

Abracadabra! The Magic of Start Buttons

Eva Bertilsson

Emelie Johnson Vegh

The idea behind start buttons is to give helpful information to you and control over events to your learner. In this presentation, Emelie and Eva will share their favorite protocol for starting button training, showing what the training might look like step by step with a few different teams. You'll get to see how Eva and Emelie organize the structure and work from rewards through pairings to learner-initiated trials, making it possible for those first start button behaviors to emerge—a truly fascinating process (if not magical!).

This is an excellent opportunity to see what a training session structure can do for your training and, of course, how you can build those start button contingencies that everyone is talking about. It is also an excellent chance to enhance your understanding of the ideas behind the start button concept.

In the Q&A session that follows, you'll get the chance to ask your questions and also hear the answers to other peoples' questions, most likely filling in blanks that you didn't even realize you had!

Abracadabra! Let those start button behaviors emerge!

Agility ICU

Julie Daniels, CCUI

Leslie McDevitt, MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

Does your dog stress UP in agility? Maybe your dog wants all of the turns. Maybe they don't like waiting in line with other dogs. Some CU dogs want to run with the other dogs, and some want the other dogs to go home.

This presentation is full of practical ideas for managing your dog's arousal or reactivity around the excitement of agility. Check in to the CU Agility Intensive Care Unit! Leslie and Julie will help you use the most versatile CU pattern games in the context of agility. From training to competition, they'll help you get your agility dog out of the ICU and back into the game.

Cooperative Care Unleashed

Linlin Cao, Ph.D., CPDT-KA, CCUI

Do you find yourself stuck in cooperative care training? Do you think cooperative care training isn't fun for you or your dog? Or do you want to build more trust and better communication with your dog but don't know how to get started?

Linlin will show you her favorite pattern games and how to incorporate them into your dog's grooming and veterinary care routines. With pattern games, you will learn to communicate to your dog when each procedure will occur. Most importantly, you will learn how to give your dog a voice in the process.

Creativity Unleashed: Which Game When?

Angie Madden, CPDT-KA, CCUI

Meaghan Cassell, CCUI

Do you find yourself stuck in a situation and not sure which Control Unleashed® concept to apply? Which pattern should you choose? When should you use LAT vs. Up and Down? How do you go from doing the patterns at home to taking them “on the road”? Do you have to carry bowls around with you to play Superbowls?

Many handlers struggle to transfer what they have learned in a class (or read in a book) to the outside world. Join Angie and Meaghan as they walk you through real-life applications and some out-of-the-box ways to incorporate your CU favorite games. Learn how to successfully build patterns into your daily routine and tackle everyday problems like barking out the window, jumping, and leash walking.

CU at the Movies

Melissa Millett

Follow the journey of Sugar, the 2lb. Chihuahua, as she develops the confidence to become a 4-legged Hollywood star with the Control Unleashed® program! Learn how to apply CU in studio-specific training for cameras and environments.

For both integral and performance reasons, dogs should feel safe and enjoy working. Learn how pattern games can create consistency in the ever-changing and strange world of film.

CU at the Zoo

Angie Madden, CPDT-KA, CCUI

Can you teach a wild animal to take a breath on cue? Control Unleashed® isn't just for dogs! Join Angie to find out some of the ways zookeepers are using CU for cooperative care and more.

CU in the City

Adam Skandarani, CCUI

Moved to the city and your dog isn't taking well to the hustle and bustle? Or do you enjoy taking day trips and need to keep Fido home because he can't relax?

Join me on a case study of just such a dog as we work through his apprehension around the sights, sounds, and smells of the city using pattern games, voluntary counter conditioning, and more from the Control Unleashed® program!

CU Under the Radar

Tamar Paltin Mayer, BA CPDT-KA, FFCP AKC CGC & ATT Evaluator

In an ideal world, you would only take your dog to classes taught by like-minded force-free instructors who understand all the hard work you've put into building a relationship with your dog. You would also have access to Fear Free vets and groomers and have full support through your Control Unleashed® journey. Unfortunately, most of us do not live in areas with access to all of those resources, and many of us take classes with instructors who we could label many different ways but who use compulsion or force in some way at some point.

Learn how you can use CU patterns and games in these situations without causing a disturbance and still benefit from the class experience. We will talk about which patterns you can use to help your dog feel confident and learn in spaces that may not be as aware or welcoming. You can be stealthy in your application of CU games and find new ways to apply patterns you already know!

Deaf Dogs Unleashed

Tiffany Baker, CBCC-KA, CCUI

After implementing Control Unleashed® exercises creatively and effectively with deaf dog clients, it became clear that there was a need for these ideas to be shared. Training with deaf dogs can sometimes be challenging; the need for attention and engagement from deaf dogs is crucial when the dogs rely so heavily on visual cues. There's also the added difficulty deaf dogs experience with Sudden Environmental Contrast (SEC) and a more pronounced startle response when things appear in their environment unexpectedly. Deaf dogs can also experience increased anxiety and have difficulty relaxing when stuff happens in their environment, unpredictably and outside of their control. What better way to provide our deaf dogs with the support they need to navigate their world than with the CU program.

