

Functional or Dysfunctional?

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The following list of pack function performance is what Kyle considers of use and value. Degrees of responsiveness less than this list can often prove problematic in your relationship and activities with your dog.

1. A dog **cannot STAY unless** it can do so for 5 minutes or more.
2. A dog **cannot HEEL unless** you can throw the leash over your shoulder and only have to give a tug once in awhile.
3. A dog **cannot COME unless** you can call it and have it respond 99% of the time on your timetable.

All dogs should be able to do the above mentioned— to the extent of distractions that they will encounter in their weekly lives given the four seasons in repeated trials. Without that your dog is not safe and depending on how much you involve your dog with your activities, neither is your sanity. These standards are high but attainable and we need to be doing training that is going to work! Not just teach a cute crowd pleaser on a mechanical level for a few minutes in an environment that will not help you reach your goals.

All of this does not mean that you cannot be affectionate with your dog. It means that you need to be conscious of how you structure your relationship to maximize your life together. I love my dogs dearly and allow them to do many things that people pay me to teach their dogs is very bad in their own lives— sleep in the bed, jump up on me and charge out the door first. All these behaviors are common place in my home with my dogs. Everybody's lives are different and training needs to be tailored to a person's lifestyle within the limits of still having the dog respect their owner's/handler's needs. There is nothing wrong with being a loving caregiver as long as they are not getting rewarded for behaviors you view as bad.