

BODY, MIND, AND HEART

Cesar Millan's Success Formula for Bonding with your Dog

By Judy Huston

“I do believe the dogs are connected to the universe, and I also believe that dogs serve the divine order of the universe. I believe dogs are here to serve a purpose. Just like us. The difference is that we have the power to create what it is that we want of them and for them. We have the power to create what we want them to mean to us. My mission is to help humans to fulfill dogs' needs as much as dogs so obviously fulfill ours.”

~Cesar Millan

I love dogs with a passion. They have been a blessing in my life as long as I can remember. They are a way of life for me and for many of us. Life wouldn't be as sweet if we couldn't share it with our loyal companions.

As I write this, my four dogs are asleep in their favorite spots in my loft office. Kyra, my White Shepherd, and my inspiration for most of the good things I've accomplished with dogs, is at my feet. The feeling I have as I sit here and try to put into words the affect Cesar Millan has had on our lives is gratitude, peace, and contentment.

It is my nature to delve deeply into anything that I'm passionate about. This interest includes anything to do with dogs of all breeds, but particularly our White Shepherds. Take this interest in dogs and combine it with my study of human psychology and temperaments, and it makes sense that Cesar Millan would appeal to me. Cesar operates the Dog Psychology Center in Los Angeles and he rehabilitates dogs and trains people. His Success Formula works like nothing I've experienced before, although other trainers like Sam Malatesta, Brenda Aloff and others contributed a great deal to our learning process.

I've always had a heartfelt need to understand my dogs better. Since we got our Golden mix, Abby, almost 13 years ago, I've been on the journey to learn more about the human/dog bond. Abby is the first dog I trained beyond household obedience. Bits and pieces of things I read or heard made sense to me and worked with my dogs, but even when someone seemed to have the answer for their particular dog, they weren't always able to communicate it in a way that would work for us. And, most importantly, most of what I learned and experienced from books, camps, clinics, and seminars had to do with “training.” Little, if any, addressed understanding my dogs and developing this almost magical bond I was looking for.

There were trainers I'll always be indebted to that helped me get to the place where I was able to hear and understand Cesar and finally, achieve that elusive

dream of an almost perfect bond of understanding with Kyra. If we'd been given a little more time, it is possible we could have evolved into a true working team in the herding arena. She always had the potential. It just took me a long time to catch up with her.

After watching Cesar on National Geographic a couple of times, I realized what a spiritual and gifted man he is and I set a goal to meet him and learn from him. So, in April of 2005, we had the privilege of hosting a seminar by Cesar with 307 people in attendance. The "icing on the cake" was that the day after the seminar, Cesar and his wonderful wife, Ilusion, came to our home to spend the day with the volunteer team and their dogs. This is where we all experienced his magic first hand.

Part of the elusive dream for me was to experience my relationship with Kyra in a balanced way with her trusting my leadership versus the challenges I had to deal with because of "spoiling" her with too much affection and the wrong discipline. We always did fairly well with exercise. I wanted to "complete" my relationship with Kyra and experience not only the love that poured freely from her, but have her respect. Miracles of miracles, I got this. Thank you Cesar.

Kyra was a high-energy dog and she loved to work. With the almost four years of damage to her body pre and post surgery, I didn't know if she would maintain health and be able to be part of the Cesar experience. She was not only able to go to the seminar with me and have a picture taken with Cesar and her half-sibling, Luger, and niece, Kimber, and nephew, Lazer, but she was in fine form for the next-day training event at our home. I was in heaven.

I'll always be grateful we had our wonderful weekend with a dog's best friend, Cesar Millan.

Note: Sadly, Kyra died suddenly on June 26, 2005. She started out the day in high energy and looked as beautiful as usual. After taking a swim in the late afternoon, she began to show some symptoms of trouble. By early evening, she did one last wonderful thing for me, she left for the Rainbow Bridge without me having to make the decision that it was "time" and without us having to go through any more tests or surgeries. I will always miss her, but I will always have her memories and her legacy of love, learning, and loyalty. She will always be at my side and in my heart. She was nine years, nine months old.