

Ruby as shot by KMorgan Photography



## Training Tip: Don't Let Your Leash Speak for You

### You Are Your Dog's Guide

Suppose you were in a foreign country with a tour guide. Your guide is leading you down streets crowded with other tourists, stopping now and then to point out the sights, turning corners and keeping up a brisk pace. He's speaking to you, but only sporadically, and his accent is kinda thick and there's a lot of street noise.

You don't want to get lost, so even though the sights and sounds of this exotic city are very compelling, even though your first instinct is to lose yourself in the newness of it all, you focus on controlling these impulses and remember to keep your eyes on your guide. You glance casually around, taking in a shop window here or a savory smell there, but you don't allow your gaze linger too long or stop to read any menus.

Your top priority is staying with your guide. You trust him to show you the best sights and keep you out of trouble; you can tell he knows his stuff by how confidently he navigates these strange streets. In fact, the longer you follow him, the more you find yourself admiring his skill and competence, and the happier you are to defer to his

judgement at every step. Besides, without him you might never make it back to the hotel.

So you learn quickly to check in with him visually every second or two, begin to pick up on his body cues, small gestures that tell you what's happening next. And you listen carefully for his voice, amidst all the city sounds, in case he's offering some instruction.

### What Your Leash Is Telling Your Dog Behind Your Back

Now suppose you were connected to your guide by a four-foot rope, connected to a belt around your waist or maybe a harness. He might still be giving you all the same cues, subtle changes in posture or direction, little hand signals, and verbal instructions; but the need to focus on those cues is entirely gone.

Thanks to the rope, you cannot lose your guide. You may allow yourself to get drawn in by the sights, sounds and smells around you. You may take a break from watching and listening, since the rope never fails to correct your course no matter how distracted you become. All you really need to do is

listen to *it*; the rest you may safely tune out. Sure, the rope is a little uncomfortable at times, but it's so much easier to heed *it's* cues than to pay attention to all that other, subtler communication. Hey, did that guy just make a wisecrack about your hat?! Maybe you should say something.... Ow, there goes that rope. You know, that guide's a bit rough. The more you think about it, the more you might like to see a little of this town without him nagging at you. Grrrrr.

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Senior Knuckles



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## How To Keep Your Leash from Getting In The Way

Do you worry that your leash is getting between you and your dog?

Teaching your dog to respect a slack leash will automatically encourage greater awareness of other cues. Every dog can learn to do this with a little training. That said, expecting your dog to walk on a slack leash means giving him one, and weaning yourself off using the leash as your primary mode of communication.

If you're serious about taking the leash out of the equation, don't settle for a no-pull harness or training collar that only cuts down on the pulling. No piece of equipment, no matter how clever or expensive, will train your dog for you (fortunately for us trainers). If there is continual tension on the leash, even light tension, it's entirely likely your dog is "listening" to your leash more than he's listening for or looking at you.

Training aids can be invaluable in many cases, but choosing the right tool for your dog can be perplexing. Dogs are individuals and therefore respond differently from one another to training aids and protocols.

## Take Back the Conversation

Some things, however, are universal.

Take every opportunity to encourage and enforce attentiveness and responsiveness to body language and vocal cues. If you say your dog's name and he looks around, praise

him up. If you're out for a walk and you want to change direction, try saying "Let's go" and leading the way (with that air of confidence that says you just expect him to follow), rather than steering him silently with the leash.

By using your voice to get your dog's attention and cuing him with your body language (posture, direction) to follow along, you'll be taking steps to take back control of the conversation between you.

—Ruth Crisler

For personal instruction, please call us or email a trainer at [www.seespotrunkennel.com](http://www.seespotrunkennel.com)

## Band Leader and Pit Bull Owner Jeff Morrison Puts the Fun into Fundraising

It takes something special to get me out of the house, what with the kennel and a new baby. But I made time to step out last month to hear client Jeff Morrison's jazz quartet at The Local Option as part of a fundraiser for Chicago area rescue groups. Jeff teamed up with fellow pit bull lover Karen Morgan of KMorgan Photography to decorate the space with stunning larger-than-life-size photographs of pit bulls as part of her own pit bull awareness project, Not My Pit Bull.

