



Episode #2: Courage vs. Confidence & Wanting vs. Committing

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

thoughts, dog, action, commit, feelings, circumstance, strategy, training, day, feel, results, stay, plan, confidence, uncomfortable, goal, motivated, train, inferences, courage

This is the agility challenge podcast with Daisy Peel. You're listening to episode two. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host, Daisy Peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk, or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do list seems so long that you don't even know where to get started, then this podcast is for you. For more podcast episodes, training, content and coaching from me, head to www.thetheagilitychallenge.com where members get access to monthly training and handling challenges, in addition to league play, and a whole lot more. Let's dive in with today's episode.

Hey, everybody, welcome to episode two of the agility challenge podcast. It's me, Daisy, I'm back for more. I'm glad that you're back for more as well. First, I wanted to go over a brief review of something that I talked about in episode one. And that is something called the thought model. Now, the thought model is essentially this objective circumstances. Like last time I talked about the temperature. So an objective circumstance could be that it's 10 degrees out. That's a circumstance. And those circumstances almost immediately in our minds, our brains, which are amazing machines, those circumstances trigger thoughts and just almost intertwined so much that you just can't even see any daylight between it between the two are feeling so circumstances trigger thoughts, which cause feelings, and then those feelings typically, cause actions and those actions lead us to that we take lead us to results. And those results are typically always evidence of the original thought that we had. So I talked last time about how the circumstance could be that it's 10 degrees out, and the thought might be, it's cold. And that causes some feelings for me at least, and it's unpleasant gonna be so cold outside. And the action is that I bundle up, and then I go outside. And my result is that I there, it's evidence that I'm gonna go outside and it's cold, I feel cold, I feel uncomfortable. I'm glad I bundled up, thank goodness, I did that. And so you know, it's sort of all self serving.

On the other hand, my husband goes outside in shorts and sandals when it's 10 degrees and snowy out. So he's definitely got some different thoughts and feelings that lead him to different actions. So that's kind of a review of the thought model. And I'm gonna dig into that a little bit more in this episode. It always reminds me of and I brought this up last time as well, in episode one, I used to be a chemistry teacher. And one of the very first experiments that we did in the chemistry classroom at the beginning



of the year each year was observation versus inference. And so I just had the kids light a candle, and they had a candle and a beaker, which is a glass looks like a cup. And they had to make some observations and inferences. And so the whole point of the experiment was to help people help those kids understand the difference between observations which are more objective and inferences, which are the almost immediate conclusions that we draw regarding those observations that we made. So the thought model is a lot like the scientific method. And it's, it's really designed to clarify the difference between observations and inferences, which our minds are making all the time, we're constantly making judgments based on our thoughts and feelings and taking actions based on those judgments. So we got circumstances, thoughts, feelings, those drivers to actions, which cause results, which typically serve as evidence for the original thought.

And so the trick with that is to try and be aware of the feelings that are a result of your thoughts, which the feelings and cause actions, the trick is to try and be aware of those feelings without being carried away by them. And it does definitely have to do with dog training and dog agility, which is, and we don't really talk about it too much in the context of dog sports, which is why I started this podcast up again. Because the trick is to be aware of those feelings without being carried away by them and to recognize that you have a choice about how you can respond to the thoughts that you have. And you can evaluate, wait a minute, why do I feel this way about this thought? Do I? Is this really this? For real? Do I need to feel this way? Do I need to take actions based on these feelings? And a pretty good example of becoming aware of your thoughts, and your feelings can kind of be like, and this is pretty relevant for me. It can be like having a room in your house. That's pretty messy.

Or in my case, having a room in my house. It's filled with boxes that I still haven't unpacked from when we move moved this last year from Oregon to Ohio. So becoming aware of your thoughts can kind of be like becoming aware of that room in your house, that room in my house that I never really got around to unpacking. So I decide that I really like to use this room for something more productive, maybe I'd like to use it for my canine fitness room, instead of just storing boxes from the move. So I go in the room, I want to use the room, and I flip on the lights, and the rooms are complete disaster, there's boxes everywhere, I don't even know what's in the boxes, there's just it's a mess. So the easiest thing to do, in that case, for me, and maybe for you, if you're thinking about another room in your house, is to just turn off the lights and back away slowly.

