

Life Lessons learnt from The Dog Whisperer

(This article does not go in depth into the why's, please see my other articles to understand my reasoning and the training and experience that support my views. Likewise watch The Dog Whisperer to understand Cesar's methods more)

I love the dog whisperer not only because I love dogs and see no such thing as a lost cause, but because I've learnt so much about life as well as about dogs. Not only does he teach that energy is everything but I have found so many parallels between dogs and the way our minds work. Plus Cesar Milan is a great example of how to be at ease in the world, no matter what goes on around you.

So here is what I learnt:

1. Dogs are the happiest and least stressed when they are followers, and only take charge when no-one else does. This role then makes them anxious, and sometimes aggressive, as they try to control everyone around them in order to protect their pack. This is a lot of responsibility and stress.

The mind is very much like this also. It is not meant to be in charge of you, but it had to take control because you didn't know to trust your instincts. And being in control makes the mind anxious and become manic or aggressive (to yourself or others). It becomes worse the less you do as it says too, eg ignoring it's criticism or fearful thoughts. Sometimes your poor mind is running in circles barking at you to stop you from perceived danger, even though that danger is often false. And just as dogs get worse if they are challenged with the wrong energy –so does your mind.

Our natural state is to follow our instincts. They call our gut the second brain because not only does it house the most nerve endings but the brain also sends some info to it for processing. Our unconscious mind processes sensory input very quickly and your instinct shows it's decision, only we don't hear it because our minds are so busy, slowly mulling over what has already been processed! The mind is then supposed to follow your instincts. I'm often reminded of this when I trust my gut and solve a problem, then have to wait for everyone else to think about it and come to the same conclusion, lol. Even top scientists and business men base decisions on hunches or what they 'just know' without going through a conscious process. And in this state we are at most peace. The mind becomes anxious when it is in charge, doing a job it isn't designed for, replaying the past and fretting over the future. If we trust out instincts we can stay in the moment and know that our mind will alert us to the messages our instincts tell. The mind

is also then free to relax and play, just as the dogs on The Dog Whisperer do once they return to being a follower.

2. On the Dog Whisperer Cesar teaches that dogs will only give up the pack leader position once they trust you and you give off a calm energy. The mind is the same, it needs to trust you will be OK without it's control and whilst you are in any negative state it will see you as weak and stay in charge. Likewise even if you are usually calm and trusting your instincts, as soon as you feel stressed your mind jumps back in charge. Now of course part of the problem with this is that it is our mind that causes our negative state in the first place, but it doesn't get that!!

When Cesar first works with a dog and takes control it resists because it doesn't trust yet or know how else to be, and it usually kicks up a tantrum to get back control. If ever you've tried to control your mind you'll know it does exactly the same!! But Cesar stays calm and patient, not getting angry or frustrated with the dog but rather getting it to relax. This is the best way to calm your mind too. Patience and staying calm. If you get frustrated or annoyed with your mind it actually will tantrum more. Plus you have to remember your mind has been in control for most of your life so far so it is bound to take time to give it up. But when it trusts it will easily give it up, just as the dogs Cesar works with really do want to give it up when they feel safest to. I can attest to this as the minute I stopped fighting my mind and stayed calm then it was easier to think less and hear my instincts. Plus the more my instincts were proved right the more my mind trusted them.

3. Cesar also teaches that you wait until a dog is calm before you acknowledge him, or before you give him a command, otherwise you reward the negative state. This is true for the mind too, I teach people to sit and get still before they do anything, and especially before they make decisions. If you start from an agitated mind then it is hard to think clearly. Negative states put you, as Cesar says, in a flight, fight or avoidance state – none of which allow you to be your best, nor allows you to react to situations well.

The practical applications of this are that you can have fun using Cesar's techniques on your mind! Eg. the minute my mind stated getting anxious or manic I would say 'Sshht' to distract it (also helps that it made me laugh) and then let my thoughts go.

Of course this all might be partly in jest but it also is very true. We don't pay attention to our minds and what keeps them healthy and balanced, and how to

get the most out of them. We just let it run free, be in charge and then complain and blame it for our woes, or say it can't be helped. Just as in all the dogs Cesar works with – it isn't the dog and there is no such thing as a lost cause, the same applies to our minds. We can learn how to get the best out of ourselves or not.

4. Another thing we can learn from Cesar is that energy is everything. Dogs react instantly to the energy you project (e-motions are just energy in motion so you can think of energy as your emotional state). The dogs behave inline with your state, the second you change state then the dog behaves differently. This is shown beautifully on every show. The same is true for everything in life, what happens is influenced by your energy. People read others mainly by the energy (or vibe) they give off, the words are a very small part of it. I teach how to get along with anyone and a big part of it is you being able to stay calm no matter how someone else behaves, and then they relax too and change their behaviour. Martial artists also know that the key to their success is being able to stay calm and trust their instincts, in fact any top performer or athlete knows this (it's also called being in the zone).

Interestingly people are often unaware of their energy, I hear people say they have tried Cesar's techniques but that they just didn't work, but I know that person is really frustrated when they say they are calm. Likewise in life.

5. I also remember one show where he said the dog didn't trust the owner when it was being fake because he could sense it, and that's true for humans too. The more relaxed you are in yourself, the more true you are to yourself, then the more people trust you. I know this as I often have worked with people who are deemed difficult and found them to be a pleasure as long as I am calm and assertive. Just like dogs, humans sense negative energy as weak and try to manipulate it, whether through aggression, verbal tactics, withdrawing or playing a victim role (see the free guide on my website for more info). Once people see that you stay calm no matter what they do they give up and relax, which brings out the best in them and is much nicer to be with too. Unfortunately humans take longer to rehabilitate though because our minds keep us in the past or future, unlike dogs who only react to now!!

6. As I said at the start Cesar is a wonderful example of how to be in the world, and how staying calm, assertive and patient gets the best results. You can read about this, and even get taught it, but seeing it in action can often make it seem more real. He also is extremely compassionate and non-judgemental towards the owners, just finding ways to connect with them and help them grow. This is also the state you will find most peace and joy in, and it's something we can all learn.

Just imagine being able to stay at peace no matter what goes on around you, and influence it for the better without getting angry or upset?

So next time you watch The Dog Whisperer think about how you can apply the principles to your own life.

In summary:

- Your energy influences the situation you are in. The more calm and assertive you are, the better things will go. And if things don't go well check your energy first as you probably aren't calm and assertive, even if you think you are.
- Your mind is not meant to be in charge of you and think so much, it is meant to be calm and used when you need to think, be a follower to your instincts.
- In order to bring balance to your mind, and therefore yourself, you need to gain it's trust and be patient. Your energy affects it too (but remember that your energy is created by how you think, so it becomes a vicious cycle)
- Get a calm mind before you do anything or react to anything.
- Learn to be calm and assertive no matter what goes on around you.
- And most of all – have an open mind to learn how to be the best you can be.

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Kathryn Hodgson is trained in NLP Psychotherapy and Evo-K, amongst other things. She also has extensive experience working with people in business, drug rehabs, the criminal justice system, with young people and in mental health.

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