

Tellington TTouch Overall Goals: A Process for “Just Do The Work” The Five Questions

By Debby Potts, Tellington TTouch Instructor



Whenever you are working with an animal, consider the following points. Remember that we aren't working to stop what we don't want, we are helping the animal to be the best he can be and when we do that, all sorts of problems can be resolved. Considering these points will be helpful in determining what Tellington TTouch® techniques to choose. I am describing dogs in this example but the same points can be adapted for any animal.

Is the dog in the best physical, mental and emotional balance?

Overall balance is a very important consideration for humans and animals. Physical, mental and emotional balance are all connected and influence each other. If a dog is pulling on the leash, he is out of balance physically and as a result we may find that he is also more likely to be reactive and over-emotional. Being able to address behavior from all of these perspectives is one of the reasons we can often help dogs that may not have been helped with other approaches. There are many TTouch techniques to improve balance.

Is the dog as comfortable in his body as possible?

Can you remember a time when you had a stiff neck or your back was sore? It probably made you less patient and more reactive to people around you. Perhaps it was difficult to think or to do things, even things you otherwise enjoyed doing. Like us, many dogs have tension patterns that influence their health, behavior and performance. Pain, fear, or the even the anticipation of pain can be powerful influences in our dogs' lives. Our goal is not about relaxing, though that can be helpful. It's really about releasing tension. TTouch can alleviate pain and tension which helps our dogs think and act rather than react instinctively.

Does the dog have self-control?

Having self-control helps our dogs to be safer, calmer, and easier to work with. As children we all had to learn to sit still and be quiet- even when we didn't want to. Our dogs have to learn the same things in order to live successfully in our culture and in our lives. This is not the same as training; many dogs are very skilled at following obedience commands but don't know what to do with themselves if they are not on a command. Too many dogs spend too much time on a command or locked away from people because they are difficult to manage. Many TTouch techniques, especially the ground work, helps dogs to develop the self-control to live a happy life with humans.

Are you communicating clearly & understanding the communication from the dog?

Sometimes we think we are communicating clearly when we are not. Communicating can be difficult even when we speak the same language. Clear communication comes from having a clear picture of what we *want* from the dog (not what we don't want) and using tools and techniques that communicate that intent clearly. It's amazing how smart our dogs get when we are more clear! It is also about understanding the communication you are receiving from your dog. How do you know when the dog is not okay? What is it specifically about her behavior that makes you think she is excited, happy, nervous, etc.? Keep your mind open rather than being attached to your opinion.

Are you building a relationship of trust?

All of the above points exist under the umbrella of developing a trusting relationship. It is the most important part of the TTouch philosophy. You can't MAKE a dog trust you; it has to come as a result of what you DO. We are working *with* the dog, not doing things *to* him. Break things down, and think about what is reasonable. Work to understand his point of view and consider the actions that you take as a consequence. TTouch creates a relationship of trust and respect that not only helps you to work with the dog in a way that is safer and easier, it also opens up the possibility of creating results and developing a relationship beyond what you might have thought possible.



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