And typically, what happens once we make the choice to just I'm just going to back away slowly from this, just close the door and forget that I ever opened it, forget that I turned on the lights, maybe I don't even care about this room, maybe that'll just be the storage room, we typically almost immediately come up with excuses and justifications in our mind, for why we should back away from this project of cleaning out this room and unpacking these boxes, I don't have time, maybe I don't really need this room, this is just going to be a lot of work, I don't really want to know what's in these boxes. And of course, the analogy for us as dog trainers is that maybe we've got a dog training project or behavior that we really need to work on. And we we know that it's not that great. Maybe it's our sixth day, or



we've injuries aren't that great. Maybe our toy motivations aren't that great or retrieve. But instead of tackling these things head on, and risking the failure that they might entail, and the challenge that they might entail and the discomfort that they might entail and the work that they might entail, we just back away slowly and pretend that we didn't see it, that we don't know that it's a thing. And we just let it slip beneath the surface of conscious thought.

So that's the easiest thing to do. Just stop paying attention. let it slip below our conscious awareness, we're just going to let life and thoughts happen to us, instead of maintaining awareness of and choosing thoughts that serve us better. So, you know, we might even let's stick with our six day example. We know that we don't have a great six day. But we just kind of like we just put it on the backburner over and over again, and I need to think about that. I'm just gonna think about that. Like that room in the house, I don't need that, I don't need that. And then we go to a show. And we we don't even really think about our state not being great, we just, it's fine, whatever, maybe maybe the course will require us at staying. And then we have a run where we need to sit stay.

And we are right back to square one where we have a circumstance that requires a six day we have some thoughts about that six day trigger some feelings, most of them uncomfortable. And then we take some action and the sad state fails. And then of course, there's more lack of action is also an action, by the way. So we the whole thing is a vicious cycle, and then the results, our dog doesn't have a great six day and then we decide that we're not going to think about it. And you know, just it's a vicious cycle. So knowing that we have a long standing training or handling problem doesn't really help us to address it in the long term. Doing something about it does help us, you know, we came up with a plan to tackle the six day problem and train this, it's a problem that would actually help us procrastination or never taking action.

And letting those things remain below the surface of our conscious awareness really means that we're choosing to keep those training and handling issues that we currently have. So you can go to a competition or go to a class and complain about not having a great sitz day. But honestly, if we've chosen not to take action on it, and we're just complaining about it, that means really, that we're choosing the issues that we currently have. So I mean, we're all in that situation, nobody's perfect, I definitely have some behaviors that I have chosen not to do anything about. And by choosing not to do anything about those issues, I've chosen to keep them basically. And I can say that it's not a conscious choice, because I'm choosing not to think about them. But that kind of is a conscious choice. So and that's okay, sometimes it's fine to have some handling and training issues that instead of changing the situation, you're just going to stick with the status quo. There are plenty of legitimate reasons to do that. And that's fine.

But if we are saying oh my gosh, my system is terrible. I just hate how my how bad my said stay is. If you're not if you're choosing not to take action that is actually a choice. So that's kind of what I want to talk about today. We've got the thought model where circumstances trigger thought bots which cause



feelings which cause actions, which lead to results. And really want to what I want to talk about is changing that cycle. So that you can change how you feel about something, by changing your thoughts about that thing, and then changing the actions that you take because you feel a little bit differently about it and changing the results. So first, though, before I go any further, I want to talk a little bit about something that might seem kind of tangential to all this, but definitely plays a role. And that is the difference between wanting something and committing to it.

Now, it's January of 2023. It's a new month of a new year. And so a lot of us have goals and resolutions. And that implies that we are committing to taking action on something. But I want to talk about the difference between wanting and committing. Because if you just want something, if you just want a better set stay, then that just means you just want it but it doesn't really imply that you need to take action, it feels good or can feel good to say that you want something, it's safe, it's a safe place to be sounds good. It sounds noble, I'm gonna I want to better sit say this year. But you don't actually have to do anything challenging. You don't have to challenge yourself, you don't have to challenge your notions of yourself as a trainer. You don't have to challenge your notions of yourself as the trainer who can train to sit stay wanting something is safe, it's comfortable. But you don't have to do anything challenging. On the other hand, when you commit to something, that means that you've decided that you're going to do whatever it takes to make it happen, if you commit to a better set stay, that means you're going to do whatever it takes to make it happen, even if it's uncomfortable for you, even if it's annoying for you, even if it's restrictive for you.

