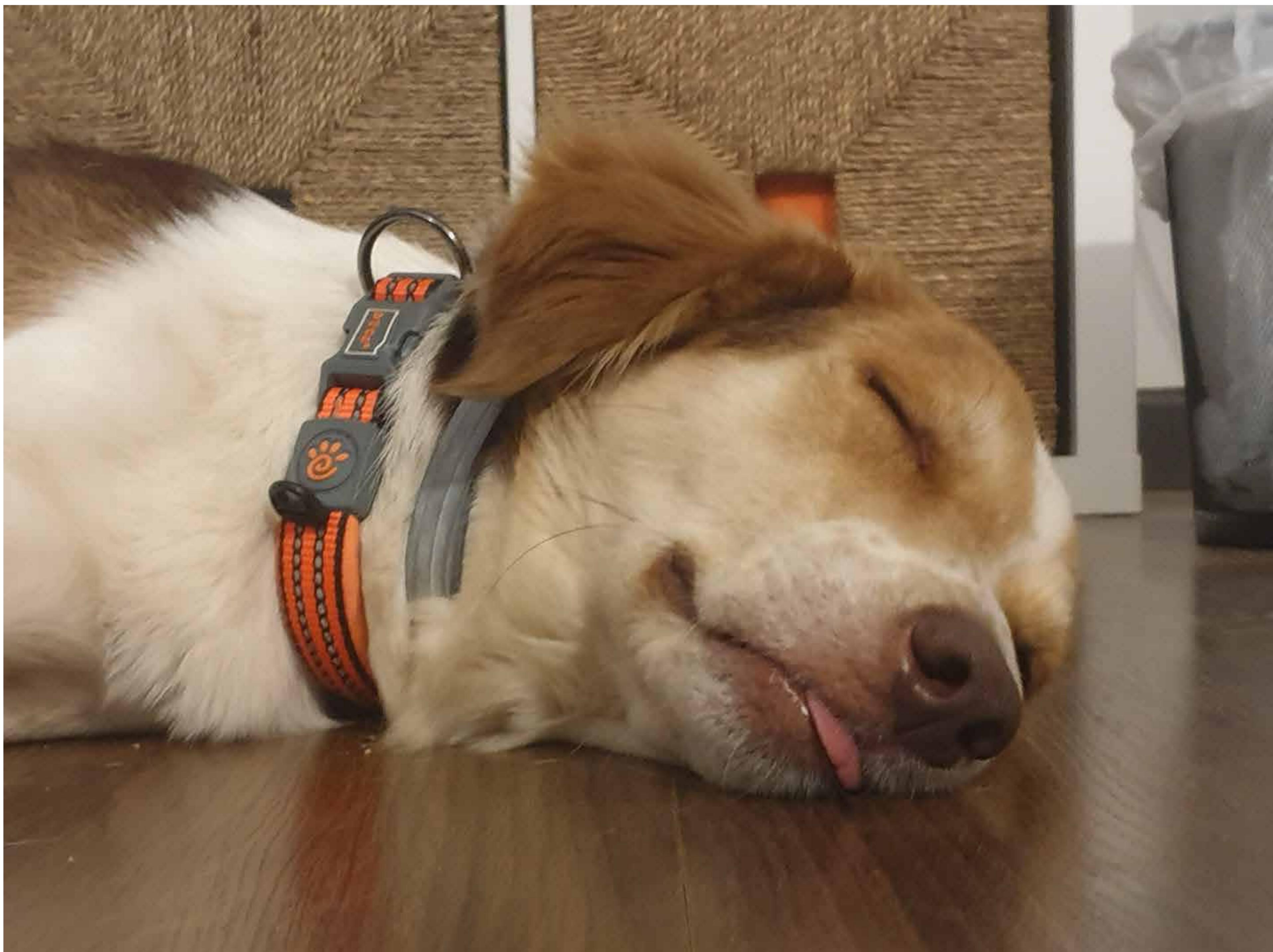


# 10 Truths of Force Free Training for Dogs



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*Biscuit*

## 1. Welfare First

To feel safe and contented, dogs need to be free from pain, be in a healthy body condition, have freedom of movement, indoor living quarters, consistent company of human and animal friends and be living in familiar, calm surroundings.