In this presentation, you will experience the CU program thoughtfully and creatively customized for our beloved deaf dogs. The presentation will introduce unique visual and tactile cues combined with predictable patterns to build a beautiful recipe for engagement and confidence. We will be navigating the skills necessary to implement the popular Look At That conversational game and many of the foundation patterns that build voluntary engagement and predictability, such as Up-Down, Ping-Pong, Give Me A Break, Whiplash Turn, and 1-2-3. We will look at what the real-life application of this program looks like for our deaf dogs and much more!

Whether you are a deaf dog guardian or a trainer looking to add tools to your toolbox so you can better assist your clientele, this presentation is for you! Get ready to open up a new conversation of empowerment with your deaf dog!

I CU and I Smell You

Victoria Kander, KPA-CTP, CTDI, CNWI, AKC-Evaluator

Megan Wallace, B.S., CPDT-KA, CNWI, CCUI

There's something magical that happens when dogs get a chance to use their incredible olfactory senses. Nose Work is a fun and accessible way for any dog owner to harness that instinct in a way that builds confidence and provides mental stimulation. While all dogs love searching, not all dogs love the environments where searching happens. That's where Control Unleashed® comes in! We have spent years combining the power of Nose Work and CU to create incredible shifts in dogs' behaviors.

In this presentation, we will explore the impact of this combination on our lives and many of our students. You will follow the stories of several dogs through their journeys in learning that the world is a safe place. Geek out on the science behind Nose Work while remaining in awe of the magical aspects that we don't fully understand!

Running Time: 51 minutes

Q&A: Sunday, 11:45 am - 12:15 ET

I CU Are Connected to Me: Relationship Unleashed

Laura Donaldson, PhD, CDBC, KPA CTP, CCUI

MaryKay Hasseman, USDF Bronze Medalist, KPA CTP, CCUI, TAGteach Level 2

The Control Unleashed® program envisions training as a conversation between canine and human partners. This presentation will examine what “training as a conversation” between multi-species partners means, how it impacts what we do, and how we do it when training our horses, dogs, cats, ferrets, chickens, pigs, and parrots.

Practicing dog training as a conversation goes far beyond the “I talk, you listen” model that dominates much of traditional—and even some positive reinforcement—animal training. In the traditional model, the dog is given a “command” or stimulus and then expected to respond by doing the commanded behavior. In contrast to this, CU imagines the human-animal encounter as a conversation that implies reciprocity and a willingness to listen by all participants.

This presentation will offer a deep dive into reimagining training as a conversation: what it means and how it changes everything we do when working with animals. It will have a multi-species focus, with special emphasis on horses and dogs. Topics covered include how focusing on our dog's behavioral issues often prevents us from recognizing our connections with the dog; learning how to listen to your dog or horse; and how developing a mindful awareness takes the way you train animals and their humans to a whole new level.

This presentation offers a new vision for how training as a conversation can open up a new world of rich connections with the animals in our lives.

I CU Are Stuck

Hannah Branigan, CCUI

Leslie McDevitt MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

Does your dog get “sticky,” fixated on something that elicits that instinctive eye/stalk response, making it impossible for them to see or hear you? Join Leslie and Hannah in exploring ways to help your dog transition from that sticky place back to being able to focus on you.

When you have a naturally sticky dog, getting their mind back once they’ve gotten fixated is one of the hardest things to do. Hannah and Leslie have been there! We’ve got you.

Time: Friday, 5:00 pm - 7:00 ET

Live Q&A Starts: 6:30 pm ET

I CU Everywhere

Merissa Kreidler, CPDT-KA, KPA-CTP, CCUI

Kimberly Palermo, CPDT-KA CCUI

The long-awaited school year has arrived, books and wands have been purchased at Diagon Alley, and students begin to step off the Hogwarts Express. As a professor, you watch the Sorting Hat place first years into their houses and wonder what your new students will be like. You already have the basics prepared—your favorite potion to teach on the first day, an easy spell to learn, and you’ll begin to prepare your fifth-year students for this year’s O.W.L.S. But what about the magic beyond the basics—how can you give your students the life skills that will help them fly?

Join fellow Ravenclaws Merissa Dubraque Kreidler and Kimberly Palermo as they discuss how you can incorporate Control Unleashed® skills into your everyday basic manners classes. Whether you’re teaching first years (puppies) or seventh years (advanced students), you will learn which patterns and skills you can introduce to each level, how to combine these skills to challenge your students and discover fun and creative games that can be played to practice these skills.

