



### **Class Enrolment Confirmation Letter**

Thank you for registering for a class through Loyal Learners Pet Services. We are going to have a great time working together!

Please read through this letter and feel free to ask any and all questions that you may have!

#### ***What to Bring to Class:***

- **Your dog** on a **flat collar, martingale, or slip lead** and 6-8 foot **leash**. *No prong collars, electronic collars, or retractable leashes please! If you feel like you need this equipment, please ask me and we can discuss options for you.*
- Lots and lots of **high value treats**. Pea sized is best.
- A **clicker** if you are using one. This is not a requirement.
- A **treat pouch** is not required, but will make your life a lot easier. They are available for purchase.
- Weather **appropriate attire** if an outdoor course as **classes are rain or shine**.
- **Poop bags**.
- A folding **chair** (if desired).
- A **mat** for your dog (if desired).
- Water for your dog.

### ***What to Expect:***

- Class is intended to be a positive experience for your dog. We will be using a marker (a verbal or a clicker) to tell your dog that he/she performed the desired behavior. This will be in conjunction with your dog's favorite treats to learn and establish behaviors. The food will be his/her paycheck. However, like the clicker, it will NOT be a forever thing.
- When you arrive, select a spot to get your dog settled in. Practice whatever skills your dog knows how to do (sit, shake, eye contact etc) while others arrive.
- Keep dogs out of each others body bubble. I know this is hard to do at times but for safety reasons NO ON LEASH GREETINGS between dogs. Not every dog is social with other dogs and those that are are often adversely affected by being on leash during a greeting.
- We will begin class with some warm up exercises as a group. Then we will begin instruction. Instruction will typically start with me explaining WHY we are learning the skill, explaining it, and demonstrating it. Then there will be time to practice. Please note that your dog is NOT the same as your neighbors. I am NOT judging you against each other! I am looking to see that YOUR dog is making progress! At the end of class, we will review skills, answer any questions. Homework is emailed.
- Please feel free to call/text 585.519.1580 with any questions or updates. You can also email me at LoyalLearners@gmail.com

### ***Payment and Paperwork:***

- Cash (preferred), Money Order Venmo, or PayPal (friends and family option) is welcome. NO CHECKS PLEASE.
- Please bring a signed copy of the “Waiver of Liability Form” to class the first day. This form is found on the last page of this document.
- Bring a copy, email, or text me a photo of your dog's current vaccinations. We require (as age appropriate) a current Rabies and Distemper and highly encourage the Bordetella (Kennel Cough) vaccine.
- Enrollment in a training class will require a deposit which is non-refundable and non transferable to another class. This deposit will be half of the class fee.

## **Important Information:**

### **Training is part art and a large part science.**

My role as your trainer is to coach you to be better able to handle your dog(s). Dogs are not robots. They have feelings, automatic responses to things (such as fear), likes and dislikes, strong and weaker points, and are not always predictable. **My goal is to give you the tools so that you can be *PROACTIVE rather than REACTIVE* when working with your dog.**

*The methods that I use are based on science.* Behavior is lawful; all living organisms are bound by the laws of learning. While there are many ways to get a certain behavior, I will teach you the most effective ways to do so in a humane and ethical manner.

### **The simple version: A – B – C**

**A=Antecedent** (what I am *asking* the dog to, such as “sit”) **B=Behavior** (what the dog does, Spot “sits”) **C=Consequence** (what happens after the behavior, Spot gets a treat for sitting)

*Take away:* Dogs are inclined to do what works for to get them the consequence that they desire. Consider this; you go to work for the next 6 weeks and every time your Boss sees you smile, you get a \$10 bill. Great, right? What is the long term effect? We all look like clowns, smiling, a lot, hoping for that reward! Well, that happens with your dog too. If he sits by the door politely and you let him outside, he will be more apt to try this behavior in the future because it ended with the desired consequence. But be careful, it can go the opposite way as well; he begs at the table and gets a scrap, he will be more inclined to do this behavior again, because it worked.

We will work together to ensure that your dog is performing the behaviors that we desire. We do this by asking for appropriate behaviors and paying him/her for it!

### **Management vs. Training Skills**

We do not live in a laboratory. We live in the real world. I will give skills to work with your dog in real life situations. However, managing the environment is a key factor for success, particularly dogs that are managing stress (such as a frightening stimulus). Sometimes, your dog may not have the skills to work in a particular environment and management may be necessary at that time. It is always a work in progress.

