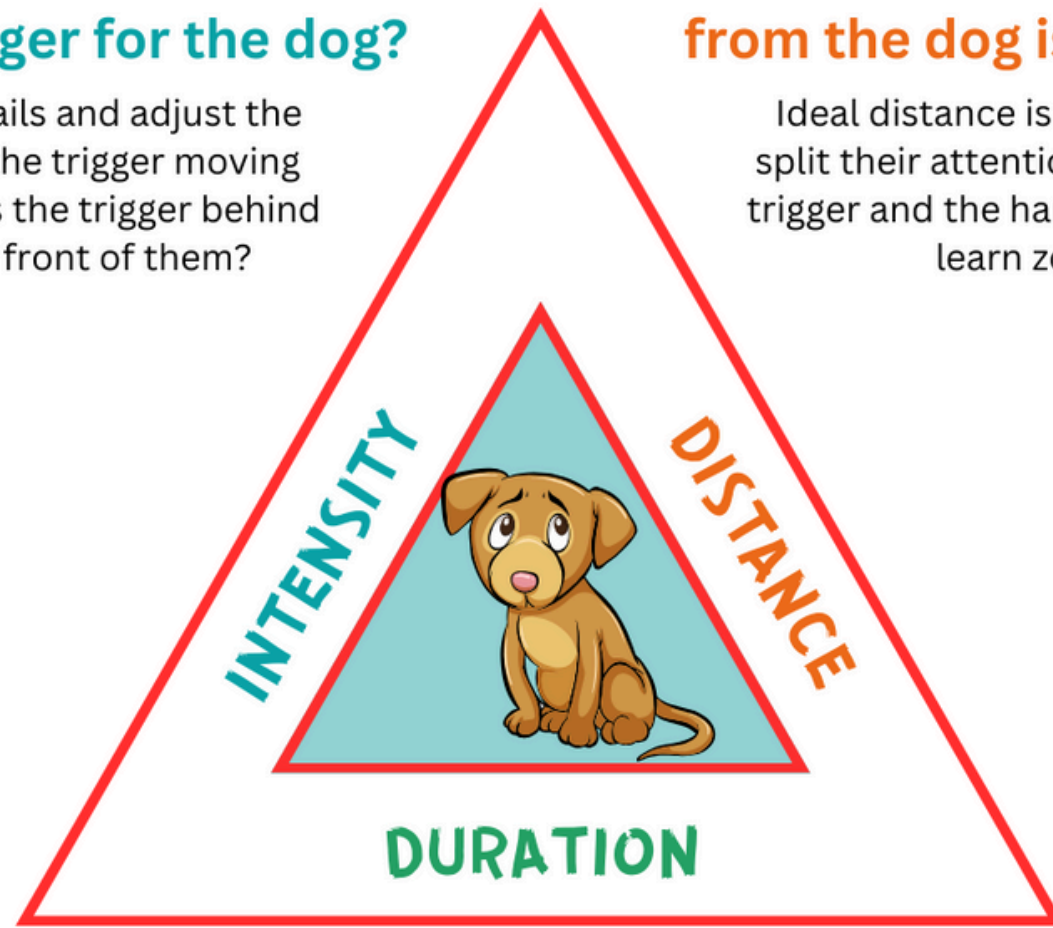
is the trigger for the dog?

Consider details and adjust the intensity. Is the trigger moving fast or slow? Is the trigger behind them or in front of them?

## HOW FAR AWAY

from the dog is the trigger?

Ideal distance is if the dog can split their attention between the trigger and the handler (think and learn zone).



## FOR HOW LONG

will the dog be asked to deal with the trigger?

Ideal duration depends on intensity and distance. when in doubt, keep it brief and listen to what the dog tells you.

Trigger is **TOO INTENSE** = **increase distance** + **shorten duration**

Trigger is **TOO Close** = **decrease intensity** + **shorten duration**

Dealing with trigger for **TOO LONG** = **increase distance** + **decrease intensity**





# **SUPPORTIVE STRATEGIES**

- Allow plenty of DISTANCE
- Shorten DURATION
- Minimize INTENSITY
- Have an exit strategy (relieve pressure)
- If the dog blows up - interrupt and redirect, then return to the area after dog has calmed down





# STEP 6

Conditioned Punishers

Out or No BEFORE  
the consequence

Redirect and reward



# COMMON AVERSIVE TOOLS

- Leash/collar combos
- Spatial pressure
- Squirt bottle, pet corrector, etc.
- Noise making devices

Each tool can help or hurt, depending on the dog and how/when it is used.



# IT FOLLOWS THAT...

When choosing a punisher we want to look for something that will produce the *OPPOSITE EFFECT* of the problem.

- ➔ The punisher needs to LOWER the dog's arousal level.
- ➔ The punisher works best if it causes the dog to instinctually MOVE AWAY.





# STEP 7

Confront Uncontrolled Triggers

Employ supportive strategies





## STEP 8

Consider Alternative Activities





# CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO WALKING

- ➔ Structured Play
- ➔ Off Leash Activities
- ➔ Movement Puzzles
- ➔ Training!
- ➔ Scent work

The possibilities are endless!





# **FINAL THOUGHTS...**

## **Focus on the Pattern**

- ➔ **Something stimulates the dog (trigger)**
- ➔ **Dog becomes over aroused**
- ➔ **Dog propels themselves forward**

- **Avoid reinforcing the pattern**
- **Reinforce low arousal and movement away from the trigger**
- **Choose corrections/punishers wisely**
- **Be aware of and use Release Valves**
- **Be purposeful in your timing**
- **Apply multiple strategies**









# TURNING THINGS AROUND

Typically, the primary focus of the use of +P and +R is on the WHY and the WHEN.

- Why is the dog acting this way?
- When is the best time to correct?

What is overlooked is the HOW...