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POSITIVELY STRESS FREE DOG GROOMING – STAFF
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I own a busy grooming salon on Capitol Hill, in Washington DC, called Dog & Cat Grooming. Capitol Hill is the 20 blocks of residential neighborhood surrounding the US Capitol building. The following lecture is a companion to my lecture on using Positive Reinforcement to change the behavior of grooming dogs, but this "staff" lecture is the one that is closest to my heart.

The potential for success in the grooming business is endless. Do you know why? You can't outsource dog grooming! Your customers can't send their dogs to China and have someone groom them for 30 cents an hour. There aren't many industries in this country that have the rosy future that ours does. If you are in a good location and do a good job, very quickly you will find yourself needing an assistant, a bather/brusher and eventually even another groomer. This lecture is about how you can add employees and maximize *their success*, which will maximize *your success*.

This lecture is about how you can apply the principles of behavioral science, and learning theory, with the deliberate application of positive reinforcement, with the management of your staff. I'm going to be talking about a management approach that works with your employees or even if you aren't a supervisor, it works with your co-workers. This works whether you only have one bather that helps you (even if it's a family member) or if you have several employees, and you dream of having a chain of grooming salons.

Through the years I have trained and exhibited my dogs in AKC competition obedience. I started in 1973 with the old fashioned technique we call "pop and jerk". My approach to dog obedience training changed in 1994 when I saw Ted Turner. I'm not talking about Jane Fonda's ex husband. This Ted Turner is a marine mammal trainer and he was the curator of animal training at SeaWorld, when I met him.

From Ted I began to learn about behavioral science and learning theory. In 1994 I made a commitment to use just positive reinforcement with my own dog training and as a result, and the success I was having, I also began to examine my handling of the dogs I groomed in my shop. Over the next several years I worked to develop a method of grooming, a way of handling the dogs, and then even a way of supervising my employees, to incorporate the same behavior principles I was using in my dog training. That's what I call Positively Stressfree Grooming. In this lecture I'm going to tell you about how this experiment with staff supervision has evolved, what has worked, what hasn't worked, and some of the

unintended and unexpected benefits that I have experienced because of this approach.

If you have read the first lecture about using positive reinforcement with your grooming dogs, there is some information about learning theory and behavioral science that I'm going to have to repeat in this presentation. But one of the things that we know about learning is that we will forget 80% of what we hear, *forgetting is a normal part of learning*. This is just going to give you a 2nd chance to hear a little bit of what you may already forgotten since reading the first lecture!

I want explain a little bit about what the scientists have proven about learning, and about changing behavior. It's important to remember and understand that this is scientific fact, proven and supported by empirical data, we have evidence from experiments. This is not just somebody's idea of what they think would be a nice way to treat people, it's not a management technique, one of those "hot" approaches that get popular in industry every once and awhile, and come and go. As I've said before, I'm not the grooming whisperer. This isn't a way to "protect your cheese". This is scientific, it's proven and it's called Operant Conditioning.

Operant Conditioning simply means that behavior is controlled by its consequences. That is; what happens during, or immediately after a behavior will determine if that behavior increases, or decreases. It's simple. A key word there is immediate. Dog Trainers call that "timing". Scientists call that the "law of contiguity". *The law of contiguity means the consequence that happens during a behavior or with in one second of a behavior is what's going to be associated with that behavior. If the consequence comes even a few seconds later, it will probably be associated with a different behavior.* With people, like our employees, we have some advantages, and tools, that we don't have with dogs. We have tools that make it a little easier to delay reinforcement, without breaking the law of contiguity, because people understand language. So we can say, to a person: "that was great, I'm going to pay you an extra $5 for today" and we don't have to actually give them the money right that instant. We can include it in their check at the end of the week. But timing of reinforcement is always important. We do have to *notice the behavior as soon as it occurs* to have the **most** impact with our reinforcement.