So for example, if you've decided that you're never going to that you're going to take action on its day. And part of that is that you're never going to run your dog, if your dog breaks a sit stay, then that's going to be uncomfortable. And it might be annoying, and it might be restrictive. And it might be costly. Because if you enter a show, and you take your dog to the start line and your dog breaks the start line, you've committed to not continuing with the run, or doing a fix and go for the run. And you're just not going to continue with that run in a way that's going to yield to a clean run or qualifying run because you've committed to better six days. So you've committed and you're going to stick with it if it's uncomfortable or annoying or restrictive. Or the results aren't as fast as you want them to be, it could take months to get a better start line, it might not happen in a day, it might not happen in a weekend. And you're going to take action, you're going to take massive action, which and some of that massive action might be you're going to change your thoughts. You're just you're going to be the kind of person who is committed to never running, if your dog breaks it stay, and you're going to keep chipping away at it and you're gonna keep at it and you're gonna keep at it and you're Keep at it going to keep at it.

And part of that commitment also means that if you've got a plan, and you're taking action, and it doesn't work, you're not going to give in to those inner voices that say you're just a failure, you're terrible, you can't try to sit stay, you might as well just give up and let your dog run amok off the start line, you're not going to give into that because you're committed, you're going to manage your thoughts and manage your feelings about those thoughts. And you're going to think about how you can pivot and



try something else. Another strategy for your start lines or going to more classes or fun matches or, or whatever.

So you're just going to keep doing that and doing that and doing that you're going to commit, you're going to stick to your plan, you're going to be prepared to pivot your plan if you need to, but you're going to continue to stay committed, instead of just saying that you want it you're not just wanting it you're committed. And that's kind of an important point as well, that idea of pivoting. Because I think there's a lot of us in in dog sports and dog training that think that once we pick a strategy, like for six days or the wave polls, that's a pretty good, pretty good one. Like, oh, I've always used the two by two method. I'm just I've always used it and I always will. We tend to have loyalty to a strategy. So we pick a strategy or an action plan and then we stick with that strategy forever. We think we're gonna stick with that strategy forever. And we're just never going to change if I've always done the two by twos I'm never going to change I've always traded my running contacts this way I'm never going to change. And there we go.

There's like there's, it's like there's some pride involved in it. So for example, I've had a lot of students come to me over the years, they set out to train a running contact with the goal of having great fast contacts with their dogs. And they're they're having trouble training, the running contact and, and my recommendation to them is that okay? Look, your goal really was that you wanted solid contacts that were competitive and fast. Why don't you pivot and teach her to onto off? Oh, no, I couldn't have already spent a year teaching or running contact And my response is always, well, the amount of time that you've previously invested in a strategy shouldn't have any bearing on whether or not you should stick with that strategy.

So if your goal really was to have competitive fast contacts, and your current strategy isn't working, then let's pivot, let's, let's change, you don't have to stick with a certain strategy forever, that there should be no ego and no pride when it comes to pivoting. So you should absolutely be thinking to challenge that particular belief, if that's one that you have, because strategies stop working. Sometimes they need changing or amending, maybe you've got a different dog this time around than you had last time. So your stay plan doesn't work for this dog, because it's different than the last dog are different than the last 10 dogs. Courses changed. So your handling needs to change, your training needs to change the types of behaviors that you train need to change your physical abilities change. So you can't, you can't get too wedded to the idea of this is how I've always done it, this is how I'm always going to do it.

Because things change and you were going to have to change with those things. So if a strategy stops working, if you've committed to a plan, whether it's, I'm going to train six days, or I'm going to improve my fitness so that I can get around a course better. If a strategy stops working, then you have to resist the temptation to give into that little voice that says, well, that strategy is not didn't work, you moron. Of course, it didn't work, you're a complete failure. I knew it all along. If the strategy stops working, you



have to resist the temptation to give in to that little voice in your head and pivot, find a new strategy or tweak your current strategy and have to keep at it, keep at it. Now, this whole podcast series is about mindset and growth mindset and challenge and the mental game. So how does all this tie into that? How does commitment tie in to that you have to keep in mind that commitment. Compared to wanting remember, wanting just feels good. You don't have to take action, if you want something you can want it and that just you know, just feels good.

