



What students are saying about The Misha May Foundation's UNDERSTANDING DOGS class

Diane: The Understanding Dogs Class is an innovative way to learn about dog behavior, human behavior and how to integrate them together to enhance the lives of both. The approach is unique in that participants do not bring their dog to every class. Only one participant brings their dog to class, thus giving all participants an opportunity to focus on the lecture material and demonstrations.

The other benefit is that each night is dedicated to a “case study” format for the dog attending class that evening. The lecture materials, demonstrations and lesson topics focus on the particular dog of the night, giving the owner hands on, specific actions they can take home to help improve behavioral issues and address their concerns. I learn something new every session because of the dynamics of each owner and their dogs. Everyone is unique and this class addresses their uniqueness in a very special manner. You will not be disappointed.

Richard: I found this training to be very helpful. I learned things that I had not anticipated but that have helped me understand my dog and dogs in general. I have owned many dogs, most of them rescues of one sort or another. The dog that Lorraine helped me with in her class is Abby, who is a three year old golden who has had a very difficult life with lots of trauma and subsequent fears. Her fear of humans and her behavior related to those fears had deemed her “unadoptable” from the rescue group that was trying to help her. I knew I needed help with this dog as I did not have the understanding of what she needs in order to feel safe enough to learn and adjust. Like many people I thought she needed discipline and rewards to change.

What I learned in this class was first how animals learn and the types of conditioning we teach them unintentionally which can either help or hinder them. Then I was able to understand more about how the dog needs to be in control of a frightening situation and not the other way around. Instead of dragging her over to meet people she is afraid of, I learned to let her know that she is able to go as far as she wants without any coercion. This allowed her to calm down knowing that she was not going to be forced into a panic inducing situation and therefore eventually she would come in and exhibit the desired behavior on her own accord and this in turn would lead to less stress in other situations now that she has learned how to deal with one.

It is like building a foundation of trust beyond what we already had. She now knows that I understand some of her fears more clearly and that allows her to deal with them. I have noticed that she seems calmer and her behavior has improved markedly. She is a much happier dog and much easier to live with now thanks to what I have already been taught.

Chelsea: Thanks so much for the class, I really enjoyed seeing the techniques you used with each different dog



that was brought into the class. I really enjoyed the fact that you let the dogs do things at their own pace, and set up owners and dogs with successful situations rather than ones too stressful for them to handle.

I think the main thing I got from your class is that everybody needs to know that there is a kind and loving way to help your animals live in a world that is comfortable for them and not full of fear and unwanted experiences.

Jenny: I found the discussion on desensitizing most helpful. For a dog who has issues, to try and minimize or eliminate the fear of certain triggers is extremely important. (e.g., the sound of another dog's tags rattling). It makes sense but I would not have thought to do that on my own!

Barrie: I thought the class I went to was great! Everybody was totally interested and involved, which impressed me. It's a great format.

Sue: I have a perfect example of what works beautifully with a dog. I took Bailey for a walk in the park yesterday. I reigned him in by my side as we approached two other dogs. They were not jumping; they were not aggressive; they were just looking at Bailey as we passed by.

This owner then jerked her dog and actually pulled her up on two legs and was harshly yelling something at her so she would not look at Bailey. This broke my heart. I almost stopped to tell her about your classes but felt it would not be received well. Lorraine teaches with kindness.

In this situation I applied a training technique I learned. I had tasty treats in my pocket, and as we approached the other dog, I distracted my dog by doing the "dance". I put the treat down to his mouth and said sweet things and we literally turned in a circle away from the other dog. I wish everyone would take Lorraine's classes because of what I saw in the park yesterday. You do not teach pets with cruelty because then they just learn fear.



Rhonda: I am sooo enjoying your class. I'm learning so much through the discussion and by watching the dogs!

Cheri: The Understanding Dogs class was a great opportunity for me to work with my dog, Heidi. She had a bit of a rough beginning as a puppy, and so I have been working hard with her since to gain a better understanding of her needs, but had a couple areas to continue to work on and thought this class might help and it did. As usual with one of Lorraine's classes, the training seemed to give me more training than to the dog, which is a good thing.

The main issue I had with Heidi was that Heidi wouldn't come back to me off leash or when outside in the backyard when called. After hearing others in the class with similar issues and after talking about how perhaps the dogs aren't understanding what we're asking of them, several training options were presented to try, including trying a different word other than her name or 'come' which I've probably worn out by now. 'Treat' was suggested with a different dog so I thought I would give that one a try. Sure enough, it worked. She came to me like a bullet when I called her in from the back yard, and is consistently doing it ever since. The strange thing is that I have never used that word as she was not a treat motivated type of dog so I was really surprised that word meant anything to her. Now it means 'come' and she sure does get a treat.

I had an unfortunate opportunity to try it off-leash about a week ago when she got out of the back yard through an open gate I accidentally left open and she ran off. I was just sick and she was no where in site. I ran into the house to get the car keys to go look for her and when I ran out again, there she was running right back to me! It was the very first time she didn't run away. I was just thrilled and am sure it's a result of Lorraine's wonderful advice and the training and practice Heidi and I continue to partake in. Thanks Lorraine!

Maureen: Since taking Lorraine's latest class, I feel much better about myself. My dog, Nelson, is better behaved and I feel good about his progress. I plan to take more classes.

I especially liked the class where Nelson was featured. It was very helpful for Lorraine and the others to watch me interact with Nelson and get pointers on how to do better. Nelson has a problem walking on a leash. He recently started barking at other dogs on leashes. The last public walk we made, I carried treats and whenever a dog approached, I made Nelson sit and fed him treats. He didn't bark once at the other dogs. I felt it was quite an accomplishment.