I first tried to apply the principles of Positive Reinforcement to the one single employee that I had when I opened my shop on Capitol Hill in 1998. This young man was fabulously talented, he was working for me as a bather/brusher, and I was beginning to train him to groom. He was one of those people that right from the start you could see had the potential to be a competition groomer. He just had a great eye, and a wonderful combination of speed and perfectionism. He was *very talented* but he never came to work on time, and he was often more than an hour late. At least ¼ of the days he was scheduled to come in, he didn't show up at all, and usually didn't even call. This was causing real chaos in my scheduling, and in my life, but he was just so talented, and such a huge help when he did show up that I was really reluctant to let him go. I just wanted to **fix** him.

I decided I was going to "fix" his lateness problem with positive reinforcement. Now right off the bat, I was making a huge mistake. The mistake was this: Remember the definition of positive reinforcement from the other lecture? Reinforcement is anything that **increases** a behavior.

How did I think I was going to **decrease** his lateness using positive reinforcement when positive reinforcement is what you use to increase behavior? I realized my mistake pretty quickly i.e. reinforcement increases behavior and I was trying to stop a problem behavior, because when you're using positive reinforcement you find out very fast that the *first* thing you have to do is identify the behavior that you want, so you can reinforce it. You have to visualize the behavior that you *want to see*, and you have to forget about the behavior that you don't want. We are very conditioned to react to behavior we don't want, but to use positive reinforcement we have to retrain our mind to *stop looking at the behavior we don't want*, and instead set up the behavior we *do want* because, after all, by definition, reinforcement *increases* behavior. I knew what I actually had to do was find a way to reinforce him for showing up on time, or even early. That was the alternative behavior I could reinforce to extinguish his lateness problem.

So I told him that if he came in 15 minutes early, he got $15 extra that day, 10 minutes early $10 extra, and 5 minutes early, $5 extra. We worked that way for a couple of weeks, and you know what happened? Some days he'd show up early, and get the extra money and some days he'd show up an hour late, just like before. And some days he didn't show up at all. Boy was I mad. How could he be so ungrateful to me being such a nice, wonderful, generous boss? It *really* made me angry and resentful to pay the extra money on the days he *was* early.

The worst day was a day I had 17 dogs scheduled to groom , 4 of which were Afghan Hounds in full coat that were getting long haired brush out, and I was in a temporary location at that time were I couldn't stay in the shop past 7:00pm. He never showed up, he never called, and he never came back again.

So, when I hired my next bather, I decided that I had a couple of problems with my last approach, and now I could correct my approach with the new person. I thought the first mistake I was making with the last bather was that I was reacting to a problem behavior, instead of proactively reinforcing good behavior before a problem developed and I was on the right track, but I was only partly right about that. I also thought that part of my problem was that my reinforcement was on a fixed schedule and fixed schedules always come with problems.

The classic example behavioral scientists give for this is a vending machine, versus a slot machine. Vending machines are fixed schedule reinforcement. That means when you do the "behavior" of putting in a dollar into the machine, you get reinforcement, a can of coke. It's fixed, you expect it every time. One dollar, one coke. If you put in a dollar, and nothing comes out, you don't stand there and keep putting dollars into the machine. The predictability of that schedule causes the behavior of putting the dollar in, to stop.

The best schedules of reinforcement to *maintain a behavior* are variable and unpredictable, like a slot machine; where people will sit for hours, sometimes

getting reinforced, but mostly not getting reinforced. Slots have the worst percentage of payout at the casinos of any of their attractions. Customers go in knowing that if people got more money out than they put into the machine, the casino couldn't stay open. So they go into this place that is obviously flourishing by taking more of your money than it gives back, but they still do it, and they still do it because of variable and unpredictable schedules of reinforcement. You never know when you might hit the big one.

So I thought my problem with the last bather had been that my schedule was too predictable. Now I was mostly wrong about that being my problem, and I'll tell you what my big problem was later, but the first thing I did was change my schedule of reinforcement. With the next bather I hired, I told her that anytime she beat me to work; she would get $5 extra. So the variability was in whether or not she beat me to work, which depended on what time *I* showed up. But guess what happened? Some days she would beat me to work and take the extra 5 bucks, and some days she would show up 15 or 20 minutes late. And again I'm getting resentful and angry about paying her the extra money when she does beat me to work. I'm starting to think "this positive reinforcement stuff is for the birds, it just isn't working". But I was a true believer, from what I had done with my dog training, so I tried again.