Like eating candy. If you commit, you're committing to a process. And when you commit to a process, whether it's fitness or training, or coming up with a new way to train something or training a new dog or maybe venturing into a new venue, maybe you only ever did AKC, now you're going to do you KPI you're committing to a process and and that commitment to that process may involve some discomfort, you may have to adapt and adjust. And you really have to keep in mind the idea of having a challenge mindset. And that failure is mistakes are not, you know, failure is not a judgment as on your abilities as a person is just feedback for you to tweak and continue that cycle. And another thing to keep in mind when you commit to a process.

Whether you commit or not, actually, you have to keep in mind the idea of internal integrity. So if you just want something and you're not prepared to commit to it, to having it, that's totally fine. But if you do commit to it, you need to really commit and don't just pretend to commit. If you don't, if you want something and you're not ready, or you can't come in because of life circumstances or whatever, that's totally fine. But don't pretend that you're committed. Because if you commit to something to a process, and then you fail at that process, when you're not when you weren't quite ready to commit, and you didn't have things in place to help yourself commit, you're going to start a cycle where you're kind of half assing, the training, or half assing, the fitness or half assing, your nutrition or whatever. And you're setting yourself up for failure.

And when you do that, you're kind of cheating on yourself. And you're cheating on your dog. And you're eroding your relationship with yourself and with your dog because you're not, you're making promises constantly and you're not delivering on them. So you're not being honest with yourself. You're not behaving with integrity, internal integrity, with yourself. So for example, let's say that you have decided on a plan for training the weaves the weave poles, you pick the plan, and the plan is spelled out in a lot of detail. Maybe you made the plan yourself. Or maybe you're following a plan that a well known dog agility trainer has already spelled out for you.

You say you're committed out loud and internally, and you even get your calendar out and you plan to train five days a week, short sessions multiple times a day, you've got all of that covered. But then you only end up training one day a week. And you come up with all sorts of reasons and excuses about why you can't clear time out of your schedule to actually train those weasels. And then the way pool training doesn't go well and your dog is missing entries or skipping polls are popping out early. So the next thing that happens to most of us we tend to respond and a few pretty poor indictable ways, we either



engage in a lot of negative self talk, where we tell ourselves we're terrible that we're a failure. Of course, it didn't work. You've never been able to train these before. Why would you be able to train them now? Or we play the victim. And we say, well, this plan is just terrible, this plan didn't work for my dog. And a lot of the times, we never really followed the plan. Remember, we only trained one day a week, when we said we were going to train five days a week. So we play the victim and blame the plan, when the plan, we never really even followed it.

Or we justify things like, Well, I just didn't have the time life got in the way. And all of these thoughts that we have to erode our relationship with ourselves, they erode that internal integrity you've got with yourself and also with your dog, because you made a promise, you made a plan you committed and then you didn't follow through. And so you know, that you didn't follow through on your promises to yourself. So you have to review go back and review that thought model that I talked about at the, at the very beginning of this podcast. And the last one, where we, I talked about how we've got this objective circumstance, we've polls. And then what follows after that are thoughts, and then feelings, and then actions and then results. So you have to get your thoughts and feelings straight before you settle on a plan or a strategy. And you've got to work through that thought model backwards. So for example, with the weave poles, what's the result that you want, you want a solid weave pole performance, where your dog can find that entry on his own and stay in those poles no matter what you're doing, even if you fall on your face on the course.

And then move backwards through that thought model. So if I want really super solid weave poles, what actions do I need to take and not take to make sure that my dog has really solid weave pulse, or the sixth day, if I want, if the result I want is a solid six day, what actions do I need to take and not take to be able to have that solid six day, maybe I'm going to take the actions of not entering trials that I really want to enter. And I'm not going to run my dog, if the state gets broken, I'm going to do Fix and Go or leave the course, I'm going to find some new trainers that can help me with my stay issues and help me be a better stay trainer. And then I need to work backwards from that. And think about how how do I need to feel about the actions I have to take to get the result that I want, whether it's the sixth day or the week goals. And quite often, for me, at least the feeling that I need to have on board is motivated. And then I'm going to work backwards from that.

