



## 30 Days to a Well-Mannered Dog: The Loved Dog Method

By Tamar Geller



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From Oprah's dog trainer and the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Loved Dog*—a groundbreaking thirty-day plan for coaching dogs of all ages to become housebroken, happy, and well behaved within one month.

Long known as a dog coach to the stars—her clients include Oprah Winfrey, Ben Affleck, Courteney Cox-Arquette, Owen Wilson, Natalie Portman, and Larry King—Tamar Geller changed the way Americans relate to their dogs with her bestselling book *The Loved Dog*. Her approach is simple and down-to-earth. Instead of utilizing the negative and often painful feedback of physical dominance, choke chains, and prong collars, Tamar recommends love, play, and mutual respect as the keys to a happy home for dog and human alike.

Now, Tamar makes her Loved Dog™ Method accessible for everyone with this day-by-day guide that will lead you through the first thirty days with your new dog—or help you make a fresh start with your current dog. Drawing on her studies of wolves in the wild and basing her method on the principles of child development, Tamar uses an "instincts versus choice" approach that satisfies a dog's Seven Basic Needs and will result in a pet with good manners.

*30 Days to a Well-Mannered Dog* covers every question commonly asked by people embarking on the momentous journey of dog ownership: why it's important to choose the appropriate dog for you and your lifestyle, what you can expect from a puppy versus an adult dog, how to introduce your new dog to your home, and how to respond when things don't go according to plan. Tamar guides you every step of the way, from addressing undesired behaviors in your dog to crate and paper training him to introducing him to other dogs and helping him become relaxed with strangers. Included are important but often overlooked tips about the use of words and body language to communicate, the power of play, and the amazing value of teaching your dog some lighthearted pet tricks.

Along the way, Tamar debunks myths in need of debunking: that dogs are frequently "alpha" by nature and need to be dominated; that discipline is the key to dog training, and that "success" only means getting your dog to do what you want. Instead, she shows how to align your dog's wishes with your own to create a rich and enduring relationship that works wonderfully for you both.

Gentle, firm, and effective, *30 Days to a Well-Mannered Dog* will build your

relationship with your dog to make every new day together a day of love, joy, and discovery.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"The Loved Dog method is nothing short of a revolution. Tamar Geller shows us a pathway beyond punishment, and reminds us that understanding and respect are the key words in dog training in the twenty-first century. Now these common-sense and humane principles are set out clearly in a single, accessible volume." ---Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO, The Humane Society of the United States

#### About the Author

**Tamar Geller** created, owns, and operates The Loved Dog™, Southern California's first cage-free doggy boarding and day care center. An advisor to The Humane Society of the United States, Tamar also works with many rescue organizations, and is the founder of the non-profit program Operation Heroes & Hounds™, which champions homeless dogs and wounded military personnel. She lectures on dog behavior at Pepperdine University and speaks at engagements around the country. When she's not taping QVC on the East Coast, Tamar lives in L.A. with her own loved dog, Clyde. Visit her website at [www.tamargeller.com](http://www.tamargeller.com).

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#### DAY 1

#### BRINGING THE DOG HOME

The first day! Today we're going to cover one of the most stressful (and easy to remedy) issues that every dog and puppy owner has to contend with: housebreaking.

#### NEW HOME, NEW RULES

I was once invited to the *Today* show to demonstrate a few Loved Dog techniques for bringing a new dog into the home. We had just finished a practice run, having set up the stage and rehearsed the segment the day before I was going to film it live. The stagehands were working their butts off to clean everything up, and I happily joined in—until one of them asked me to stop.

I felt surprised and confused—I was just trying to help, to show them my gratitude for all of their hard work. Why on earth would they ask me to stop? What I didn't know was that there was a set of regulations, established by the unions and the insurance companies, that assigned specific tasks to specific people. Even something as small as moving a salad bowl from one table to another represented a violation of the rules.

It felt unnatural not to be able to help, but as I was learning, the TV world had its own rules that I had to obey. Thank God the stagehands were patient enough to understand that I didn't know those rules, explaining them to me instead of smacking me with a rolled-up newspaper, spraying Binaca in my face, or choking me with a chain, telling me that they were the alpha leaders and that I shouldn't misbehave or act so dominant.