I thought, well maybe she just has too much "bad learning history". *Bad Learning History means that an unwanted behavior is already very firmly established because of previous reinforcement or punishment consequences.* Bad learning history makes a behavior a lot harder to change. She didn't work for me that long; she left for another job which gave me an opportunity to try something different with the next person. I decided that what I needed with the new employee - I was finally starting to smarten up - I decided what I needed was something called "errorless learning" and also a "lure".

The tool of training that I had been using with those first 2 employees is called capturing. Capturing means: waiting for a naturally occurring behavior, and rewarding it when it occurs, so that it will occur with more frequency, because, as we know, reinforcement increases behavior, so if you reward it, it will occur more frequently. I wasn't using pure capturing, because the employee did know ahead of time that their behavior would be rewarded. It wasn't a surprise they knew they would get more money for showing up early, but I was pretty much waiting for them to do it on their own, and then rewarding it. And promptness may have increased over time, but I couldn't live with the lateness and uncertainty while I waited for that to happen. With capturing I probably would have had to use a really *big* amount of money *every time*, eventually changing to a variable schedule, to get the behavior of the employee showing up on time *regularly* the way I wanted them too.

I decided, I couldn't just wait for the behavior and capture it. I decided to use another tool, called luring. Luring, in dog training, is when you hold a reward, a treat, right in front of the dog's nose, and use it to manipulate his behavior, and give him the lure, the treat, as a reward, after you get the behavior. For example when you hold a treat to the dog's nose, and pull it up, to get the dog to sit, and then give him the treat. So I planned a lure, to get my new employee to be there

on time and I'll explain how I did it, but I also decided to use another tool called, errorless learning. Errorless learning just means setting a scenario right from the start, to get the behavior you want, with no opportunity for a mistake. Errorless learning is the best learning technique you can use if you can set it up that way. So I decided to use errorless learning, and a lure.

When you're training a behavior with dogs, to use positive reinforcement, the first thing you have to do is set the dog up for success, and get the behavior that you want, so you have something to reinforce. That's called management: setting up for success

Before I started this new approach, I realized that I also needed a management tool. The management tool that I needed was a time clock. I needed to know exactly when people were on time (which for me is 15 minutes before the shop opens, that's when I require they be there and ready to work). I needed to know exactly when they got there, in order to use these 2 tools of luring and errorless learning so I bought a time clock.

The way I used these tools was this: (I still use this today with every new person, because this really works well.) The new policy was: Every new employee starts with a 60 day probation period. They are not "technically" hired until they finish the 60 days probation (2 calendar months, not 60 scheduled working days). During that probation period, the *only* requirement, the only thing they have to do to be successful and go from temporary worker to regular status, is have perfect attendance. This means they have to be there every day they're scheduled, and they have to punch in on time. That's errorless learning, and it's a good first impression, or imprint, of what I expect, as their new employer. Any time they're late, or miss a day, even if they have a good excuse, or have told me ahead of time, I'm not mad, but the 60 day clock starts over. They can't become a regular employee until they've put together 60 days of perfect attendance. Now the lure is, that at the end of the probation period, they get a dollar an hour raise. (I have been shocked at what a challenge this is for most people. I have yet to hire someone who has been able to do it on the first 60 consecutive days.) These 2 things: the lure and errorless learning, have dramatically improved punctuality and attendance at my salon. They haven't cured "lateness" totally, because I still didn't understand what my big problem was; the big problem that we're going to talk about before I finish, but they have been huge tools for me.