What do I need to think, to feel motivated? So what do I need to think, to feel motivated so that I take actions and get the result that I want. So an example of the six day that I've been using, maybe I want to I want to have a solid set stay so that I can lead out on a course, so that I can feel more control in the beginning of a run so that I can use the other skills that I know I've trained my dog to do, so that I can qualify more often, and have those clean runs so that I can advance through the levels and maybe get a championship title. So those are the things that I need to think those are the things that I'm going to think about that will help me feel motivated so that I take actions to get the results that I want. And at the bottom of it the circumstance, the objective circumstance can just be sets day or week goals that just generates all that other stuff, the thoughts, feelings, actions and the results. So working backwards



through that can help you clarify how you need to feel about the thoughts you're having about something, you know, what thoughts do you want to have so that you generate the feelings you need to feel so that you can take that action that you need to take and get the results that you want to have? And it's really important that your motivation, if that's the feeling that you have that it should be your reasons should be internal.

Because honestly, you don't need to have a better sense today because because you are concerned about people judging you, oh, I need to have a better sense because everybody thinks I'm a loser because I don't have a good sense. Honestly, you can't control what other people think about you. And most people, most of us, including all of us in that are so self involved that we're not even aware whether or not someone else has a good sense they are not we're pretty wrapped up in our own problems. A lot of people won't even notice when you're said stay are you weak poles get better. So if nobody cares, but you and nobody notices, but you your reasons for taking action, and changing how you feel and think about something really need to be internal.

They can't be external. Now I also want to point out that when I'm going through this process, I I've talked about this before I choose motivation for the feeling that I want to have and not confidence. I, I don't think that it's helpful to say I'm going to, I want to feel confident. Because calm, feeling confident is really not something that needs to be part of this equation. You don't have to be confident that you're going to achieve a goal before you start working on it. And in fact, why would you feel confident that you're going to achieve a goal if you've not yet achieved the goal? There are a lot of times when I don't feel confident about something that I'm attempting, I don't feel confident that I'm going to be able to run a course clean, I don't feel confident that I'm going to be able to make it to a blind cross, you just don't need to feel confident.

Confidence typically comes after you've achieved something. So if you've never successfully trained to sit, stay, or you've never successfully trained a running contact, or you've never successfully run a course clean, why would you engage in telling yourself I'm going to change my feelings. So I feel confident, that's going to be a really tough one to believe in for yourself. Courage is required before achieving a goal. But confidence is not, you're not going to Don't Don't bank on feeling confident until after you've achieved something.

Courage is required before you've achieved something courage is required to commit to working on a goal or taking action toward a goal. Courage is uncomfortable. And courage is where that challenge mindset comes in. Confidence is comfortable, you've already achieved something and you may not even care to ever achieve it again. But if you want to continue moving forward with your skills, and your abilities, it's courage that you need not confidence. Courage is what you need to maintain a challenge mindset where failure is just feedback and not a judgment on your self worth. And your brain is going to want to make excuses and justifications to protect your ego because courage really is uncomfortable. You're going to need courage to make and keep commitments towards your training goals and your



fitness goals and your nutrition goals. And you're going to need courage to continue taking action towards your stated goals. But you don't need confidence. Confidence feels good. But typically, confidence can actually lead to lack of action, confidence will help you rest on your current abilities. And you don't you really don't need again, I just I can't stress it enough. You don't need confidence to take action. And you don't even need confidence to do well. You can step to the line and have no confidence at all, that something is going to happen. But you do need courage. So that's a biggie. And hopefully you've made it this far into this podcast to hear that again, and repeat it to yourself. Again, confidence is not required to take action, repeated action toward the goals you've committed to.

