



Episode #12: Heading To A Seminar

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

seminar, presenter, dog, podcast, values, agility, training, feel, asked, feeling, episode, handling, uncomfortable, problem, advice, violate, podcast episode, judged, issue, weaknesses

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This is the agility challenge podcast with Daisy peel. You're listening to Episode 12 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 dot the agility challenge.com](http://www.theagilitychallenge.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 this episode of the podcast. In this episode, I'm doing a first and that's first podcast episode recorded on the road without my normal home studio and recording equipment. I'm on the road in South Carolina for a few days of teaching and then a weekend of judging UK I now that I've got the kinks of recording a podcast while on the road worked out no more excuses. So that's been my big thing to learn how to do this week. Usually the podcast episodes drop on Thursdays but this one is dropping in just under the wire for this weekend. And I think it'll be good information for you to hold on to and think about going forward. So recently, I had a podcast listener reached out to me requesting a podcast on the topic of seminars, she said she'd had some bad experiences with seminars that had led her to avoid them altogether. And that after listening to podcast, Episode 10, on self sabotage, which you can find at [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com), forward slash 10. She decided to take the plunge and attend a seminar in the next couple of months. In the case of this particular listener, she felt like



maybe just maybe she was engaging in the kind of self sabotage that is simply not showing up because of some unpleasant emotions she'd experienced at previous seminars. What she was really interested in was how to handle advice that she might be given at a seminar that she might not really buy into. She wanted to know, does she discuss the advice or ignore it? And how to accept advice when she feels defensive about it? She also wanted to know whether or not I'd recommend auditing or participating at a seminar and I'll get to that, but I think her questions were really great ones that are the perfect topic for a podcast episode, especially since I'm spending this week on the road teaching seminars for several days in a row. So there's a lot to unpack in her questions, which again, I think are really great questions. How do you deal with the feelings of anxiety you might encounter at a seminar and why you may find that seminars make you feel even more anxious and competitions, how to deal with feelings that other people might be judging you and have opinions of you that you may not want them to have. How to deal with that feeling of bristling up or getting defensive when you're at a seminar and the presenter offers up advice or a critique of what they've observed. And how to decide what advice to fold into your training and handling. When to ask for more information and when to say thanks. but no thanks. So I'm going to start with that last point. First, how to decide what advice to fold into your own personal handling and training system. When to ask for more information and when to say thanks. but no thanks. So first of all, I think it's important to have some pretty clear values defined for yourself, meaning, what are the values you hold highest when it comes to how you conduct yourself as a person, how you conduct yourself as a dog, Owner, trainer, and handler and that kind of stuff. If I'm asked to do something that's going to put me outside the boundaries have my values, I'm not going to do it. I owe it to myself to the people I care about and to my dogs to maintain that internal integrity. Now, having said that, I do think it's important to make sure that I'm being level headed when I'm questioning whether or not something I'm being asked to do may violate my values. I'm going to ask the seminar presenter for clarification and to play out some hypothetical scenarios that take what I'm being



asked to do some theoretical endpoint. Stuff like what consequences will what I'm being asked to do have when it comes to my dog's understanding of a particular behavior or handling move? If I'm asked to do something that contradicts my dog's current understanding of a concept or behavior, is there a plan to account for that? I don't want to just knee jerk and get defensive and throw something out that I'm uncomfortable with by saying it goes against my values. Discomfort is uncomfortable, but if being uncomfortable goes against my values, I'm never going to make much progress when it comes to learning new skills. But if I'm asked to do something that truly violates my sense of internal integrity, even after asking some clarifying question, shins, then I'm going to be clear about not jumping wholeheartedly onto adopting whatever that something is.

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Next step are those things that I don't think violate my values or internal integrity. But things that I've got a little spidey sense about that may produce a conflict with something else that I've trained my dog to do. So perfect example is layering. Layering is when you ask your dog to bypass an obstacle that's between you and the dog. Why might I not want to layer? Well, because teaching my dog to layer obstacles can make it more difficult for my dog to come in and take obstacles, say in a serpentine situation. Now, I'll leave you guys to look up those terms, if you're not familiar with them. That doesn't mean I'm not going to layer. I do it all the time. But I've taken the time to think through the consequences of layering obstacles, and I can tell you what they are, and what skills will be weakened because of them. And I accept those consequences as potential limitations, and that's fine. In that case, I'm going to ask questions, how do you account for the skill that will be weakened when I do this other thing you're asking me to do? If the seminar presenter doesn't have a clear answer, I might do what they're asking in the moment just to see how it plays out. Because, you know, let's be honest, at one day at a seminar isn't likely to completely ruin all my dog training up to that point. But I'm going to



