



**How did you get into dog training?**

My Dog, Ulisse! I wanted to understand him better. He had been in a shelter for 8 years, and the first trainer we met used correction-based training. I wanted to know if there was another way. There was, and I never looked back! Positive Reinforcement is so great if you find knowledgeable sources.

**What qualifications or training do you have, and which one are you the most proud of and why?**

I am accredited with the Animal Behaviour and Training Council and the Professional Association of Canine Trainers. They are wonderful people. I am so proud of the ABTC for being the first Animal Training organisation to achieve UKAS regulation with the UK Government. This is the way forward!

**If there is one thing you would recommend to all dog owners, what would that be?**

Meet your dog where they are at, emotionally and physically. You can always reduce the level of training to an approximation that makes the dog successful. Stay at that level. When the dog looks like "hey, I got this!", then make it a teeny-tiny more difficult. Control the intensity of distractions.

**What are you most passionate about as a dog trainer?**

The list is long... If I had to pick one thing it would be: bridging the gap of miscommunication between dogs and humans - We speak words, they speak body language / cues of safety / cues of dangers. They learn best from interactions that build trust vs. interactions that shut down their choice.

**What do you consider to be the biggest benefit of training with our dogs and why?**

When our dogs feel that their voice matters, they will grow closer to us and it's beautiful to see. Just this morning my cat alerted me to the next-door builders, I gave her the relaxation cue we trained, and she went right back to relaxing on her heated blanket. Training is part of our daily life, our animals are always learning... we might as well teach them helpful behaviours!



### **What's a memorable success story from your work?**

I have attached two reviews of two of my heart-dogs who were struggling a lot when they first arrived at their new, forever homes. Luckily, they landed in families that were committed and had the resources to be consistent with training, and they did their utter best to support their dogs. The results were so lovely and it's a credit to their efforts.

★★★★★ 14 Aug 2023

We took on an 18month old dog with aggressive behavior and anxiety problems. Fortunately, Martina was recommended to us and, a year on, we have a loving, quirky, and irreplaceable family member. The change was so marked that other dog owners in the neighbourhood thought we had a different dog.

Martina worked with our dog with patience, care, and exceptional knowledge, starting with one-on-ones and then through reactive and agility classes. Martina is still one of our dog's favourite people, and always gets a huge welcome when we see her. I have recommended Martina to others who have also had superb results.

★★★★★ 17 Mar 2024

We adopted a very busy cocker spaniel who came with no manners and a very strong interest in birds. Martina has been absolutely amazing and helped us so much to understand and manage our new addition. Her approach is calm, reasoned, kind and always dog-centered. She is understanding of owner psychology and the stresses that a new dog can bring to a household. She has instilled confidence, with realism, in me and I am so thankful we have her alongside.

We still have a long way to go but I'm now excited and looking forward to the journey rather than despondent and somewhat overwhelmed!

When she is coming to see us we call it the Martina Magic session.  
I can't recommend her highly enough.

### **What is the most common behaviour issue you see in dogs?**

Reactivity Dog to dog, or reactivity to strangers/passersby. Separation anxiety cases are also high on the list and "busy city life" reactivity. Resource guarding another.

### **What's the simplest thing an owner can do to prevent common behaviour problems?**

Manage the environment so you promote better choices. For instance: when meeting someone, pair the experience with food while the dog is allowed to sniff the person and ask the person to avoid petting/reaching/going close face to face to the dog so that there is no social pressure... Another example could be when at a Pub, sitting in a quiet corner that doesn't have a lot of traffic, having the dog's usual mat and a chew in their protected space can go a long way. Practice for scenarios (i.e. 5 minutes at the pub every day when it's quiet, before the busy Saturday lunch when it's packed and the dog can't leave).

### **How should owners approach training when their schedule is busy?**

Aim for Quality instead of Quantity. Look at your schedule and think of the times when you can spare three minutes. Choose a quiet environment, call your dog, practice your training, then offer them a long lasting, frozen chew to end the session on a high note. Or a 'sniffari' walk!

### **When should an owner seek professional help for behaviour issues?**

Sooner rather than later. Speak to a professional that uses dog-centric, modern methods.



**What's one piece of advice for keeping a dog mentally stimulated at home?**

Sniffing is such a great idea. There are so many food puzzles, problem solving toys, snuffle mats, hiding treats into rolled up towels, long lasting chews that are diet and age-appropriate, experiencing sensorial activities, like a ball pit full of treats to find (under supervision).

**If there is one thing you would recommend to all dog owners what would that be?**

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