

canine questions

By Sharon Harvey

Q How do I get my dog, Brutus, to come when I call him? I have a fenced yard so he can't run away, but whenever I'm in a hurry to leave the house, he won't come inside—especially if he has found deer poop to roll in. Any ideas?

A Let's start by putting yourself in his paws. You're outside, enjoying the fresh air, romping and playing, chasing squirrels, rolling in the most pungent poop you've ever found, and someone calls you to go inside, gives you an impatient pat on the head, then deserts you. What would you do? Right, you probably wouldn't come either.

Then, think about your routine. If your dog has learned that coming to you means instant abandonment, change your daily drill. Let him out to potty, call him in, give him an extra special toy or treat while you shower,

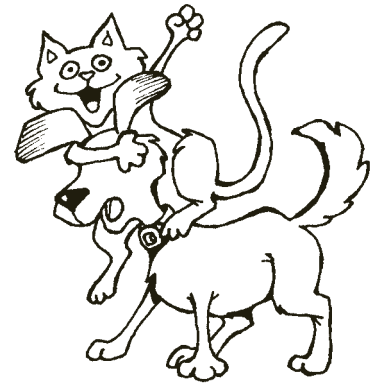


There are a number of things you can do to change his outlook on coming when called. First, NEVER get angry when he finally comes to you, even when he takes his sweet time. Start by practicing in an area where there are no distractions and where he can't opt to ignore you. It's a good idea to have him on a leash just so he can't run off. Practice "come" over and over and over again until you've logged so many repetitions he doesn't believe he has any other choice. Always, always, always give him an extra special goodie whenever he comes. Start with him close to you and gradually increase the distance. Once he comes reliably from a distance with no distractions, reduce the distance and introduce distractions. Gradually rebuild distance and reintroduce a variety of distractions. Your main mission is to become more interesting and desirable than anything your dog may find in your yard—including the poop.



dress and eat. Allow him to have time for fun after he has come back in the house. If you think he'll need to go out again before you leave, take him out on a leash. Sometimes the easiest training approach is simple management.

As for that poop, scoop it and throw it over the fence—sorry, you'll NEVER win that battle!



If you're having a problem with your cat or dog, call the Rescue Village HelpLine at 440.338.4819, ext. 13 or send an e-mail to askthetrainer@geaugahumane.org. We'll help you solve your problem or refer you to someone who can. The most frequently asked questions will find their way into the Rescue Village Reporter's Ask the Trainer column or onto Q104's Ask the Trainer radio segment that can be heard on Sunday's Wilde & Fee Morning Show during the 8 o'clock hour.

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To shelter and find homes for sick, injured, abused, and abandoned domestic animals that have no other alternatives

To foster compassion for all living things through education

To reduce pet overpopulation through spay/neuter programs

To prevent cruelty by advocating and enforcing animal protection laws