If you’d like to learn how to incorporate CU into your classes or are simply looking for some fun ideas to get creative with your students, I CU Everywhere could be the missing Horcruxes you’ve been looking for.

I CU Got a Pandemic Puppy

Merissa Kreidler, CPDT-KA, KPA-CTP, CCUI

Let's face it—last year was rough! The Virus That Shall Not Be Named trapped us in our homes, only venturing fully masked and armed with potion bottles full of hand sanitizer. We furtively stockpiled toilet paper and traded our finest wizarding robes for the comfort of yoga pants. With all of this extra time at home, many people decided to get a puppy. Unfortunately, for a number of these people, this was an impulse decision borne out of sudden isolation and the need for companionship, and they were not prepared for the work that raising a well-socialized dog requires. The pandemic also made socialization difficult, and seeking help (when things started to go wrong) was also fraught with logistical challenges.

As we emerge from the pandemic, trainers are beginning to see the dogs (no longer puppies) that resulted from this trend. Many of our training businesses are booked solid with unsocialized, scared, and utterly clueless adolescent and young adult dogs. Some of these dogs are coming to us with problems ranging from a complete lack of social skills, to separation anxiety, to fear-based aggression with the bite histories to back it up. And they are coming to us for help.

In this presentation, Merissa will discuss using CU skills to help these dogs and their owners learn the skills they need to move forward together. She will also discuss when to refer the owners to a veterinary behaviorist, and how to broach that topic with the owners. She will also talk about how she dealt with socializing her own puppy during the pandemic, providing structure and learning opportunities even when leaving the house was a rarity. You will meet her puppy, Sushi (Border Collie, Ravenclaw), and Sushi's best friend Sonnet (Icelandic Sheepdog, Gryffindor), and watch insanely cute videos of them learning CU games and later using those skills to navigate our newly reopened world.

I CU Need Some Support: Helping Horses Relax & Stay Focused on their Learning

Jen Digate, CBCC-KA, CCUI

Join Jen to learn how to use Control Unleashed® pattern games within the context of your ride or groundwork session to keep your horse focused, relaxed, and engaged. Learn what games to use when and how to move easily between your skill/discipline and helping your horse regulate emotionally.

I'll CU at the Shelter

Beth Brown, CCBC, CPDT-KSA, CCUI

A truth common to shelter animals is that they experience higher than normal levels of fear, frustration, anxiety, and stress. This experience can lead to an increased length of stay and make them look less adoptable, especially if behavior problems start to crop up because of the negative emotions they're feeling.

In this presentation, we'll discuss how using Control Unleashed® pattern games daily can help decrease these feelings. We'll see examples with both dogs and cats. Some of the pattern games we'll learn about in a shelter setting are default behaviors, LATTE, Gimme a Break, Requested Approach Training, and Superbowls.

I'll CU Virtually

Rachel Forday, CCUI, VSA-CDT

With the pandemic hitting so many dog training businesses across the globe last year, it is time that we learn how to train with our clients and their dogs virtually. Not only is it essential for us to provide our services to people in times when we cannot be face to face with them, but we can also use virtual training to help our clients more effectively even when there isn't an ongoing global crisis.

Rachel will be talking about why dog trainers should learn to train virtually, how to do so especially with Control Unleashed® material, how to get clients on board with it, and more.

Inclusivity in Dog Training: Asian Issues – A Panel Discussion

Moderator: Michael Shikashio, CDBC

A panel of dog trainers discusses the issues that Asians face around the world and in the dog training community. The goal is to come together as a community, learn something with each other, and then be able to spread awareness about the issues that are impacting Asians.

Michael is an internationally sought-after keynote speaker and presenter on the topic of dog aggression at numerous events, conferences, and universities worldwide.

He has mentored and presented to thousands of animal professionals in twelve different countries and has been a guest at every major dog training conference in the U.S. and Mexico, including the APDT, IAABC, FDSA, Clicker Expo, Victoria Stilwell's DBC, PPG, CICA, IACP, Owners of Dog Daycares, and The Aggression in Dogs Conferences.

Puppy Prodigies Unleashed: From Puppy Kindergarten to Building a Foundation for Dog Sports

Laurie C. Williams, BA, CPDT-KA, CDTI

Thankfully, many people understand that puppies need early training and socialization, so they flock to the nearest puppy kindergarten class eager and ready for their puppies to learn. But once they've checked that box, many do not continue to higher-level classes. So, we trainers have a short window of time with these puppy owners to "turn them on" to more advanced learning and get them hooked, and one of the best ways to accomplish this is by introducing them to dog sports. But you can't do that with puppies, right? Aren't they too young? Absolutely not!

In this session, you will be introduced to many foundation behaviors, games, and exercises you can start implementing in your puppy classes that are sure to set off a spark and get your puppy owners hungry for their puppies to learn more!

