

Nicole Polisenno

Owner, Dog Trainer | **Better Together Dog Training**

Nicole Polisenno grew up on Long Island, New York. Growing up she always wanted a dog. She was allowed to have a cat, parakeets, hamsters, fish and an iguana – but never a dog. As soon as she moved out of her parent’s home, she bought a Dachshund and named him Georgie. Nicole loved Georgie more than anything in the world and spoiled him rotten. However, she did all the wrong things with him, and he was the worst-behaved dog ever.

Nicole received an A.A. from Briarcliffe Business School and was immediately hired by AAA Auto Club. She worked there for 14 years advancing to become the president’s administrative assistant. Unfortunately, her boss passed away and she was left with two choices: stay at AAA or pursue her passion- dogs. She chose dogs and hasn’t looked back. In 2003, Nicole signed up with the Academy of Canine Education in Queens, New York, and learned from the best, Anthony Jerone. She received her Master Dog Training Certificate and started her own obedience training business. While doing so she realized she needed a supplemental income while growing her business and was hired by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Inc. She also attended BOCES and received her Certificate in Animal First Aid.

Unfortunately, Nicole then sustained a neck injury and underwent spinal surgery, which entailed a long, slow, recovery process. While recovering she became a Christian and with the help of Jesus she got back on her feet again, healed, and recovered. She then started another career in nannying and began taking care of children. Then, COVID happened, and everyone seemed to get a dog to keep them company during isolation. Nicole took this as a sign, and knew it was time to jump back into dog training full time again. She revamped her dog training programs and started Better Together Dog Training. Her dog training programs transform dogs and their families. Nicole is both a dog trainer and a people trainer. She notes that in Ecclesiastes 4:9 it says, “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.” Nicole believes that people are better together. She teaches people how to reinforce training their dog and understand their behaviors. Nicole feels that she can accomplish better behavior from dogs including transformations using the relationship between people and their dogs. She is responsible for the overall operations and management of the business, the marketing, training, and ensuring the safety of both dogs and their owners during the process.

In her spare time, Nicole enjoys walking and visiting parks with her dog, attending and serving at her church, going to the beach, bicycling, being outdoors, and enjoying the flowers, trees, birds, warm weather, and being with her family and friends.



What advice would you give someone who is considering getting a dog for the first time?

Consider the amount of time and money you will have available for your dog. Dogs are living beings and have similar needs to children. For a dog to thrive and be happy they need your attention and time. They need to be cared for their entire lifetime, approximately ten to 20 years depending on the breed. They need medical attention, yearly veterinary visits and vaccinations. They need to be trained, walked, exercised, and most of all Loved.

Consider the breed you want. Research which breeds you are interested in and match them to your lifestyle. Are you an outdoors person? Or are you more laid back and want a couch potato buddy? Do you live in an apartment with no backyard or a have a house with a fenced in yard? Do you have children? If so, what ages are your children? Some breeds are better around children than others. All this needs to be considered when picking out your pup.

Consider if you want to raise your dog from a puppy and deal with potty training, crate training, and teething. Or would you rather skip those stages of puppyhood and get an older dog who knows this already?

What are the most common mistakes dog owners make?

The biggest mistake people make is not training their puppy when the puppy comes home. Most people think a puppy is going to know what to do when they bring one home. They will not. They are puppies and will act like puppies. They pee and poop wherever they want, chew on anything and everything, jump and mouth people, cry, bark, and don’t know how to walk on a leash. They are a lot of



work, but if you get professional advice and start training the puppy right away it will relieve a lot of stress on you and the household for a happier life together.

In some ways you are both a ‘people’ trainer and a dog trainer. What challenges do you face in this dual role?

Training the pup is the easy part of my job. The challenge is teaching people who have their own ideas and usually have been trying to train their pup for some time before reaching out to hire me. Humans are creatures of habit. Helping people form new habits and new routines with their pups is a challenge. When I’m called in to help, people are desperate, willing, and wanting a change. They follow my advice and experience results.

Can you tell us your top three training tips for someone who can’t afford a professional trainer?

Crate train your dog. Train your puppy to love being in the crate. This includes feeding, giving treats he loves in the crate, and putting a light sheet or blanket over the crate. Dogs are den animals and like the feeling of a covered crate. Your dog is safest in a crate when home alone and when they are sleeping. This prevents your puppy or dog from eating or chewing on the wrong thing which could be detrimental to his health and life.

Exercise your pup. Just like exercise is good for people, the same is true for dogs. They must get out and go for a

walk on a leash not just be put in the yard to occupy themselves.

Teach your dog words, commands, and tricks. Dogs love and need to think. Not only do they need physical exercise, but they need mental stimulation. The more you teach your dog and make him think the happier your pup will be.

What sets Better Together Dog Training apart from other dog training businesses?

I am a balanced trainer, which simply means the type of approach I use to train and modify your dog’s behavior. I will assess your dog and take into consideration the breed, characteristics, and temperament. I will assess your lifestyle – whether it entails active, moderate, or low level activities. I will assess your concerns and exactly what challenges you are experiencing with your dog. I will then create a personalized program with the best style of training for you and your dog to succeed and live a happy healthy life together.

What does the word power mean to you?

Knowledge is power. Some of my clients call me desperate, defeated, discouraged needing help. Their dog has taken over the household and is out of control. I go to their home and teach them how to communicate, understand and train their dog. This changes the whole dynamics of the household, and they regain their peaceful households back. Knowledge is power.