



Dog whisperer Ben Carter began training Matilda, an Aussie Sheherd, when she was just a puppy

Meet Ben Carter

The Sugar Land Dog Whisperer

As a certified behaviorist, this calm and cool dog trainer communicates with Fort Bend canines

Written by Michelle Johnson | Photography by Taryn Burnett

Ben Carter's true passion for animals was revealed after he faced losing his job in the oil industry after an economic downturn in 1996. Carter says, "I've had animals all my life. I got my first dog when I was 2 years old." By the time he was 10, he discovered a natural talent for connecting with dogs which would later turn into a career.

"I had a gift for communicating with animals - some people refer to this as dog whispering," he says. "I never dreamed that I would end up doing this for a living."

A New Start

It began when a friend of Carter offered him a job at a kennel. Employees at the kennel began to notice Carter's ease of communicating with the animals - even the tough cases that many others had given up on.

"There was a Rottweiler that everyone was afraid of. No one wanted to get him out of the kennel," Carter says. "I just walked up, told him to calm down, and took him out of the kennel." Carter gave him a bath and walked the dog around the facility. "After a while, this so-called 'aggressive dog' was following me around," he says. "Everyone was surprised."

Teaching Others How to Talk

Soon the kennel sent Carter to different locations to teach employees how to deal with aggressive dogs without fear. Carter also had the opportunity to observe the techniques of other dog trainers.

After hearing about Triple Crown Academy and visiting the school, Carter decided to attend. "I really liked what they had to offer. They had great trainers there," he says. "I decided that I wanted to be part of it." After attending an intensive training and behavioral science program at the school, he returned to put his new skills to work.

Facing Tough Cases

Carter took all of the different techniques he observed from other great trainers and formed his own system for training dogs. "My main belief is that dogs are like children," he says. "Some accelerate faster than others; some have to be taken down other avenues. Every case is different."

There have been a few special cases when training an animal was not so easy for him. He was called to help a family with two very aggressive Rottweilers. The dogs would jump at the large, glass-plate front window when people walked by the home.

Carter says, "The owners feared the dogs would break through the window - injuring themselves and possibly unsuspecting passersby." During his first visit to the family's home, one of the dogs bit him and drug him across the room. "Even after being bit by the dog, I went back - refusing to give up. After six months, the dogs no longer charged at the window."

Training Takes Time

Carter now offers in-home training tailored to the needs of his clients. "There are no quick fixes," he says. "Imprinting specific behavior patterns takes time."

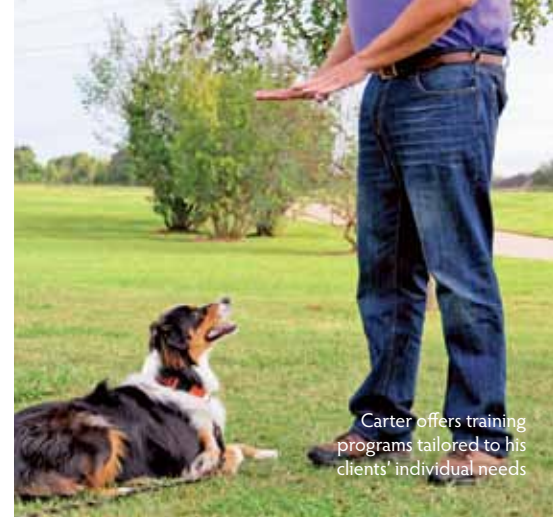
He offers behavior problem-solving using techniques including whispering. As a motivational, non-violent method of training, whispering is based on repetition and positive reinforcement. A dog trainer watches, listens, and develops an understanding of the dog's actions and needs. Dog training has to be consistent and reliable.

There are other methods that can be used - such as clicker training. This training method uses a plastic clicking device which is used to mark correct behavior and is followed by a reward. This tactic is a positive, reward-based method. It again requires repetition and positive reinforcement. **SLM**

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**5
TIPS**
for
Well-behaved
Pets

1. Train early
2. Be consistent
3. Use positive reinforcement
4. Use short commands
5. Practice often



Carter offers training programs tailored to his clients' individual needs

Carter trains dogs at local Sugar Land parks



Carter has had a strong connection with animals since childhood, which led to his dream career