

....  
....



Snezha, my first Search & Rescue dog, as we won our first the National Championship in 1980. He was so inspired by the musical fanfares applauding our victory that he wanted to join with his own howling, much to the amusement of everybody.

I owe Snezha a lot. He went through all kinds of training experiments with me. Whenever I learned about a new exercise, or thought of one, he was the first to try it! The number of commands he learned comes close to 100...

He had no outstanding natural talents that made him special - except his willingness to learn - which isn't special at all: all dogs have it. And that willingness increased for every new thing he learned from me! One of the best ways for me to make him excited soon became teaching him a new trick or a new exercise.

He was living proof that no dog ever gets too old to learn new tricks. When he died of heart failure at age 17, it happened while we were training a new trick...

### ***The effect of nosework***

In 1981, after finishing University, I moved to a new town where I got a job that was quite demanding. At the same time, my wife got a job that also exhausted her. We had fenced the yard and given our three dogs a "doggy door" so they could roam the entire house and yard as they wanted, so we did not feel too bad about not having as much time for the dogs as we previously had.

But our neighbors weren't happy. The young couple on one side had a baby, and this baby had trouble sleeping, because our dogs barked almost all day in the yard. Everything that moved got barked at....

My wife and I did not know until, one day, the husband came over and asked us to at least keep the dogs inside the house when we left them home alone. I understood the problem and immediately suspected that the dogs were bored. I had been used to them sleeping all day at my feet when I was studying - and they had been used to being trained quite intensively at least two or three times a week when I took them to Search & Rescue dog training or Competition training. With my flexible schedule at university, it was easy to find the time for this - but when bound by a job, it was a tough commitment to maintain.

Now, training three active dogs every morning before I left for work was a bit much - but I wanted to give it a try. I cut corners, though. Instead of taking them out an hour for a bike ride, I cut the bike ride down to half an hour and decided to spend half an hour on training them.

The dogs were all trained to find and retrieve articles with human scent on, and I knew from all our competition matches that 10-15 minutes of search work with the nose for small articles, like a pencil in a yard with fairly high grass, would exhaust them. Three times ten minutes every morning would give each dog ten minutes intensive nosework - and it was within what I could commit to.

I did not tell the neighbor about this plan, but I promised that I would solve the problem with the barking...

And I did.

Five days later, the neighbor phoned. He was devastated and could hardly find words for his apology - he did not mean his complaint to be a demand for putting the dogs down...!

When I understood what he meant, I laughed! He was a bit upset - because he did not have a clue. We made friends again as I explained the situation to him.

What happened was this: after I did the ten minutes intensive nosework with each dog early every morning before I went to work, the dogs slept all day in the house! Because of the fence, the young couple did not notice that I took all three dogs out for a bike ride every evening when I came home from work. They only noticed that there was no more barking.

The poor couple felt guilty about having "forced" us to get rid of the dogs. They were very delighted to know how simple the solution was...

**Please consider this: 10 minutes intensive nosework in exchange for a whole day of nuisance barking!**

[Back to start of this section](#)

[Back to start of this chapter](#)

### ***Using brainwork to solve problem behavior***

Most dog trainers know very well that dogs bark when they are frustrated. We all know that frustration is a stress factor. Boredom is a very strong reason for frustration. So, boredom causes barking.

But, when a dog can get "pooped" for a full day after doing just 10 minutes "sniffing around" in a yard when it is ready to play or bark all day after an hour's ride beside the bike, then it gets obvious that the main reason for a dog resting is not that it is *physically* tired. Being *mentally* tired is far more important - and mental activity is a much stronger way of activating a dog than physical exercise...

I discussed this concept with many of my dog friends and trainer colleagues. They all had similar experiences. Their dogs were generally well-behaved, but when they weren't, there was always an element of "no time for training" in the problem. They all knew that they could not reduce the dog's daily walks and general exercise, so when time was short, it was the "extravaganza", the training, which was put aside till "better times".

The most obvious results came from my Search & Rescue team. We generally met every second Sunday to train. We trained all day. Tracking and Search were always high priorities, and we did a lot of it. We all experienced that our dogs were extremely quiet Monday and Tuesday after a training day. But only after those Sundays we trained!

....  
....