think on it some more before I run home and change my handling and training plans. So there's a lot of space in between those two scenarios, stuff that violates my values, and stuff that presents an unknown or makes me uncomfortable. And that stuff is often where the golden tidbits of information are. Usually if I come away from a seminar with one tidbit, it's totally worth it. And I'll also say this, I don't go to seminars to be comfortable or to show off my stuff. I mean, I don't want to over face my dogs or myself, but I'm going to a seminar to get somebody else's perspective on things, to hear where they're coming from, and to take advantage of their expertise. I am picky about the seminars I go to, but if I go, I go to learn, get a little uncomfortable, brought my defenses and look at things in a way I might not have otherwise, it's a little bit of a gamble, because I don't expect to come away with much for my time or money, maybe just that one little thing. But I do go with an open mind nevertheless. And that kind of ties in with my next point, how to go to a seminar and deal with feelings of defensiveness that may pop up. Now as a seminar presenter, I do recognize that what I'm seeing on a given day is just a tiny glimpse into the whole of a team's relationship training, handling and history of reinforcement. As a seminar attendee, I also recognize that what the presenter sees is through that tiny, tiny window. But I will say that there are some things that a good presenter can see pretty much right away, that can really cut to the core of a problem, your regular instructor may have given up telling you this thing. And you may not have wanted to really look at whatever that thing is in detail. And you know, it's I'm talking about that problem that you kind of hope will go away if you just don't pay attention to it. But seminar presenter X sees that thing and comments on it not from a place of judgment, but from a place of wanting to nail down a perceived issue quickly and get right onto a solution. After all, that's why you came to the seminar. And that's what that seminar presenter is going to assume. The thing is, when a presenter who we've not been around for more than five minutes sees right through us with some fundamental deficiency or weakness in our training or handling, it really can leave us feeling a bit naked and vulnerable to say the least. And the seminar presenter may also be using us as an example to



others. While they're talking about that problem for all to hear. I do this all the time. And for a couple of good reasons. First of all, that problem that the seminar presenter, maybe even me just brought to light, you may feel alone in that moment, and that you're being made an example of but I assure you, you are not alone. And it's very likely that another person in your seminar group is going to come after you and have the same issue or something very similar. When I teach a seminar and an issue comes up, I want to point it out to the person having the issue, propose some solutions and point out to others in the group how their dogs may benefit from the solutions as well. Very different dogs can benefit from the same solutions to a problem for different reasons, but with a similar end benefit. So I'm going to be keen to highlight how your issues are really interwoven with the issues and or weaknesses of your fellow seminar attendees. And I also want to make sure that I generalize an issue so that everybody listening in can see how different dogs can have very similar issues that may manifest differently but have a similar root cause and you just never know if your next dog may benefit from this information even if the dog that you're attending with doesn't. So I always encourage people to tune in to every team when they're running. If the presenter is a good one with some real expertise, they're going to have worked with enough different dogs before provide a perspective that's way broader than your own. I only own a handful of dogs personally, but I've worked with hundreds. And I file away the things that I see over and over and over again, because I know those things will benefit teams I work with in the future. Now finally, let's talk about feeling judged. Watch scrutinized naked and vulnerable at a seminar I've talked about in previous podcast episodes, how lonely it can feel walking into the ring in a competition with that feeling that everybody's watching. There's an element of isolation that immediately signals our lizard brain that there's danger. We're not with our tribe, we're exposed and we could die. I mean, of course, this is not the case. And of course, you're not alone. at a seminar more so than a show people are watching, at least I hope they are, because they could be learning from your experience and then applying it to their own. They could be asking questions to clarify what a seminar



presenter is telling you, because they want to understand the advice that's being given. And if you've listened to episode nine on other people's opinions, which you can listen to at [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com), forward slash nine, you'll already know what I'm about to say. And that is that most people are thinking far less about you than you might think, and are far more wrapped up in their own internal experience. So while you may be worrying that you're being judged by your fellow attendees, they're busy worrying about what's going to happen on their turn. And the seminar presenter may also be worrying about how you're going to leave the whole interaction feeling, or whether you process what they were trying to tell you, or if they're going to be seen as a fraud, etc, etc, etc. At the end of it all, if you feel a little naked and vulnerable at a seminar, and uncomfortable, you are absolutely in that sweet spot to really learn something. And I will encourage you to try this the next time you're in a class or a seminar, say out loud how you're feeling. Say out loud, man, I felt naked as a baby out there by myself, say out loud, man, I think that seminar presenter just saw right through me to some weaknesses, I have tried hard to cover up. Maybe it'll be something like, Man, I'm gonna really need to think on this one. And you're going to discover several important things. One, that you're not alone, and that as a group, several other attendees may be feeling similarly to you may get the opportunity to hear the information that seminar presenter offered up as interpreted by one of those other attendees, which may be a great starting point for furthering your own understanding or getting more clarification from the seminar presenter. And finally, that by being that person who wasn't afraid to say the quiet part out loud, you'll realize that it really wasn't so bad. After all, you survived maybe even how to laugh with the group felt like a weight lifted off your shoulders and opened yourself up to really examine the seminar for that one nugget of information that could really be a potential game changer, or a problem that's been nagging at you for quite a while, something you maybe just couldn't put your finger on a solution for, because maybe you're too close to the problem to see it clearly. So there are some of my thoughts on how to really maximize your seminar experience. I'm really glad that I was asked to address this topic by a



podcast listener, and I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts on this topic. And of course, if you've got a question or topic that you'd like me to address on the podcast, feel free to leave a comment at [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com). On any of the episode pages, you can even leave a voice memo if you'd prefer to talk at me instead of writing to me. I hope you enjoyed this episode. And if you're heading to a seminar sometime soon, put on your student hat. Go with an open mind and an open heart and a good solid sense of your values. And have a wonderful time. That's all for today. Bye bye. If you enjoyed today's podcast and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things we talked about today, head to the webpage for today's episode, [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 12. And scroll to the bottom you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. I'm a pretty tech savvy person but even for me it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead and head on over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 12. subscribe to the podcast, leave a review and share it with a friend. Also, you can leave a comment below the episode and let me know your thoughts about what we discussed today. I'd love to hear from you, and maybe discuss your thoughts on a future episode.