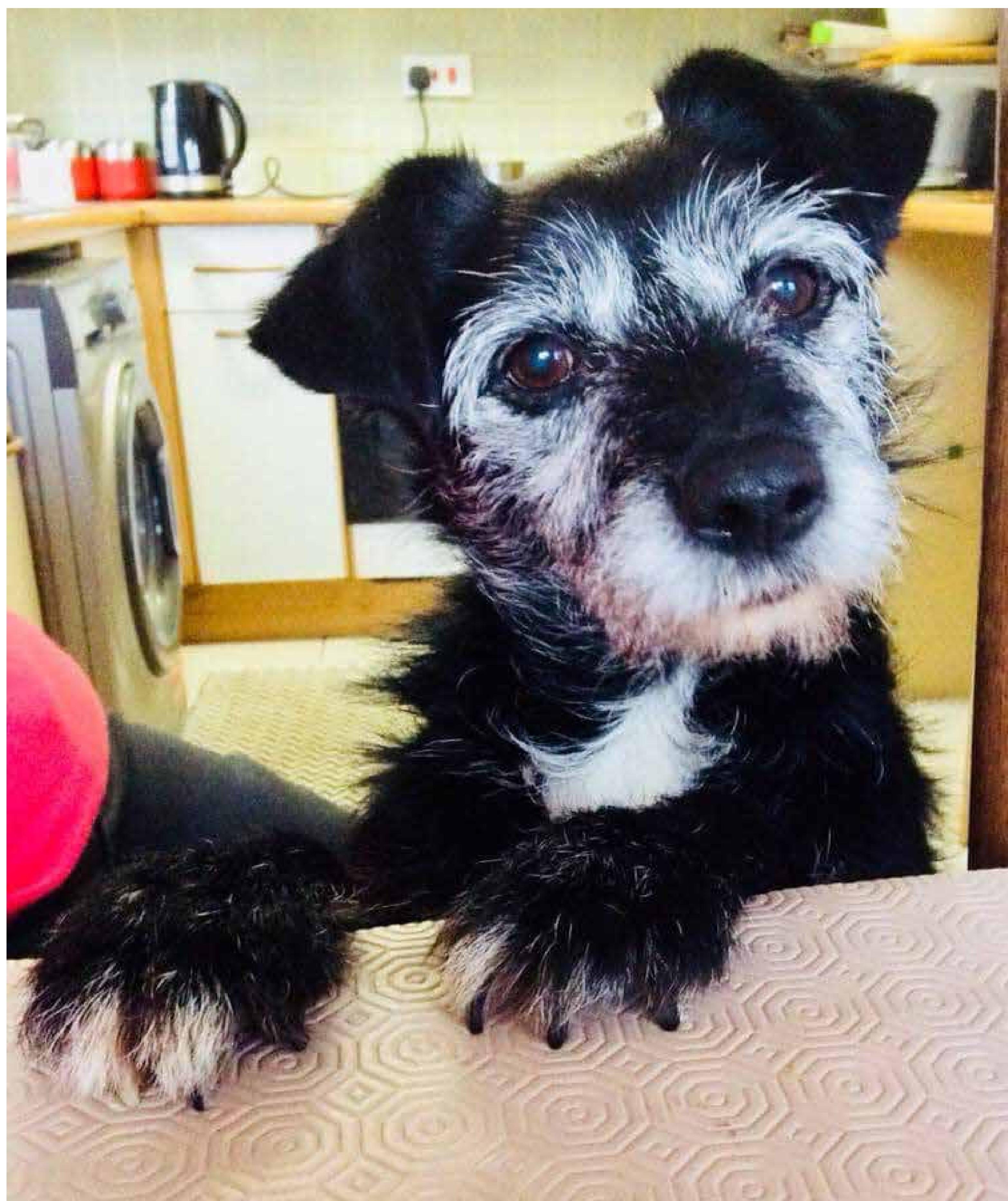


*Blue*

## 2. Enrichment

Our dogs will thrive when provided with an enriching environment where they have a variety of terrains to explore with their noses. Opportunities to dig, roll and interact with different surfaces, scents, textures and other animals (human or otherwise) may\* also be of benefit to some dogs. Play with other dogs or human-led is also an important component of enriching a dog's life.

