



## ASK A TRAINER — THUNDERSTORM PHOBIA

*My dog is afraid of fireworks and thunder. He always whines, shakes and pants when they happen. Is there anything we can do to make this easier on him?*



The old recommendation to ignore your dog during these times is no longer the first choice of some trainers. Instead, the use of Classical Counter-Conditioning has shown to be a very effective way to change unwanted behavior. By pairing something the dog fears – thunder, noises, etc – with a something the dog enjoys (treats, play, petting, etc), the dog will come to associate the bad thing with the good.

When starting, you want to have the fear stimulus low. You also want the enjoyable item to be *really* good, such as cooked chicken or liver—as opposed to his kibble—or use his

best and most favorite toy.

When you start Counter-Conditioning for thunderstorms, start the recording softly. As soon as it starts, reward your dog by dropping treats, giving praise, and staying calm and happy. Do this for around 5 min. When you are done training, put away the treats or toy. If your dog didn't whine, shake, or pant, and he ignored the recording, then for the next training session you can try to turn the volume up a little. Do not rush this. If your dog did show signs of stress, keep the volume the same or turn it a little quieter. Once your dog no longer stresses, you can turn the volume up a little. Work on this daily, or a couple times a day.



Your dog should come to associate thunderstorms with treats and fun.

Of course, the real test comes during the next thunderstorm or



fireworks. If you know one is coming, try to give your dog plenty of exercise that day, so he is tired and will hopefully fall asleep during the event. When the thunder starts, remember to have the treats or toy ready. Stay calm and happy, do not be nervous.

If his thunder phobia is severe, there are other methods – pheromone therapy, comfort wraps, acupuncture, or medication—you should talk to a veterinarian or a trainer who specializes in behavior modification.

*Victoria is the owner of [DarkSaber Dog Training & Behavior Modification](#), APDT & CGC Evaluator*



Do you have a question about dogs you would like answered next month? [Email Victoria!](#)

## AFFIRMATIONS

By Cera

I am working on a new affirmation list. For the last 5 years I have had an affirmation list of 50 positive affirmations and I am supposed to say them eyeball to eyeball in the mirror 5 times a day. It doesn't always happen like that, but since I have the list memorized (it takes about 1.5 minutes to steam through it), I do find myself repeating it if not in the mirror. Every now and then I switch my affirmations around, find new ones to challenge me and realize that many of them I have really truly become. It is

pretty cool.

A lot of people I know don't really care for affirmations. Some think they are far too Pollyannaish. Some don't think they can say them unless they believe them. Some say they dumb-down treatment and just don't work. I've been in treatment facilities where the staff require affirmations to be said, but obviously don't believe them themselves.

I was fortunate to attend a program that really does believe in the affirmation, the staff says their own affirmations, and you are challenged

to combat every negative intrusive thought by an affirmation. A negative intrusive thought are those comments that you hear in your head about yourself that have somehow become implanted... 'you are a screw up.' you have to be perfect'. 'you should never have been born'... These thoughts somehow became 'beliefs of self' and have repeated themselves over and over again to the point that they do change the way we think, act, and view the world. Affirmations are the way to combat those negative mental messages. It's not easy

*(Continued on page 2)*



## AFFIRMATIONS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

though and takes a lot of work, but if said enough they seem to internally battle away at those negative messages (the program I went to called them 'abuser values' because they were put on us by our abusers).

The fact is that doing affirmations has not turned me into a Pollyanna. I call myself a 'realist' (some people call that an excuse to be expecting, at any moment, the doomsday bomb). It has shifted some of my thinking, though. I am now much more confident of myself, gentle with myself, and a protector of myself. I am much less likely to shut up, sit down, and listen to the negative messages that held me captive for so long. When I first started doing affirmations I thought they were stupid and I didn't believe them. I was told they were 'future truths about myself' and that all I had to do was say them and in time I would believe or become them. I have found that to be true. For the ones I have nixed over time I have come to know that just isn't 'me' and doesn't have to be (I embrace my femininity for me is a good example). Others I never thought I would believe until one day I realized I believed it more than I ever thought possible. For example, the affirmation "I find safe ways to be seen, heard, and validated for me." turned around the day I realized that not only do I believe that is true, but I actually see, hear, and validate myself. That was a huge one!

Here are a few others that have become who I am:  
I live in my own safe place for me. (creating a safe 'home' has been a huge goal of mine and long coming).  
I keep my space clean and organized for me. (that was a huge challenge that I have achieved).  
I keep my word to myself for me.

