

What are the "4 D's" of Dog Training?

"PAWS-IBILITIES!"
WITH DOGS!



**The four D's
are what
defines your
dog's
reliability.**



Simply put, the 4 D's are conditions under which you train your dog to 'build' the reliability of the 'cue' and their ability to do it, no matter what! We often find ourselves saying, "I don't know why he won't do it - he does it perfectly at home!" Well, these '4D's are exactly why! The behavior needs to be 'proofed' under a variety of conditions that happen in real life! Let's explain a little better!

The 4D's include:

Duration – how long your dog can 'perform' a given cue, usually holding position. Building 'duration' gives your dog clarity for a release cue.



Distance – responding to, and/or performing the full criteria of a behavior, no matter the distance from your dog when you give the cue, or require him to continue the behavior.



Distractions – responding to, and/or performing the full criteria of a behavior, regardless of the distraction which may be present. Add food, toys, people, other dogs, etc.



Difficulty or Diversity - responding in new situations, with unfamiliar criteria. Train on a different surface. Teach in a new location like outdoors or in a new building. Change up your own position when you ask for a behavior. Mix up the order in which you ask for behaviors.



Is your dog able to practice behaviors in new places like the Vet's office, the groomer or the Park? Ask for 'down' while you're in a seated position? Ask for Down while your dog is standing, rather than asking for 'sit' first?

Train each of the first 'D's - duration, distance, distractions ,separately.

We usually begin with duration, while staying close and not adding distance yet.

Then, we might add distance, but don't expect my dog to do the behavior for too long (duration).

When we add a distraction, we'd go back to being close (distance), and not waiting too long (duration).

Then, we might add a little distance and just a little duration.

Go slow, change each of these 'D's' gradually.

Now, take the foundational training and start adding 'Difficulty' in NEW ENVIRONMENTS!

Work behavior cues in a different environment to build absolute reliability for communicating with your dog!

Start at home, with a different room in your home; on different surfaces; in new situations you 'set-up'.

Then, take it out to the garage.

Then, into the backyard.

Then, into the front yard, or the driveway.

Then move to a friend's home, or a pet-friendly store, or a park, outside the Dog Park, etc.

BONUS: new environments add new distractions automatically!

**The more ways you practice & in the more new places in which you practice,
the more reliable the behavior becomes.**

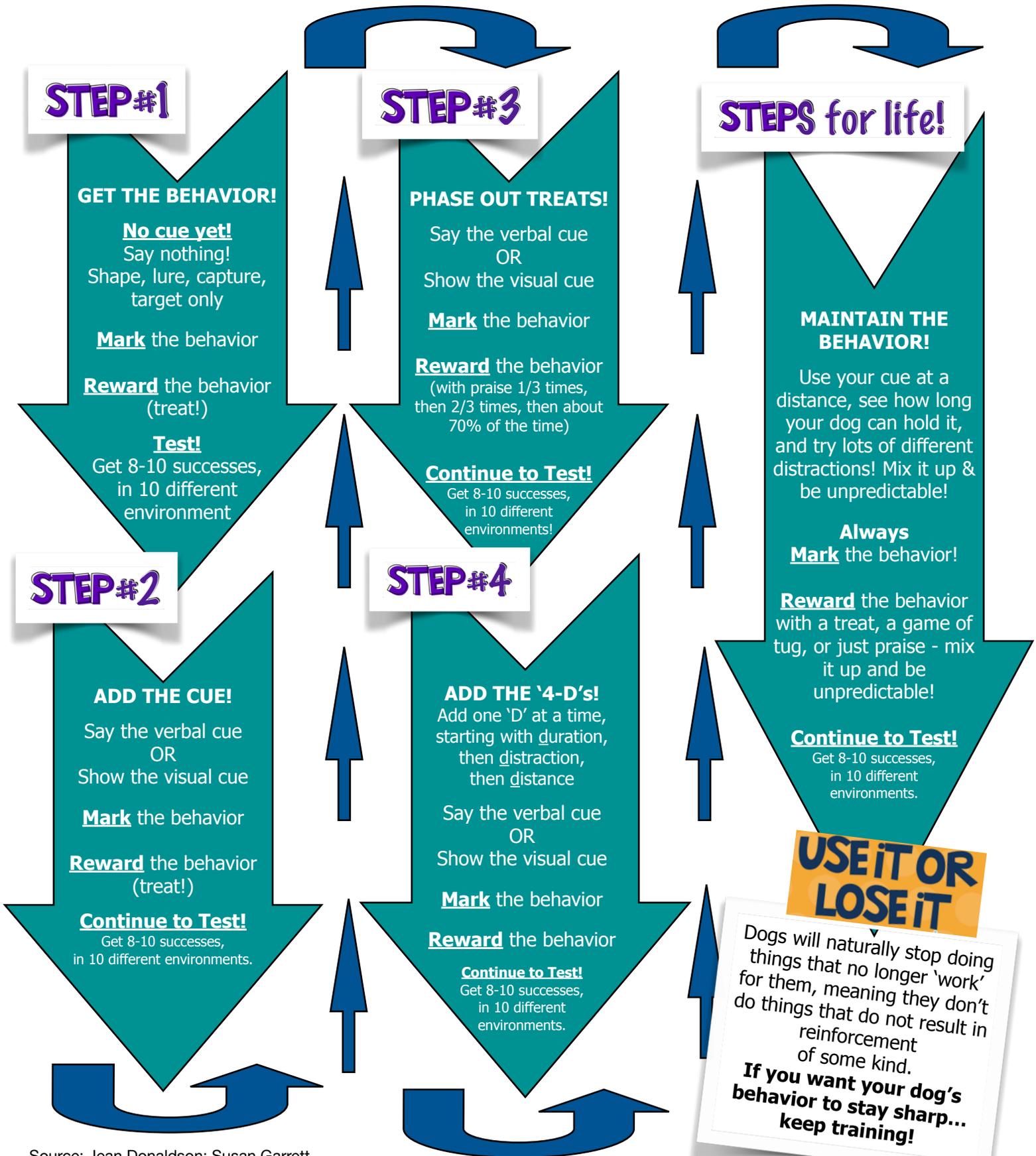
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Source: Jean Donaldson; Susan Garrett