One added benefit of this policy has been that it very quickly weeds out people with drug and alcohol problems. Remember that first bather, that just couldn't get it together to show up, the one who was so talented? Well, I suspect that alcohol was his problem and one thing I will tell you about using this approach with employees - this positive reinforcement behavioral approach that I'm preaching today - you won't be successful with people who have drug and alcohol problems, or individuals who are mentally unstable (individuals who have real, serious, emotional pathologies). And the 60 day probation weeds those people out. This approach is better than drug testing, because it weeds them all out, (including alcoholics and the mentally unstable). In my experience, those individuals just can't put together 60 days of perfect attendance (anyone who has those kinds of personal problems is usually eliminated pretty quickly). After I

have "reset" the 60 day clock several times it has become apparent the there is some kind of a problem that is beyond a simple employment problem. I usually at that point will tell them that I can only schedule them for one day a week, to work on Saturdays. On Saturdays we have a flexible schedule because we can take just a few, or many walk-in customers, so it's possible to adjust our work load if someone doesn't show up as planned and I explain that their undependability makes Saturday the only day I can keep them on the schedule. This schedule change, reducing them to only working on Saturday, has always caused those people to quit. The fact that they have voluntarily quit and because they were still on probation and just hired as temporary workers until they completed the probation, avoids some of the issues you have with letting regular employees go regarding unemployment insurance, etc.

From training dogs, I knew when I started this, that luring has some built in problems that I was going to need to avoid if I was going to be successful. Luring is the kind of dog training that gets labeled as bribery. One of the problems with luring dogs is: if they don't see the reward, they won't do the behavior. Have you ever heard "He'll only do it if I have treats"? That's the problem with luring that gives positive reinforcement a bad name. There is an easy scientific explanation for this and it is very easy to avoid that problem. The answer is as simple as A, B, C. If you are a trainer, do you know what the A, B, C, acronym stands for? Have you heard that term before as it relates to behavior?

A, B, C, easy to remember, stands for Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence.
A - Antecedent is your cue, or your signal, B - Behavior is the actual behavior that you are trying to increase or decrease, and C - Consequence, is the Reinforcement or Punishment that you are going to use to make the operant conditioning work.

But **A, B, C *have to come in that order***. If you show the reward first, if you show the treat before you get the behavior, the way you do with a lure, you have *made your consequence into your signal for the behavior*. That means, no reward, no behavior. That means you've trained the behavior in such a way that the reward becomes the antecedent, or the signal, for the behavior, instead of the consequence of the behavior. That's one built in problem with luring. A second problem is that dogs don't really think about what they did to get the reward. The dog's not thinking about "sitting" when you are luring their nose on the sit, they're just thinking about keeping their nose on the treat. They're barely conscious of what their butt is doing. Leslie Nelson (a popular speaker on dog training) uses the analogy that it's like following another car to a destination you've never driven to before. You get there, but do you really know how you got there? Could you do it again on your own?

Those are the problems with luring, but even with the problems it presents, sometimes luring can be a really effective tool to start a behavior. It is a tool that you can use as long as you understand your ABCs and you know how to avoid having the lure become your signal. One way to do that is, for example with dogs, use the lure to get the behavior, but instead of giving the dog the treat that's in front of his nose, bring out a different, *better* treat from your *other hand*,

and use that as a reward *instead*, and don't give him the treat that was in your luring hand. After doing that a couple of time you will be able to lure him without a treat in your hand at all, and he will just follow your hand, because now he knows, just following your hand is going to get him a reward from somewhere else. That hand movement quickly becomes a hand signal - a signal - a true **A**ntecedent and you can now get the behavior without showing treats. Did I help you with your dog training a little bit there too?

If I was going to use a lure with my employees I knew I needed to head off the problems that luring has right away. The way I did that was: The first time a new employee beat me to work during that probation period, I'd say, "Oh, by the way, you also get $5 extra every time you beat me to work." So now I'd given them a surprise reward from somewhere else, for following the "60 day - raise" lure. I don't do it exactly that way today, because I have more than one employee, and I also don't go in to the shop everyday we're open. Today, every day, the first person to punch in on time gets $5 extra, the 2nd get $4, and the 3rd gets $3 extra. So the variability and unpredictability come in play because they never know if they will be the first person, the second person, or the third person, and get the little bonus, or forth or fifth person, which don't get any extra money. That's how it's variable and unpredictable. Being the first person on time everyday can add $25 per week (more than $100 per month) for a full time employee, so it can be quite a bonus.