Best part? Jeff and his crew raised a bunch of money for this city's neediest dogs. So mark your calendars, because Jeff's band is playing for Chicago canines at The Local Option again on **Thursday, December 10th, at 8PM**. Be there or be square!

## What's New at See Spot Run

Networking and Bulletin Board  
Support fellow responsible dog owners by visiting one of the many fabulous client owned businesses around town. Looking for a Pilates studio, florist, or bakery? Check out the new bulletin board in See Spot Run's office.

## The Turkey Dog?

Many breeds of dog are used to hunt wild turkeys. The closest thing to a "true turkey dog" was bred in the 1960s by Virginia cattle farmer John Byrne. Now called the Appalachian Turkey Dog, it was developed by crossing a pointer with an English setter and a Plott hound.



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## In the Spot Light

### Asrai Garden

So, Asrai Garden was on my radar way before its owner Elizabeth Cronen got one of the funniest dogs ever, a French-English Bulldog mix with ears like a bat and the belly of a Buddha.

Asrai is where I've found just about every birthday, wedding or holiday gift I've ever given, from orchids to art pottery to hand-knit Alpaca wool mittens (crafted, no kidding, by Elizabeth's mom). It is where I look for unusual accents



for our Vintage Industrial meets Eco-Sustainable decor, like the bronze antler candlesticks that deck the table every holiday season, or the hanging glass votive holders in the bathroom.

And needless to say, Asrai Garden was one of my first stops after getting engaged to my husband of five years now. That Elizabeth makes a mean wedding bouquet!

*-Ruth Crisler*



Elizabeth Cronen talking flowers inside Asrai Garden

### Behind the Blooms

I started Asrai Garden in 1999 with no idea what it meant to be a business owner...I was twenty-two. For the last ten years I have been lucky enough to have a shop in an ever changing and most interesting neighborhood where much of my history growing up in Chicago lies. I have learned what it means to love what you do in such an intense way that your clients become your family and the ninety hour work weeks that come with owning a perishable business and being responsible for a bride's big day do not even phase you. I feel like one of the luckiest people alive to have found my passion at such an early age and I am grateful for every day I get to create beauty in the lives of others.

When I do get a few moments out of flower land...they are spent with the most adorable duo ever, Donkey and Knuckles. These two get much more play time with dad (my super-wonderful boyfriend Jeremy), but every so often I get in on a sweet round of "Kill the Basketball", which is Donkey's favorite game in the world, and which happens to be quite funny since her torso is approximately the size of the basketball). And sometimes I get to witness the "fancy lad prance", which is Senior Knuckles' specialty.

*-Elizabeth Cronen*



# See Spot Run

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4:30 - 7:30 PM

SAT  
8:00 - 10:00 AM

SUN  
5:00 - 7:00 PM

## Staff

Ruth Crisler

Keith Herzik  
Donyel Buckner  
Retschi Weiner  
David Orozco  
Chris Butner  
Daniel Marz  
Antonio Canas



## KMorgan Photography

We pet care folks see an awful lot of cute pet photography, but Morgan's work truly stands out for its artistry and creativity.

As if that weren't enough, Morgan's own dogs Lenny and Ruby have attended daycare and training classes at See Spot Run. In fact, Ruby is the ultra-photogenic daughter of See Spot Run staff member David Orozco's champion Pit Bull Tequila.

## Immortalize Your Best Friend

Few of us have money to burn these days, but the value of immortalizing your best

friend in a work of art photography is hard to measure. Sign up this month to join See Spot Run's Class of 2009 and capture your dog's unique personality in all its whimsy and dignity.

## Not My Pit Bull

Morgan is currently working on a photo essay that will help to demonstrate the true character, sensitivity, and loving nature of this widely misunderstood breed. If you love a pit bull and are concerned about the image of this breed, visit [www.notmypitbull.com](http://www.notmypitbull.com) for more details.

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