Courage is required. Confidence comes after you've achieved something, but then you need to have courage to try it again and see if you can achieve it again. So courage is way more important than confidence. So I want to go through the thought model with a result that I want personally. So right now, a result that I want is that I want to lose 10 pounds of 10 pounds to go to loop to reach my weight goals. And I want to improve my fitness. So that's the result. Working backwards from that what action do I need to take, the actions that I need to take are sticking to a nutrition and diet plan even when it's uncomfortable. And also sticking to a workout plan, even when it's cold. And the weather sucks, and I can barely walk because I'm sore from yesterday's workout. My actions are sometimes going to be restrictive, uncomfortable, I'm going to get sore.

And it's not going to make me feel happy all the time. But I'm gonna work backwards from that and figure out how do I need to feel in order to take action on those things that I know are not always going to be pleasant, comfortable. So I'm back to motivation, I need to feel motivated. I don't need to feel confident. I just need to feel motivated. I don't know that I can achieve these goals but I need to feel motivated and courageous that I'm that I can work towards them. And that's going to help me take action on my plan of getting fitter and lightening the load a little bit. So working backwards backwards from the feelings What do I need to think in order to feel motivated so that this isn't all just positive thinking woowoo wanting How do I stay committed. So the thought that I keep in mind that motivates me to continue taking action to get the results that I want.

The thought is that I want to take care of my body so that I can be healthy and fit and so that my joints lasts longer so that I can be quick on my feet so that I can communicate clearly. Clearly, to my dogs. I'm getting tongue tied here so that I can communicate clearly to my dogs On the course, so that we can maximize our chances of being a good team. So there's no outcome in there in terms of ribbons or winning or placement, it's just I want to take care of my body so that I can be the best handler I can be for as long as I can. So that I, you know, don't lie to me or anything like that, that's gonna keep me motivated when it's cold and wet and dark. And really, I just want to eat cookies, that's gonna, that's gonna keep me motivated. And then at the very top or bottom, depending on how you look at it, the circumstance, the objective thing that just is my fitness my body. So working through from top to bottom circumstances, my fitness my body, the thought is, I need to take care of my body, so that I can be healthy, fit and fast, so that I can communicate clearly to my dogs on course, so that we can be the



best team possible. And those thoughts are going to keep me motivated so that I can take actions, even when they're not comfortable actions are pleasant, or fun, because the result of losing 10 pounds. And getting to that goal weight and improving my fitness, those things are going to help keep me looping back to the thought, the best handler that I can be. Now, I'm going to have to work at repeating the thought that I want to take care of my body and be healthy, fit and fast. And I'm going to have to evaluate repeatedly if it really does evoke motivation. Because if it doesn't, I'm going to need to tweak those thoughts.

Because if they don't evoke the thoughts, or if they don't evoke the feelings that I need to keep me going, it's just positive thinking pie in the sky, I need to be prepared for my brain to want to go back to sitting around eating cookies, surfing Facebook, or the internet, when I should be out doing a workout that I know is gonna be uncomfortable. I know it's gonna make it hard to walk the next day. So I need to evaluate those thoughts and make sure they really get me motivated to get out there and take those actions and do those things. My brain is going to tell me I'm going to fail. So why bother trying so I need to, I need to hedge my bets with this. It's going to remind me how much it sucks to be sore from a workout. So I have to keep watching my thoughts and my feelings and evaluate where those inner judgments are coming from.

And I'm going to be constantly wanting to slip back into those old thought habits until I've made the new thoughts a habit. And it's kind of like right now it's January 2023. And I'm writing some checks to pay for show entries and stuff. And I still write 2022 for the date, because my brain just hasn't adjusted to the fact that it's a new year quite yet. Now in this case, am I telling myself I'm a failure? Oh my god days, you're such an idiot. You're such a failure. Can you remember that? It's 2023. Where are you writing? 2022? Of course not. Because it's pretty inconsequential. And a couple of weeks from now, I'm going to be writing 2023 Like I've been doing it for years and years. And I'm going to do that for the rest of 2023. And then in January 2024, I'm gonna go through the same process over and over again. But that's how it works. For anytime that you're going to tweak that thought model, because you want to take different actions and get different results.

So that's it for episode two, there was a lot of information thrown at you guys about the thought model. And then also I really want you guys to think about confidence versus courage and whether you really need to be confident or do you really just maybe need to be more courageous. So that's it for episode two. I hope you'll join me for the next Episode Episode Three. Let me know your thoughts on this podcast and leave a comment and I'll see you guys online