Of course this brings up the method by which my employees are paid, which is also based on behavioral science principles. Everyone who works in my salon makes an hourly wage plus a commission. The commission is pooled among all the employees. The employees who have been there the longest, and have the most ability, make the most on the clock, hourly. Those are the finish groomers, and the newest employees, the bathers, make the lowest hourly rate, but they all make the same commission each day. We total up all the money we make for one day including grooming, the walk-in nail trims and self serve dog washes. All that money gets totaled, and a percentage of that total gets split evenly among everyone who worked that day, whether they are finish groomers or bathers. You know why I include the self serve dog washes? Because they are an interruption of our work, and I want everyone to not resent stopping what they're doing to help a self serve customer. I pay everyone hourly for two reasons. Using an hourly rate, the employees with more ability and longer service can get more money even though the commission is shared evenly. (Finish groomers make almost double the hourly wage of the newest bathers.) The second reason the hourly pay is important is because no one minds helping with all the extra work that groomers usually resent if they're only making commission. They don't resent spending time to clean up, answer the phone, walk a dog, or any kind of interruption or extra work that they wouldn't get paid for if they were working on a strict percentage/commission and didn't also make an hourly wage. The *pooled* commission also means that every one is happy to help each other, to hold difficult dogs, or help fluff dry, and there's no jockeying to get the easy big money dogs or to avoid the hard dogs. We pool all our work, and we pool all our tips. One person may rough a dog, someone else will bathe it, a

3rd person may fluff dry it, and a 4th may finish it. The pooled tips are divided twice a month and divided by how many hours each person has worked. Only the employees get tip money. I don't take any portion of the tips, although much of them are from dogs I have groomed personally.

I also realized as I added more employees, that when someone did show up late, I couldn't punish them. I had to be un-reactive if they showed up late. After all, we all know that if a dog doesn't come when you call him, when he does finally come, should you punish him for finally coming? Of course not. You know why? It's the law of contiguity. They will associate the act of coming to you with the punishment, because that's the behavior you punished, that was the last behavior they did before they got punished. If somebody shows up late, they're not going to feel bad for being late; you're going to make them feel bad when they're punished for showing up. They're going to associate the punishment with *showing up* late, and try to avoid the punishment. They'll lie to you about why they were late. Or the next time they will to stay away a little longer to avoid the punishment. After all once you're already late, why rush in to get yelled at? Might as well grab a cup of coffee too, you're already in trouble. If you're going to be very late, why not just call in sick, avoid the punishment and take the whole day off? That's why some of us avoid calling our mothers, because when we finally do call them; they berate us for not keeping in touch, or for not calling sooner. Who wants to hear that?

If you read the dog behavior lecture, I gave a long explanation about the difference between reinforcement as a consequence, and punishment as a consequence. I won't repeat that entire explanation now, so I'm just going to have to give you some of the facts, with out the details. As I said earlier, reinforcement is anything that increases behavior. Do you remember what punishment is? The scientific definition of Punishment? Punishment is anything that decreases or suppresses behavior. Punishment damages Relationships. And punishment has predictable fallout. Punishment causes Avoidance, Anxiety, Frustration, Freezing, Flight, Aggression, and Learned Helplessness. Plus punishment often has to increase over time. It has to get harsher for the same result. (In the example of lateness, avoidance is what I described above, anxiety is a feeling we can all relate to when we are late, frustration causes road rage in traffic, road rage IS aggression. Plus the aggression punishment causes can spill over in our work relationships too; setting up an adversarial relationship with the punisher (you), and causing a "bad attitude" and "redirected aggression" against co-workers)

In contrast to reinforcement using punishment as a consequence will not actually make a behavior go away. It doesn't a extinguish behavior, like stopping the reinforcement will, it only suppresses the behavior. Let me give one quick example of the difference between suppressing a behavior and extinguishing a behavior, which means making the behavior really go away. Here's a good dog example:

Unless the reinforcement changes, the behavior WON'T go away completely: It's like a dog trying to get to a roast beef on your kitchen counter. No matter how much you punish him, he'll still be waiting for an opportunity to get up

on that counter. He waits for you to turn your back, or leave the room. Until the roast beef goes in the refrigerator, and the reinforcement stops, *disappears*, the behavior of jumping up on the counter is not going to stop. The reinforcement has to disappear for the behavior to really go away. Because: Behavior is reward driven.