When dogs enter our homes, they're in unfamiliar territory. They don't speak the same language that we do. Their wolf instincts don't naturally mesh with the rules and customs of our homes, our society, or what we would consider to be good manners. Even if we could provide our dogs with great coaching every minute of the day, they'd still make mistakes, at least at the beginning. Is it right to blame the dogs for being ignorant? Of course not! It's up to us to communicate the rules in a way that our dogs can understand. It's our job to

teach them to make good choices, remaining patient and consistent while our doggies are doing all that they can to understand us.

It's like that kids' game where you hide something and tell them whether they're getting "warmer" or "colder." Dogs are never going to learn what's expected of them if you only tell them when they're cold—or if you're only going to say, "No!"

Nothing is going to happen in a day. Your dog will need time to absorb and implement your lessons. Building trust and rapport takes time. So will learning the skills you're going to need to be a successful dog coach.

## HOUSEBREAKING

One of the first unwanted behaviors you'll probably face is the inevitable accident. Housebreaking a puppy or dog who has not yet mastered the skill will require a crate. However, if you adopt an older dog, you may not need the crate—just a few repetitions of going out and celebrating a successful pee or poo will do the trick. When your new dog soils your favorite rug, you may feel the urge to yell, smack her with a newspaper, or rub her nose in the mess. Your instincts may tell you that you've got to let her know she's done something *wrong*.

But what has she done that's so wrong? Think about it from her perspective: In wolf society, it's appropriate to poop or pee whenever the urge strikes, wherever happens to be convenient, without having to ask for help or permission; the same is true of toddlers. To live in your home, your dog is going to have to learn (from you, her coach and teacher) an entirely new set of skills and rules:

1. She has to learn how to "hold it."
2. She has to learn the appropriate places to go.
3. She has to learn how to get to those places, or how to ask you to take her to one of those places.

That's a lot for your dog to digest, although not that much for you to teach. It isn't brain surgery, but it will take a large chunk of your time and will probably test your patience in direct proportion to the value of the rugs, books, and curtains your dog is soiling. (Again, it's a good idea to move your most treasured possessions to a safe place until your dog has better control over her bladder.)

Housebreaking is nowhere near as hard as it sounds. It does, however, take time. The average dog takes four weeks to learn all the housebreaking rules. She might not seem to get it at all, until one day it clicks and you realize that it's been a week since the last mistake.

Let's start with number one: The fastest way to teach her how to hold it is to use a crate, which you've hopefully set up as described on Day 0.

As I said earlier, the crate should always be associated with pleasure, not pain. Toss a few small treats into the crate to get her inside. You can feed your dog in the crate during mealtime—you want your dog to associate the crate with the things that are good in her life—but you should remove any food and water once mealtime is over and take her outside immediately to relieve herself. Also, teach your dog that she gets her toys only when she goes into her crate. She can come out right after, but she will learn to associate walking

into the crate with pleasure.

Remember, we're trying to teach her to hold it, hopefully for a couple of hours at a time. There's a direct connection between drinking water and peeing. If you let your dog drink randomly, she's going to pee randomly—you're setting her up to fail.

For your first few weeks together—until you're fairly sure your dog knows the appropriate places to do her business—the schedule should go something like this.

**1. Two hours in the crate, then let her out.** Some of my clients ask me what they should do if their dog is sleeping. Let her sleep! Puppies grow during their sleep, which is why they sleep so much.

**2. Immediately offer her some water.** When you take her out, rush her to the water bowl. I call this “loading up.” While you don't want her to drink inside the crate, you want to make sure that she's getting plenty of water—dehydration can damage your dog's kidneys. If you make sure she gets all the water she'd like with every meal, plus every two hours when you let her out of the crate, she should be getting plenty.

Designate a specific area for the water bowl so you can monitor your dog's intake. It's best to keep the water by the door that leads to the housebreaking area, or even outside, so as to limit any opportunities for accidents along the way. If your puppy can't make it to the water bowl without peeing, take her outside first. After she's done, let her drink some water, and take her out to pee again in five or ten minutes.