Sharon: I love how you are so positive and give praise at your classes!

Chris: "Understanding Dogs" focuses on behavior issues and modification that each of the individual participants are currently facing with their dogs or fosters, with the whole class focusing on 1 participant's dog and issues each week. IT IS AN EXCELLENT CLASS and resource for dealing positively with all sorts of presenting behaviors.

I have found Lorraine to be very knowledgeable both scientifically in dog behavior, as well as practically (especially for rescue/foster situations). She covers lots of ground from conventional to holistic approaches and I can't say enough about how informative and helpful the class is! I've been in rescue for 15 years and have been thrilled to find the class so interesting, as opposed to being repetitive.

As a bonus for those of us in rescue, foster dogs of any rescue can attend the class free and active volunteers of any rescue can attend at a discounted price as space allows.

Lorraine also does individual/private consults and will arrange to come to your group by request. I highly recommend this class.

Sue: William and I both loved Nelson and were truly amazed at how you were able to invent the idea on the spot of HEY, COMPANY IS HERE!!!!!! And then it became fun for Nelson rather than some horrible threat to him when there was a knock at the door. I know he has to go home and practice, practice and practice some more. But you gave his owner hope. I could see relief in her eyes. It's a beginning of creating a new behavior and she seemed calmer which in turn will only benefit Nelson. What a sweet heart.

Indy was another dear. Again, the waiting her barking out was difficult but she finally got that that wasn't going to get her any where. It is amazing to see them get to that point where they understand. There is only kindness, there is no punishment and that is what I most appreciate about you.

I recommend you all the time. I so wish more people would be open to it. I've talked to a couple of people in the park while walking Bailey and I suggest you. You see people do the same thing over and over and over and they continue to get the same response. Pulling their leash, yelling at them does not get results and just confuses the poor animal. I will keep recommending and hope that more people hear and come to class.

Janet: Thanks for a great class and working with Barclay and me! I really liked the way you conducted the one on one "problems", and covered such a variety of different topics.

Kathryn: Lorraine's Understanding Dogs class is a unique and personal class. This class is not your typical sit, stay, or down only class. This class really helps the owner to understand THEIR own dog's issues, stress points, and avenues to desensitization. This class also stresses that the owner really observe their dog's behavior. It was great to work with each participant's dog in a one-on-one setting; it really was a collaborative effort to help everyone succeed. Lorraine's class notes before and after class help to reinforce what was presented. I highly suggest this class to all dog owners!

Chris: Casey started Wild Oat (Bach) last week after class and she is responding beautifully. Just this week alone, she has cautiously, but on her own, approached 2 different sets of strangers (new neighbors including 1 man) AND allowed them to pet her without my prompting! Although we've seen this in the past, she was much less fearful with both and 2 in one week is more than ever before. I continue to watch our progress and am grateful for the opportunities and reminders of the class.

Again thank you soooo much!

Lisanne: Oh do I have a clever Sky 9 Update story for you today...

This morning, sleepy-eyed, I let Sky out the front door to do "her numbers" (we only count to "2" in this case). As we do every morning, Sky waits at the top of the stairs inside the house, while I open the front door to check for any number of earthly events, such as:

- 1) people walking dogs, 2) Elk, 3) Deer, 4) Lobsters having a cookout, 5) Coyote's, 6) Fox

I didn't see any of the above (I've actually never seen #4 - not even in Connecticut when I lived by the sea) so I said, "OK Sky, c'mon!!" I love saying it loud and enthusiastically and I love the way she waits so obediently and then with equal enthusiasm to match mine, lunges down the stairs when given the signal, her little stump of a tail has enough hair on it to make it raise and lower like a boom, and look rather dainty if you have a really good imagination. It is at precisely this point (when I give Sky the "ok" signal) that she can make tracks on me BIG time. She leaps out into the pasture-like field in front of the house gazelle style. I, dragging my flip flops, wondering what stage the coffee is at as it brews and burps and moans and groans in the fancy drip coffee maker that we have.

This morning, Sky bounded down ahead of me and stopped dead in her tracks and looked to her right, and then at me. To her right, and then at me. Since we are so in tune with each other I realized quickly that something was amiss. Normally, Sky bounds out so gracefully and certainly, and stops dead in her tracks to do what I like to call "squat-to-pee". (That's her Native American Indian name I've given her for this moment). She does it so damned well, it deserves to be honored somehow. We are just "marking the occasion", if you'll excuse the pun! Anyway, she didn't do that instant "squat-to-pee" this morning and I realized quickly by her signal to me to look around the corner of the house and see what we could see. It was a herd of #2 (from the above example: Elk). Mama's and babies (adorable little babies..."Mama's don't let your babies grow up to be cows, boys").

Here's the good news. For the first time in our career together (Sky and I), Sky chose NOT to chase the Elk, but to alert me that they were there by using body language instead. I love this moment and I want to cherish it forever. We were able to in a very composed and mature manner, turn around without any handling other than words, and go inside to get the leash on the stairs. Once on the leash, we went right back to the same place and made our mark and celebrated it with the kind of enthusiasm one might see at a homecoming for a soldier.

I attribute this morning's success solely to the Misha May Foundation - more specifically Lorraine and the class she teaches called Understanding Dogs. Thank you for teaching me to be even more in tune with my dog, and teaching me that working with her every day showing her support and setting up winning situations is what dog stewardship is all about. Not only has this been fun, life-giving and energy sustaining....but as this morning proves, it has been a very effective life saver. Thank you, thank you, thank you and YES!!!!!!

Classes are offered in Arvada, Denver, Englewood, Evergreen, Golden, Lafayette, Lakewood, Littleton and more.

