Understanding Threshold

& meeting our puppies where they're at
Why it's important

- Know how much our puppies can handle at a certain moment
- Realize when it's time to leave a situation immediately
- Understand the emotional state of our puppy so we can act accordingly
HOW INTENSE is the trigger for the dog?

Consider details and adjust the intensity. Is the trigger moving fast/slow? Is the trigger facing the dog with his "blunt end" or "pointy end"?

HOW FAR AWAY from the dog is the trigger?

Ideal distance: the dog can split his attention between the trigger and on his handler ("Think and Learn" zone)

FOR HOW LONG will the dog be asked to deal with the trigger?

Ideal duration: depends on intensity and distance. When in doubt, keep it brief, listen to what your dog tells you.

Trigger is TOO INTENSE = increase distance + shorten duration
Trigger is TOO CLOSE = decrease intensity + shorten duration
Dealing with Trigger for TOO LONG = increase distance + decrease intensity
Stay on the beach analogy

**GREEN ZONE**
- loose body
- soft mouth, ears
- not avoiding trigger
- sniffing ground
- passing glances, easy to look away
- moving to explore environment

**BLUE ZONE**
- gathering info
- arcs towards trigger
- ears up
- focused eyes
- air-scenting
- disengages easily

**YELLOW ZONE**
- more than a few seconds to disengage
- weight shifted slightly back
- confidence is going back up
- avoiding trigger somewhat
- still able to look at trigger
- Tail low

**ORANGE ZONE**
- weight shifted far back
- preparing to run away
- tail tucked under
- ears pinned back
- crouched down
- pickier about food
- pupil dilation

**RED ZONE**
- unable to eat
- dry panting
- shivering
- drooling
- running from trigger
- barking

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- **Ideal**
  Follow the dog. No prompt needed.

- **OK**
  Wait for disengagement and follow the dog. Slow Stop at the shoreline (straight approaches, etc.)

- **Help After**
  Prompt after disengagement, encourage back to shore. Shift weight. Verbal "done?"

- **Call Away**
  Prompt right away. Move to 'dry land', and treat.

- **Get Away**
  Try to avoid restraining flight, cue to get into working mode.
Stay on the beach analogy

GREEN ZONE
- loose body
- soft mouth, ears
- not avoiding trigger
- sniffing ground
- passing glances,
easy to look away
- moving to explore
environment
When is your puppy in the green zone?
Stay on the beach analogy

**BLUE ZONE**
- gathering info
- arcs towards trigger
- ears up
- focused eyes
- air-scenting
- disengages easily
When is your puppy in the blue zone?
Stay on the beach analogy

YELLOW ZONE
- more than a few seconds to disengage
- weight shifted slightly back
- confidence is going back up
- avoiding trigger somewhat
- still able to look at trigger
- Tail low
When is your puppy in the yellow zone?
Stay on the beach analogy

**ORANGE ZONE**
- weight shifted far back
- preparing to run away
- tail tucked under
- ears pinned back
- crouched down
- pickier about food
- pupil dilation
Has your puppy been in the orange zone? If so, where?
Stay on the beach analogy

RED ZONE
- unable to eat
- dry panting
- shivering
- drooling
- running from trigger
- barking
Has your puppy been in the red zone?