Behaviorists call Relationship "reinforcement history". Every time you reinforce behavior it's like putting money in a bank. This is the classic behavioral analogy. When you open a savings account, in the beginning you have to constantly put in money, and you are not earning much interest. But, over time, as that account grows, you don't have to put in as much money, and eventually, you'll just be collecting interest. Eventually, you *can live* off the interest. That's how reinforcement works. You have to do a lot of reinforcement in the beginning but eventually you actually have to become variable and unpredictable to maintain behavior. You don't have to keep reinforcing everything. It's actually necessary to change your schedule from constant reinforcement if you want to maintain a behavior. Eventually you can even just *live on the relationship* you've built. It's just like interest and investment. But punishment is like spending money on a credit card. You get quick gratification, you suppress the behavior fast. You see an immediate change. But you're going to pay in the long run with all the fallout, and eventually you're going to destroy your relationship. The person will get good at *avoiding the punishment*, the behavior will return and the lying and the hiding will begin.

It's important to remember that punishment only suppresses behavior; it doesn't make it go away completely. When behavior is punished, we just get good a avoiding the punishment, to get to the reinforcement. If the reinforcement doesn't change, when you add punishment to stop the behavior, we just get good at avoiding the punishment. Behavior is reward driven. People will just lie, or hide their behavior to avoid punishment.

So, as Dr Phil would say: "How is this working for me?" This - "reinforcement to stop lateness" - approach? Do all my employees show up on time every day?

Well now I want to talk about what the big problem is that I alluded to earlier; the big problem that causes people to occasionally come to work late even today. Because I have to admit here, most days at least one person out of the five is a few minutes late. That big problem is what I just told you: ***Behavior is reward driven.***

Why do my employees still show up late for work sometimes? What is the reward that hasn't changed? If behavior is reward driven and the reward hasn't changed. What is the reward for being late? *They get to sleep longer!* They get to stay up later the night before; they get to linger over breakfast with their boyfriends. That is all reinforcement that I can't remove. To *extinguish* a behavior, you have to remove the reinforcement for that behavior, and there is no way for me to remove that reinforcement. So has this little experiment been a failure? Absolutely not. I have experienced all kinds of unintended benefits that I never predicted because of this reinforcement approach. Wonderful things have happened that I never anticipated.

First, most days almost everyone is on time, or just a few minutes late, but still they get there before we open our doors. And you know what my staff does do now if they're going to be late? And this isn't something I've ever suggested. It's not a policy; it's just something that they do. They started it on their own, and I only noticed it after they were doing it for awhile. If one of them has some kind of emergency that is going to make them truly late, and they won't be arriving until after the shop is scheduled to open, they call another person who is scheduled to work, and let them know, and give that person a heads up. They call each other. They take responsibility for making sure someone is there on time and they call each other. Like adults. They act like responsible adults; instead of like children who have to lie and hide their behavior.

What this experiment did do was remind me of something I already knew from dog training. It reminded me *that fixing problems is not the most effective way to encourage the behavior you want.* Reacting to a problem behavior; giving it attention and trying to *fix it,* is not a good approach. Behavior is always changing, so it's much more important to appreciate the great behavior you see right now, so it doesn't go away, and as you reinforce that behavior you're also building a relationship, which you can count on in the future. You're putting money into your relationship account. There is a management guru named Tom Peters who has coined the phrase:" Catch them doing something right" and that is what I'm talking about but he didn't invent that idea. It's simple behavioral science.