**3. Take her outside.** Lead her to the place where you'd like her to poop or pee. If you've got an unvaccinated puppy, she won't be ready for the outside world, so designate a toilet area in the corner of your yard (preferably behind bushes, someplace where children are unlikely to play), on a patch of grass, or on a balcony where you can lay down a “pee pad.” It's crucial for you to accompany your dog—she may find other things to keep her busy outside and wait to come back inside before doing her business. Accompany your dog to the area you've chosen and wait for it to happen. As she's going potty, give the behavior a name, something that you won't use in any context other than this one—I like to use the phrase “hurry up.” (It can also be something fun—Oprah uses the word “poodie” with her two dogs.) Repeat it in a calm voice, for as long as your dog is going, like a lullaby. Try not to look at her—if she sees you staring at her, she may quit too early and rush over to be with you.

When she's finished, show your dog how happy you are. Smile and clap your hands. Enthusiastically repeat “Hurry up!” or whatever you called it, using the specific phrase as opposed to a generic “Good dog!” or “Good boy!” (More on this later.) Reward your dog with a special “gold” treat, like a few tiny pieces of steak (about the size of a raisin), or chicken, and occasionally a little bit of hot dog or cheese—we'll go more deeply into treats on Day 2. You want your dog to know that, right now, this is the biggest deal in the world, and you want her to have the biggest and most amazing treat as a reward.

I call this process “making a party”—clap your hands, smile, and give your dog a jackpot of treats. When you do it, you'll be creating positive associations with whatever behavior you're trying to teach—in this case, relieving herself in the designated area. Try to start the party as soon as she's finished. Soon she'll start to look forward to it, speeding up the process and saving you from spending a lot of time waiting for her to go.

One common mistake is to reward your dog *after* she's back in the house—instead of giving her a fantastic association with the outside bathroom area, you'll have a dog who would rather linger next to the refrigerator or treat jar. Make sure you have the treats with you in the place where you want your dog to go to the

bathroom. I recommend having a small glass jar with special treats outside and a plastic bag in the fridge with precut super gold treats that you can grab on the go.

**Note**

**THE LINGERING DOG**

Some dogs take a long time, once they're outside, to do their business. Usually it's a sign that they love the outdoors and are afraid that as soon as they "go," the excursion will be over. You can solve the problem by reversing the sequence, waiting until after she's gone to the bathroom to begin the walk. Your dog will learn that going faster doesn't shorten her time outside (which she associates with pain), but will allow her to get to the fun part faster (creating an association with pleasure).

**4. Treat your dog to a half hour of free time.** Once you're back in the house, give your dog thirty minutes to play freely. When you're sure she can go a half hour without peeing, you can start to extend this free time, first to forty-five minutes, then to an hour, etc.

When free time is over, you have a few options—you can take her out again, put her on a leash and tie her to your belt or the chair you're sitting on, or put her back in the crate.

Some dogs may protest for fifteen minutes or a half hour when you first put them back in the crate, but if you can ignore them with consistency, they'll quickly learn the routine.

If you're following this routine and your dog still pees in the crate, chances are that you're probably not spending enough time outside focusing on the task at hand. But there's always the possibility of a bladder infection, so take your dog to see her vet.

**Note**

**WHY "GOOD BOY," "GOOD GIRL," AND "GOOD DOG" AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH**

See things from your dog's point of view: She sits and you say, "Good girl!" You call her and she comes to you, and you say, "Good girl!" She goes potty and you say, "Good girl!" How is your dog going to learn which behaviors you're praising if everything is "Good girl!" and you're not going to help her distinguish which one is which? The more specific you are with your praise, the clearer your coaching and the faster your dog will learn to speak your language. Giving each behavior a name allows your dog to know what she's supposed to repeat the next time you make the request.

When your dog does "hurry up," say, "Good hurry up!" or just, "Hurry up," in a singsong voice. If she comes when you call, say, "Good come!" and when she moves away from something, say, "Good leave it!" Say "Drink" when she's drinking and "Be a goat" when she's eating grass. Be creative and have fun with it!