Foundation behaviors such as body awareness, balance, obstacle confidence, targeting, impulse control, and teamwork can all be introduced right from the start, and once Frisky's owner sees him performing like a champ, they'll be chomping at the bit to sign him up for more!

The Magic of a Horse That Listens

MaryKay Hasseman, USDF Bronze Medalist, KPA CTP, CCUI, TAGteach Level 2

Control Unleashed® games are bringing a growing level of behavioral support and empowered thinking to the world of horses.

With cutting-edge details in this presentation, MaryKay explains how to choose the best CU games for riding. Set the right games in motion to ride and experience the magic of a horse that listens.

Want to know what game to use when you first get on? How about when your horse goes too slow or too fast? What if they spook? Which game will get the best results? MaryKay provides the nuts and bolts of how to make that decision when we're sitting on our horse's back.

This presentation explores how CU for horses when doing groundwork differs from CU for horses when riding. Thinking differently about what's going on when you ride matters with CU games. It can make a huge difference in whether you experience a magical feel-good connection, whatever your level of riding.

Included in this exploration is a CU game with an exercise that develops your horse's muscles to keep him sound and healthy for any discipline of riding.

There's a LATTE in the Cauldron: Enrich Your Dog's Counter Conditioning Experience!

Leslie McDevitt MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

Leslie has taken her always popular and always powerful Look at That game and added a new twist for Control Unleashed® enthusiasts to enjoy: LATTE, which stands for Look At That, Then Enrichment.

Learn the how, why, and when of this new twist and treat your dogs to a relaxing counter conditioning experience in an enriched environment that encourages them to lick, sniff, chew, and decompress while playing a slooowed down version of your favorite game.

The “decaf” version of LATTE can be used even with dogs that don't know LAT yet and uses the enrichment/decompression piece without the LAT structure—great for shelter dogs, new puppies who are shy, etc. This version can even be used for remedial socialization! There are lots of ways to use LATTE, and Leslie is excited to tell you all about it.

Trust Code Unleashed

Sarah Owings, KPA CTP, CCUI

Trust is a construct. The way we interpret and experience this construct is fundamental to our lives, our relationships, and our ability to learn. We all know the sting and disorientation when expectations are not met, when we are unsure of what is about to happen, when we feel judged or penalized, or when we lose control over outcomes. The same is true for our animals.

In this session, we will attempt to unleash the ABCs of trust by operationalizing trust. Operationalizing something means asking, “what does it look like?” Animals tend to emit behaviors we might label “trusting” in contexts where predictably safe and reinforcing outcomes occur. Pattern Games from Control Unleashed® provide a way for the human half of the equation to become a more trustworthy part of contingencies we hope our animals will join willingly.

Building trust often involves the thoughtful conditioning of antecedents before focusing on shaping specific behaviors. Building trust also means getting a solid read on body language that reflects “YES.” Attendees will learn how to confirm “YES” via start buttons and a technique called Ask and Answer.

The Trust Code approach is great for the following applications:

- Happy husbandry routines (nail trims, grooming, injections, etc.)
- Prevention of resource guarding
- Safer interactions around toys and toy play
- Creating safe learning and/or performance environments
- Establishing a relationship with a shelter animal or new learner

We will also discuss what to do in situations where you need to get something done, such as a medical procedure, but don't have enough trust established yet, as well as how to repair trust after taking a withdrawal.

Unleashing the Science and Magic of Slow Thinking

Laura Donaldson, Ph.D., CDBC, KPA CTP, CCUI

Dogs struggling with aggressive behavior habitually make fast-twitch decisions about their behavior when confronted with a threatening or scary stimulus. The consequences of these decisions are too often a bite incident and then surrender to shelter or even euthanasia. Laura has developed a program called Slow Thinking is Lifesaving for Dogs™ that teaches dogs how to think before they act—a habit that literally can be lifesaving.

This presentation focuses on how changing a dog's thinking patterns can change their behavior and why Slow Thinking is a critical emotional and cognitive habit for dogs. While the Slow Thinking program was initially developed to address canine aggression, it can also help resolve many behavior issues. We'll look at the intersections between Slow Thinking is Lifesaving for Dogs and Control Unleashed® and highlight how both programs offer practical strategies for helping your own (or your clients') dogs become slow, non-aroused thinkers.

Wild Things Unleashed: Working with Arousal

Leslie McDevitt, MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

Julie Daniels, CCUI

Nikki Bowling

Join Leslie, Julie, and Nikki as they explore the variety of Control Unleashed® games that help high-energy, easily excited, or hypervigilant dogs learn to be calm, thoughtful, and focused.

Learn tools for helping dogs think through arousal, from sport and working dogs to rescued wolf hybrids! Let Leslie, Julie, Nikki, and Lindsay inspire you!