(nothing tics me off more than when someone gets in the way of that now. Before I would have never considered I was worth even giving my word to).

I express my anger effectively for me. (yeah, huge process and I had no idea how to do that when I wrote that one)  
I have the courage to work through my fear for me (every day).

These last five years have been a total re-start to my life. I can't say how things would have been without the affirmations, but I cringe to think how life would have been without the treatment I received. I'm not saying the last five years have been great...oh my, huge setbacks. There is a lot more ground to cover still. As I said, I am far from a Pollyanna and reflecting like this is a stretch, but I did want to acknowledge what saying affirmations has done for me.

Here is my current affirmation list:

1. I am valuable and worthwhile to me, for me.
2. I have courage to work through my fears for me.
3. I meet my needs in healthy ways for me.
4. I accept change for me.
5. I keep my word to myself for me.
6. I express my anger effectively for me.
7. I trust myself for me.
8. I create a home of peace for me.
9. I feel my feelings for me.
10. I live in my own safe place for me.
11. I allow my voice to speak for me.
12. I remain true to myself for me.
13. I attend to my spiritual needs for me.
14. I accept the truths of my past without judgment for me.
15. I listen to my whole self for me.
16. I nurture myself for me.
17. I connect to my body for me.
18. I am present even when it hurts

for me.

19. I love and cherish my whole self for me.
  20. I give words to my feelings and experiences for me.
  21. I allow others their decisions, responsibilities, and consequences for me.
  22. I use my voice to speak for me.
  23. I find safe ways to be seen, heard, and validated for me.
  24. I protect myself for me.
  25. I treat myself with kindness and compassion for me.
  26. I let go of controlling the uncontrollable for me.
  27. I create safety within myself for me.
  28. I am vulnerable for me.
  29. I allow myself to make mistakes for me.
  30. I forgive myself for me.
  31. I allow myself to rest for me.
  32. I create a sense of safety for me.
  33. I eat regular and nutritious meals for me.
  34. I am proud of me for me.
  35. I live by the healthy boundaries I have set for me.
  36. I shower for me.
  37. I love my body for me. (can't say I believe this one at all right now)
  38. I work my recovery for me.
  39. I am creative for me.
  40. I set attainable goals for me.
  41. I ask for help when I need it for me.
  42. I believe me for me.
  43. I am glad that I am alive for me.
  44. I embrace my flaws for me.
  45. I have healthy relationships for me.
  46. I allow others their feelings and beliefs for me.
  47. I take responsibility for only my decisions, actions, and feelings for me.
  48. I will slow down and breath for me.
  49. I listen to and value my instincts for me.
  50. I grieve the losses of my life safely for me.
- Cera is a volunteer with Karl's Kids Program and is partnered with a beautiful SD named Hope.*



# IN MEMORY OF...

## ... KAYLEE CHEYENNE HCT "K.C."

Shared her life with N. Baker,  
KsKs Board of Directors

May 7, 2001 - May 25, 2009



Photo by Amaruq

KC was a dog who loved life, and loved sharing her joy with anyone who needed it. KC showed others the way to abandon oneself to pure wholesome pleasure, and she showed the way to trust. KC's strength, and sense of her own inner strength, was what she loved to share. She could sense when someone needed her solid,

dependable calm, and readily shared all that she was. Her passions for herding woolly sheep, and plunging with joyous abandon into any body of water, showed the sparkling spirit that she was. She wanted YOU to have fun, too. Dependability, rock-solid inner strength, natural shepherding instincts, love of life-- and a caring heart.

All of KC's sense of self was in caring for a flock, human, ovine or canine. Sometimes she ministered her care by being the rock of strength, her ruff absorbing shed tears, her shoulders there for a hug... other times, she would be the doggy version of "Patch Adams," using her quirky antics to bring out healing laughter. She knew. KC always, somehow, just KNEW. Thank you, Kaylee Cheyenne (KC) for bringing your strength, healing, and humor to those who needed it the most. May your spirit run free, we love you forever.

~ Patti Menzel



Photo by Jamie



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### Upcoming Events

Friday, June 12—KsKs Fun In The Sun Safety Workshop for the Putnam County Jr Masters Gardening Daycamp

Saturday, June 13—KsKs booth at Palatka Library

Saturday, June 20—KsKs booth at HSNF dog wash and yard sale

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Kid Safety To Pet Care Tips

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