**Focus and Attention**

* Dogs are only going to do as you ask when you have their attention.
* Reinforcement for giving eye contact is the best way to get it.
* This can then progress to attaching a command to gaining your dog’s attention

***Name Response***

If you think about how many times each day you, and everyone else, says your puppy’ name, it’s quite a lot! How many of those times do we actually want our puppy’s attention for a positive reason?

“Benny! Stop chewing the skirting board”, “Alfieee.. why did you have to poo in there”, Children: “Buster! Buster! Buster!”

It’s too easy to say their name without giving a good reason for them to pay attention to us, so next time when we *really* want them to listen, they ignore us and we wonder why.

You want to teach your puppy to willingly give you their attention *every* time you say their name, by ensuring there is a positive consequence that follows, giving them good reason to pay attention to you. Whether it is “Jasper!” followed by a fuss, or “Ruby!” and then giving her dinner, we are giving the puppy a reason to pay attention, and not ignore us when we call them. Importantly, avoid nagging (e.g. Dolly, dolly, dolly, dolly…) repeating their name multiple times will only make them numb and dull to it, so they learn to ignore their name, which is not what we want!

1. Call your puppy’s name once, and immediately give them a treat (even if they don’t look at you, just give it straight away in front of their nose)
2. Mix it up, say their name followed by a treat, offering a toy, dinner, attaching the lead for walkies, a fuss etc.

***Eye Contact***

1. Hold a treat in your hand and waft it under the dogs nose to get their attention on the treat
2. Move it up towards your face and hold it next to your eyes, drawing your dog’s eyes to your face also
3. Hold it in place until they make eye contact with you – even if only for a split second
4. Reward by giving the treat immediately and the command ‘watch me’ or ‘look’
5. Repeat until consistent

***Advanced Eye Contact***

1. When your dog is consistently giving you eye contact for a treat, move the treat in your hand out further to the side of you, instead of in front of your eyes
2. Hold in place until eye contact is given – it may take some time before your dog looks away from the treat but remain patient
3. Reward with the treat immediately and give the command
4. Repeat until consistent

***Eye Contact on Command***

1. Throw a treat on the floor a few feet away
2. Allow a response from your dog (i.e. the dog takes the treat)
3. When he turns back and looks towards you, introduce a command (e.g. ‘watch me’ or ‘look’)
4. Repeat until consistent

***Automatic Eye Contact***

We also want to teach our puppy’s not only to give us their attention when we ask, but also automatically when they see something that we want to give them guidance on. E.g. when they see a dog they want to play with, rather than rushing straight over, they look at us for guidance on whether they can go to play or not.

1. Hold your puppy on lead, and throw a treat just out of reach
2. Hold the lead still whilst your puppy with probably pull towards it
3. When they turn and look at you giving eye contact, immediately say ‘ok!’ and let them get the treat. They might need showing where it is and they can have it now.