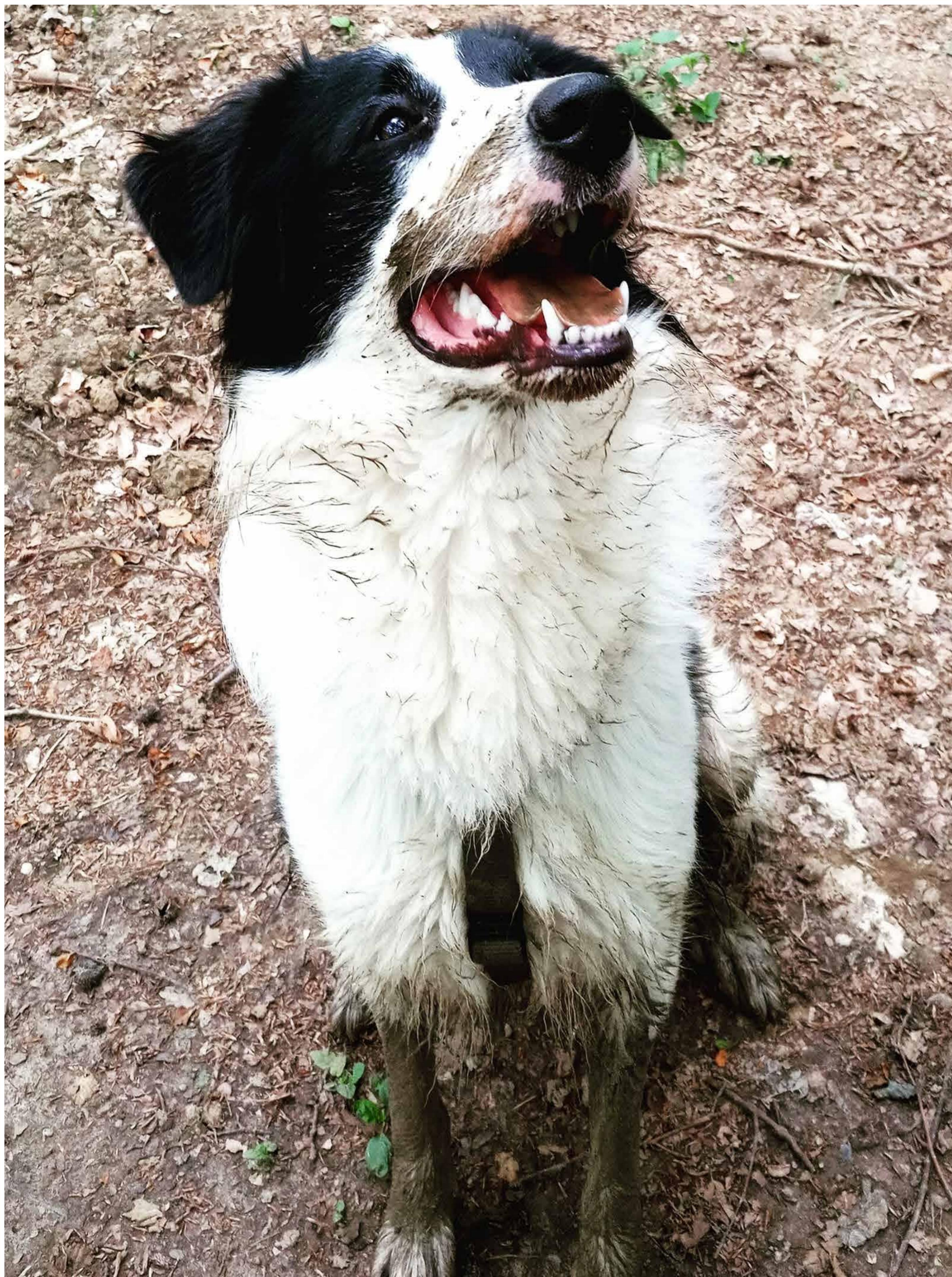
\*some dogs may experience the presence of humans and other animals as aversive



*Poppy*

### 3. No Fear No Force

All the behaviours that are necessary for our dogs' emotional, mental and physical health can be learned without them experiencing any fear, and without the use of pressure, coercion, restraint, confinement, correction or force.



*Malusi*

## 4. Freedom of Mind

Dogs need time each day to be unconfined and unrestrained, and free from pain, discomfort, anxiety, irritation and frustration in order to be in a relaxed emotional state for learning.



*Pepper*

## 5. Choice and a Voice

Having a way to express their choice is empowering for the dog, and choice is the foundation stone of trust. Learning how to teach dogs to express their preferences and choice without showing avoidance is also immensely empowering for us as dog lovers.

A dog who feels they have the option to say “no” is more likely to say “yes” to the essential things we need them to do for their own health and welfare, as well as those things that are for our own pleasure and enjoyment as owners.



*Meessa*

## 6. Positive Reinforcement “The Sciencey Bit”

All animals on the planet learn what behaviour “works” for them when they experience consequences. They will act to get things they like or value and that bring them enjoyment and pleasure, or to escape or avoid things they find painful, frightening, frustration, annoying or uncomfortable.



