

I owe a great deal to Don and Julie Pawlak for training my border collie-Aussie mix, Bodhi. Bodhi is a beautiful dog, black with a merle chest and facial markings and heterochromatic eye coloring. It was his beauty, and what little I knew of the breeds trail dog abilities, that moved me to buy him as a ten week-old puppy. While he showed intelligence and expressed a willingness to learn, my ignorance in dog training quickly turned Bodhi into an out of control and potentially dangerous dog. My pregnant wife was nervous at the proposition of having Bodhi around our soon to be born child, and I knew that if he continued down this road it would end in his demise.

Out of desperation I sought out professional help to rein him in. I tried clicker and treat training. While in training sessions Bodhi responded well, picked up new commands quickly, and loved receiving his treats. At home he regressed and would only listen if he knew treats were readily available, and he remained completely out of my control in stimulating situations.

Through a stroke of luck, I found Rush Lake Kennels one night while combing through Google search results. I learned about their resident dog training on their website, and then in more detail through phone conversations with Don Pawlak. I was reluctant to subject Bodhi to training techniques, which I once viewed as cruel. It was on one phone conversation that I expressed my reluctance to e-collar and prong collar training that Don asked me if I thought wolf pups were trained with clickers and treats in their pack in the wild. It was then that I realized that my approach to training Bodhi was all wrong.

I put my full trust into Don and Julie and dropped Bodhi off at Rush Lake Kennels for resident obedience training at 6 months old. It was rough being away from Bodhi for so long, but there is no denying the worth of the end result. Bodhi is fully on and off leash obedience trained. His house manners have improved well beyond my expectations and he is completely under my control *in all situations*. I have found the e-collar to be a very useful tool that I use to teach him new commands/behaviors and for recall from long distances.

Bodhi is a much healthier and happier dog as a result of his training. He now gets to reap the benefits of being under my control, and is reaching his full potential as a trail dog and ski partner. The atmosphere of my home is calm as we await the arrival of our baby, which my wife and I have no doubt will also be welcomed by Bodhi. Thanks to Don and Julie, we now have the dog we dreamed of having, and Bodhi is living a fulfilling life.

Please feel free to contact me for any further questions regarding my experiences with Rush Lake Kennels.

Sincerely,
Jerome Varriale



Bodhi and I skiing



Bodhi (foreground) and friends on the skin track