### **Clicker or Marker Word**

How does your dog know when they have got it right? *The clicker or a marker word is used to tell your dog when he/she has made the correct choice or performed the desired behavior.*

Criteria for a marker word: One syllable and consistent. “Yes,” “Nice,” “Right,” and “Good” are examples, when said the SAME WAY EVERY TIME. A clicker is also a great option!

### **Paying your dog**

As mentioned, your dog needs to be paid in order to continue to perform the desired behavior. Payment in training is typically a food reward as that is the fastest and most effect way to make a dog feel good. However, eventually we want to use life rewards, games, toys, resources, food, water, walks, car rides, attention, etc. We will work through how and when to do that as we progress.

**But I can control my dog easier with a \_\_\_\_\_ (prong, electronic (vibration or shock) collar, etc).**

My goal is to give you skills so that this is not necessary. These tools may be effective, but there are better methods to get your dog to work with you as a team. Plus, dogs are very perceptive and get “collar smart” (only perform with device is on) very easily.

### **How do I know when my dog KNOWS it?**

I find that a lot of people mistake what a dog “knows.” Your dog may sit, facing West, at 6am, 99% of the time, but that does not mean that they have the skills to sit, facing North, at 8pm. We need to practice a behavior in many environments and under a variety of distractions before assuming that a dog “knows” something. It generally takes 1,000 repetitions to equal understating. It is not fair to punish a dog for skills that he/she does not have.

**What if my dog is stubborn?** He needs a better motivator.

### **Concepts to get rid of:**

**Dogs want to please us!** Contrary to what Disney would have us think, dogs, like all mammals, are selfish beings. They want to do what works for them to get the desired outcome. That is not a bad thing, it is the truth.

**Dominant Dog/Alpha Theory.** Your dog is really not spending his/her every waking moment trying to “dominate” you. I am not saying that some dogs are not more difficult to motivate than some, but it is not a dominance issue.

## **Waiver of Liability Consent Release**

**Dog Name:**

**Breed(s):**

**Owner Name(s):**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Veterinarian:**

I, the undersigned, have enrolled myself and my dog in dog training classes, private consultations, workshops or other related activities (Classes) offered by Loyal Learners Pet Services. -I am aware that there are inherent risks and hazards involved in activities with and around dogs, and I am voluntarily participating in these activities with knowledge of potential dangers. I am aware that any dog, regardless of training, handling, or environmental circumstance, is capable of biting and I expressly acknowledge the risks therein.

-In order to participate in dog training or other activities, I, being fully informed of such risks and hazards, agree to assume all risks of such occurrences. I hereby waive any and all claims or actions that I or my guardians or representatives may have, from any and all personal injury to myself, my dog, children in my charge, or harm to property or person caused directly or indirectly, through action or inaction of self or others, by acts that might occur in dog training, any other format of training activities or secondary training without trainer present or engaged.

-I agree to indemnify Loyal Learners Pet Services and its employees and affiliates from any and all claims by myself, member of family, or any agent while within training facilities, within my home property, or in the general public as a result of any action or inaction, of either my dog or any another. -I also agree to assume sole responsibility for injury or damage caused by myself, children in my charge, or by the dog I own or handle and further agree to indemnify, defend and hold the instructors, trainers, assistants and property harmless from any damage, loss, liability or expense, including legal cost and attorney's fees, which result from damage caused by myself, children in my charge, or by the dog I own or handle. -This Waiver of Liability & Informed Consent Release shall be legally binding on the Releasing Party. Should the Releasing Party assert a claim to the contrary to what I have agreed to in this Waiver of Liability and Informed Consent Release, the claiming party shall be liable for all expenses (including attorney's fees, court costs and consultant fees) incurred by both the Releasing Party and the Released Party. -No waiver or modification of any provision herein shall be valid unless expressly agreed to in writing by both the Released Party and the Releasing Party. -Every provision herein is intended to be severable. If any one or more of the provisions herein is found to be unenforceable or invalid, that shall not affect the other terms and provisions hereof, which shall remain binding and enforceable. -Loyal Learners Pet Services may use pictures and videos of me or my dog for publicity or promotional purposes without liability or obligation of any kind to me; however no information/pictures can be sold or shared otherwise without additional consent.

-I represent that I am at least 18 years of age.

Owner's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_