*Scooter*

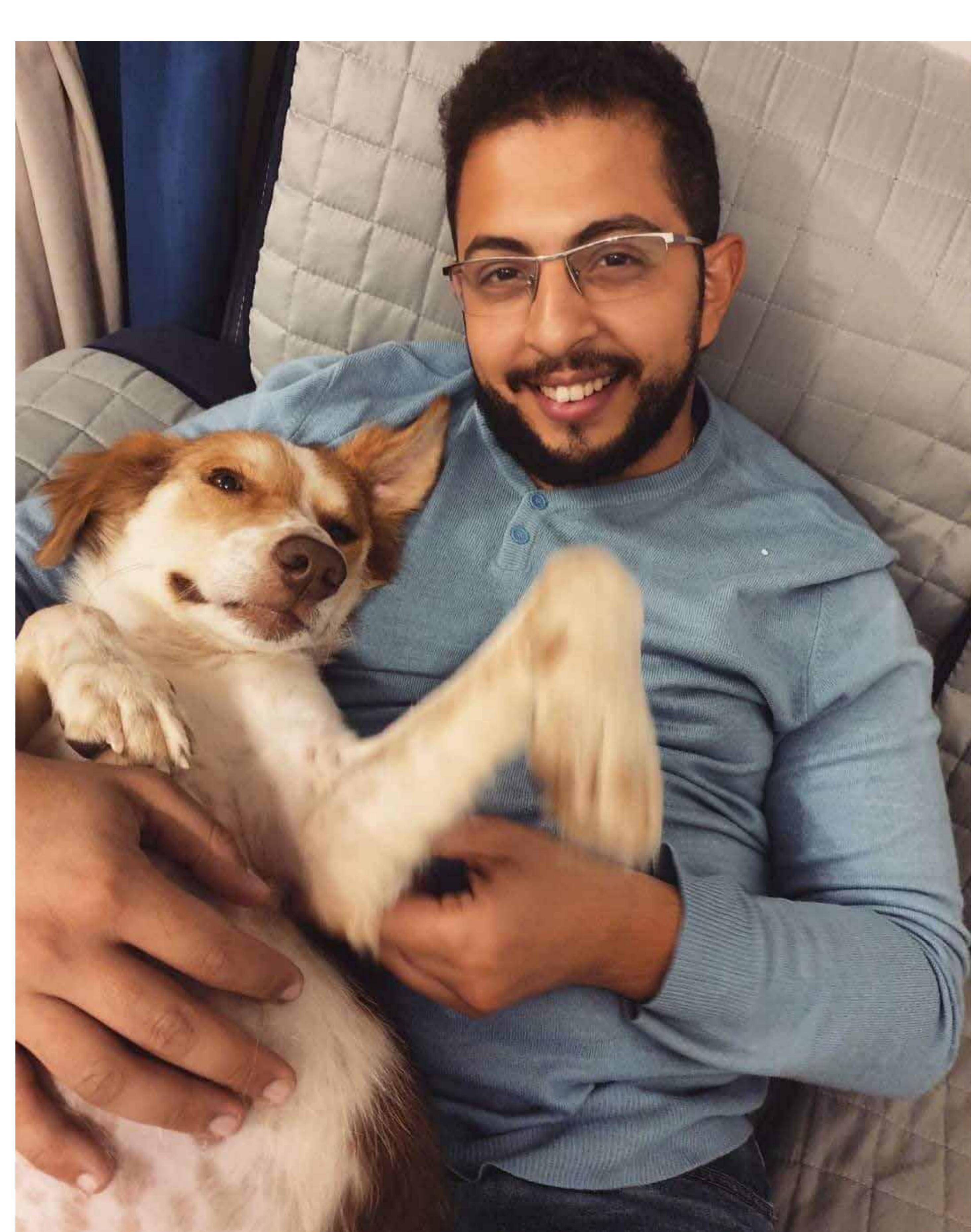
If you want a relationship with your dog that is fear and conflict free, then using a toolkit based on providing things that your dog likes and values to reinforce desired behaviour is the ONLY productive way to train him.



*Harley*

## 7. Positive Perceptions

All animals are quick to form perceptions and opinions. A single significantly frightening or painful experience can create a strong memory and sensitise a dog to a place, procedure, situation, object or person – or people in general - such that they show a strong urge to avoid that in future.



*Biscuit & Rassmy*

Perception can to some extent be changed, but it's much easier to teach an animal to have good perceptions of people, places, events and things from the start. Traumatic or painful experiences and memories are rarely forgotten and easily triggered. No dog ever does anything for no reason.



*Skully*

## 8. Context is Everything

All behaviour we see from our dogs is motivated either by something the dog wants to get, or something they want to get away from or avoid.