As your dog begins to learn English, her reactions will help you know what she wants to do. When I ask my dog Clyde if he wants to eat, he'll lick his lips if the answer is yes. I can also give him options—"Do you want to go see Maddy, play with Shadow, or go to Malibu?"—and gauge his reaction to each to understand his real preferences. You probably have friends who have to spell things around their dogs, who are quick to learn the meaning of words like "walk," "treat," and "ball." If you put in the time talking to your dog and paying close attention to her responses, people will be blown away by just how smart a dog you have!

If your dog is going to spend the night in the crate—a good idea until she's learned how to hold it—be sure not to give her any food or water for three hours before bedtime. However, if your dog constantly soils the white pad or towel, do remove them and let your dog sleep on the barren floor. If she does have an accident while in the crate and this time it isn't absorbed by the towel, she'll realize, "Yuck, I'd better hold it from



now on!” It won’t take more than three of these experiences to drive the lesson home. But give your dog the best chance possible to succeed by making sure she’s “empty” before putting her in the crate for the night. She’ll be okay—even a seven-week-old puppy can be expected to hold it for six hours of sleep.

By the way, if you bought your dog at a pet store, you may want to consider an alternative to crate training. These dogs are forced to eliminate in their crates and have already learned how NOT to hold it while they’re in a crate. Use a crate when you can’t watch them, but otherwise you’re going to have to tether her to you on a four-foot leash and take her out frequently. Yet one more reason why I don’t recommend buying a dog from a pet store!

#### **Note**

#### **WHEN PEEING ISN’T A HOUSEBREAKING ISSUE**

Not all “accidents” are related to housebreaking. Some dogs, for example, will let out a squirt or a few drops from the excitement of greeting you. The best solution is to ABSOLUTELY ignore the dog when you first come home or guests arrive. Act as if you don’t even have a dog, allowing her a few minutes to collect herself emotionally. After about five minutes, you can greet your dog in a super-calm manner.

Some dogs pee from fear—usually they’ll be cowering or lying on their backs. The worst thing that you can do is to correct her, which will only increase her fear. These sorts of situations should become less common as you socialize your dog and build her confidence by using the principles in this book.

#### **WHEN DOGS HAVE TO “GO”**

When they’re puppies, they have to “go” more frequently than adult dogs, especially:

- After eating and drinking
- After napping or sleeping
- After chewing
- After playing

#### **DEALING WITH ACCIDENTS**

No matter how smart your dog is, he’s going to make mistakes. How you handle those mistakes depends on whether or not you catch him in the act.

#### ***When you catch the mistake as it’s happening...***

Congratulations—this is a teachable moment! Celebrate the fact that you can show your dog the bull’s eye. Make it clear, by your voice and demeanor, that you are displeased. You don’t have to overdo it—think “urgency,” not “anger.”

Urgently rush your dog outside—picking him up, if necessary—to the place you’d prefer that he go. But once you’re there, change your demeanor—bye-bye urgency, hello patience and encouragement. If your dog manages to go potty again, this time in the right place, reward him with an outpouring of joy and a jackpot of treats, as you say, “Hurry up” in an impressed and happy tone of voice.

### ***When you don't catch the mistake...***

There's nothing you can do. Do NOT push the dog's nose into the pee or poop, or hit him with a newspaper. Neither of those acts communicates the real problem, which isn't the act itself, but *location, location, location*. All you'll be doing is teaching your dog to be more secretive about his business, training him to pee behind couches or in closets. Some dogs will even eat their own poop to hide the evidence!

Calling too much attention to a mistake can also create attention-seeking behavior—if your dog feels ignored, he can always go potty in an inappropriate place. Maybe it's not happy attention, but it's still attention. When I was a toddler and felt ignored by adults, I used to dip toilet paper in the bowl and use it as wallpaper. Even though it was clean toilet water, it worked like a charm.

So when you miss the mistake, the best thing to do is ignore it. If you've got the urge to hit someone, slap yourself on the nose with a newspaper and say, "Bad owner!" Next time you'll pay more attention to your dog's needs. (On Day 10, I'll show you how to use a chart to get a clearer idea of your dog's habits and needs.)

Be sure to clean up mistakes quickly, using a cleaner designed to neutralize pet odors. Dogs are all about their noses, and lingering smells just encourage a repetition of the same behavior. Just don't let her see you doing it—you don't want to draw any extra attention to the behaviors you're trying to eliminate.

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