Very early on I started to look for ways to use the positive reinforcement the way it works best. I started to look for the opportunities to reinforce the great behavior that the employees were giving all the time. To appreciate each one, individually for their individual talents and work, and let them know immediately, whenever possible that they did something well or handled a customer well. I tried to remember to notice and comment if they put something away that every one else had walked by, or if they took the initiative to fix a piece of equipment, or if they cleaned something that had been bugging all of us. I have rewarded people just for making us all laugh. I have rewarded them with money for saying something funny and making us laugh. We now have an additional thing we do on most Saturdays. Because Saturdays are the busiest days, I try to do anything I can to encourage everyone to want to be there on Saturdays. That's a behavioral tool called "placement of reinforcement". Placement of reinforcement can be a huge tool. For example we order out and I pay for lunch on Saturdays. We spend the worst part of Saturday, when all the dogs have checked in and we can see we still have a big day of work ahead of us; talking about what we're going to order for lunch. You know what food is? Primary reinforcement.

Also on Saturdays: We start the day with $50 - a 10, some 5s and mostly 1s, and anytime *anyone* working sees *somebody else* doing something they appreciate, they'll say: "Go get a dollar" (or a couple or 3) and they get to take the top bill(s) off the pile, which can actually be a 5 or a 10, remember variability. The main thing that *I* like to reward people for on Saturday is to make us laugh.

One week Johan did something on Friday, that Melissa liked, and she said "you get the first dollar tomorrow". So it's growing and expanding for us to notice and be appreciative of each other *all the time.*

I also try to remember that mistakes are good. As Ted Turner says: "Mistakes are good, because they mean you are trying, and you don't want to punish someone for trying." If someone makes a mistake, you don't want to punish them, or be angry. All that will accomplish is that the next time they'll avoid the punishment by not telling you. They will hide the mistake to avoid the punishment, and they may stop trying altogether. Punishment only suppresses behavior, and we just get good at avoiding the punishment!

I also have a way of using behavioral science for paid time off. My employees only get one kind of paid time off. I don't define it as sick time, personal time or vacation time. Each employee who has completed probabtion and worked for me at least 6 months accumulates paid time off according whether they are full time (8 hours accumulates for each year worked) or part time (4 hours per year worked). They receive those hours on the first day of each calendar year and they can use them however or whenever they want during that calendar year. In their pay check for the last week of each calendar year, they get paid for any unused hours that they haven't taken off. BUT before they get paid for the unused hours, they get to draw a paper from a bag, and the paper will say either "1.25", "1.50", "2.00" (variability). Their unused hours will then be multiplied by the amount that they draw. In other words, they will make MORE money for those hours, maybe even *twice* as much, if they don't actually use them to take time off. They get extra reinforcement for coming to work instead of taking time off. (In the bag there is only one "2.00" and twice as many 1.25 as 1.50)

These are just some of the ideas for this kind of an approach using behavioral science and some of the little things that we're doing in my salon to play around with using positive reinforcement. As my friend Leslie Nelson has said: "You don't get good at using positive reinforcement, you don't really get creative about using it, until you decide that you won't use punishment anymore. Taking the punishment out of your tool box will really force you to get creative, to learn behavioral the science and explore ways of using it."

If you want to learn more about the science, I have a DVD of two entire Ted Turner lectures for sale on my website: www.healthydogstore.com/

Behavioral science is a fascinating, endless, subject. You could spend the rest of your life trying to perfect its application, which is what I plan to do.

This approach has absolutely has reduced my stress level, and the stress level in the salon, but I think the biggest benefit is the way it has changed *me.* When I began making a conscious effort to notice all the behavior I appreciated, in each employee, it transformed me. It transformed me because there's only so much room in my head and when I'm working to fill it noticing what I *like* about my employees, and my customers, and the dogs I'm grooming, there's less room to perseverate about the things that irritate me. I *am* human, and we as humans are problem solvers, we tend to gravitate towards what needs to be fixed. But

understanding the behavioral science has given me a rational basis for *attempting to not work that way*; to not manage my staff by reacting to problems. It has transformed me from being a dictator, getting frustrated always trying to make things get done my way, into what I hope is a benevolent leader. ***It changed my perception of my employees, from people I had to manipulate and coerce into doing a good job - people that I kind of I resented needing to make money - into people that I truly love.*** I love them each individually, for all the wonderful qualities they each bring to my business and to my life.

Relationship is a 2-way street, and that's why this presentation is so close to my heart.