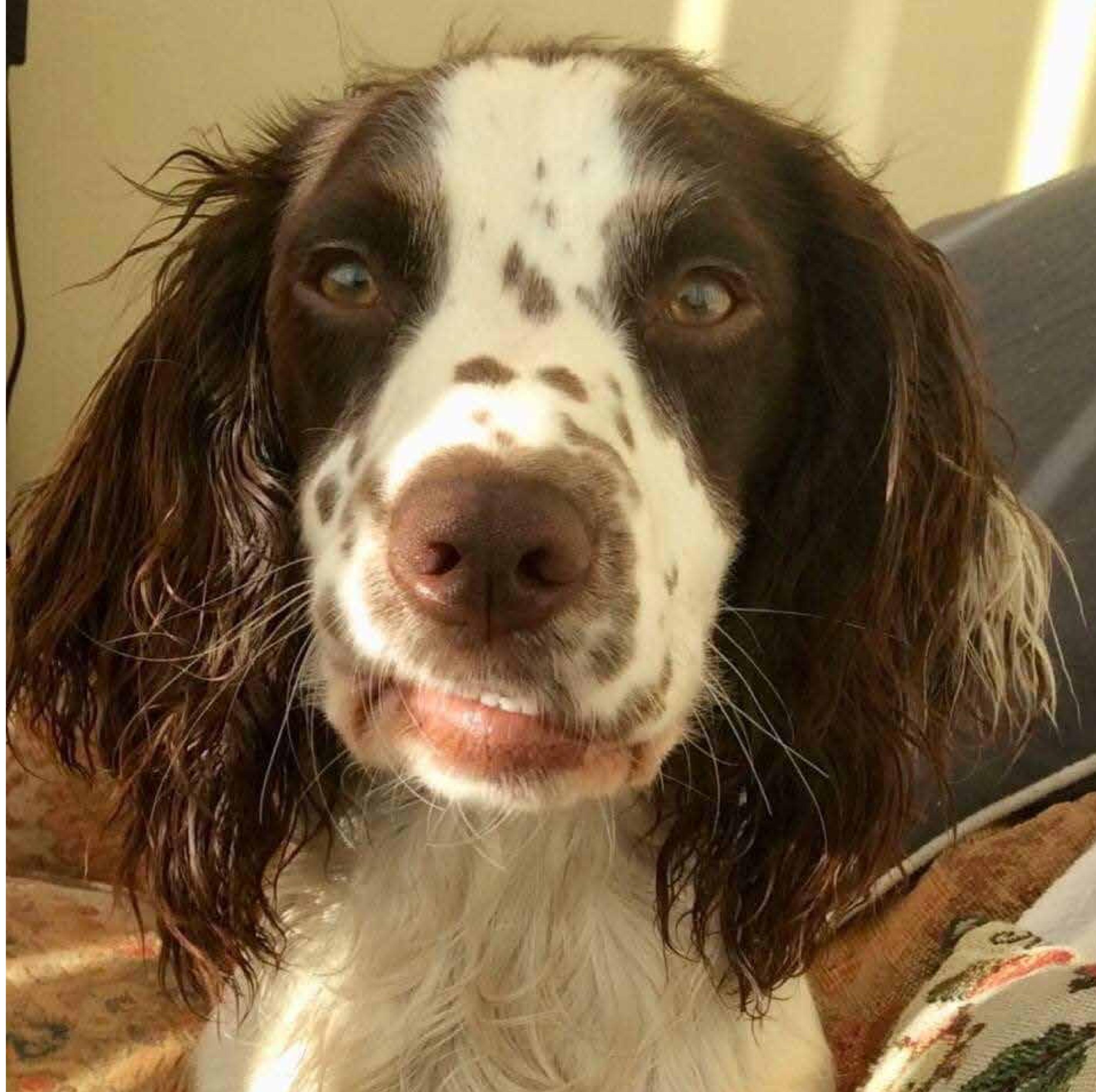
*Lia*

However, to change behaviour, we should first look at the conditions in which it occurs. What that means is that if we see a behaviour that is indicative of stress, escape or avoidance, or that is unsafe for the dog, for other animals or for people, then we need to get curious about what is motivating our dog to behave like that. We need to be willing to change something we are doing, so that the dog no longer feels the need to perform the behaviour. To quote Dr Susan Friedman “We can change behaviour by changing the conditions in which it occurs.” Almost always that means it’s us that needs to change our behaviour first.



## 9. Force Free in Practice

In order for our training to truly qualify as force-free, and in particular for it to qualify as positive reinforcement, the behaviour must first be produced without any kind of aversive (unpleasant) prompt or threat, however mild we believe it to be.



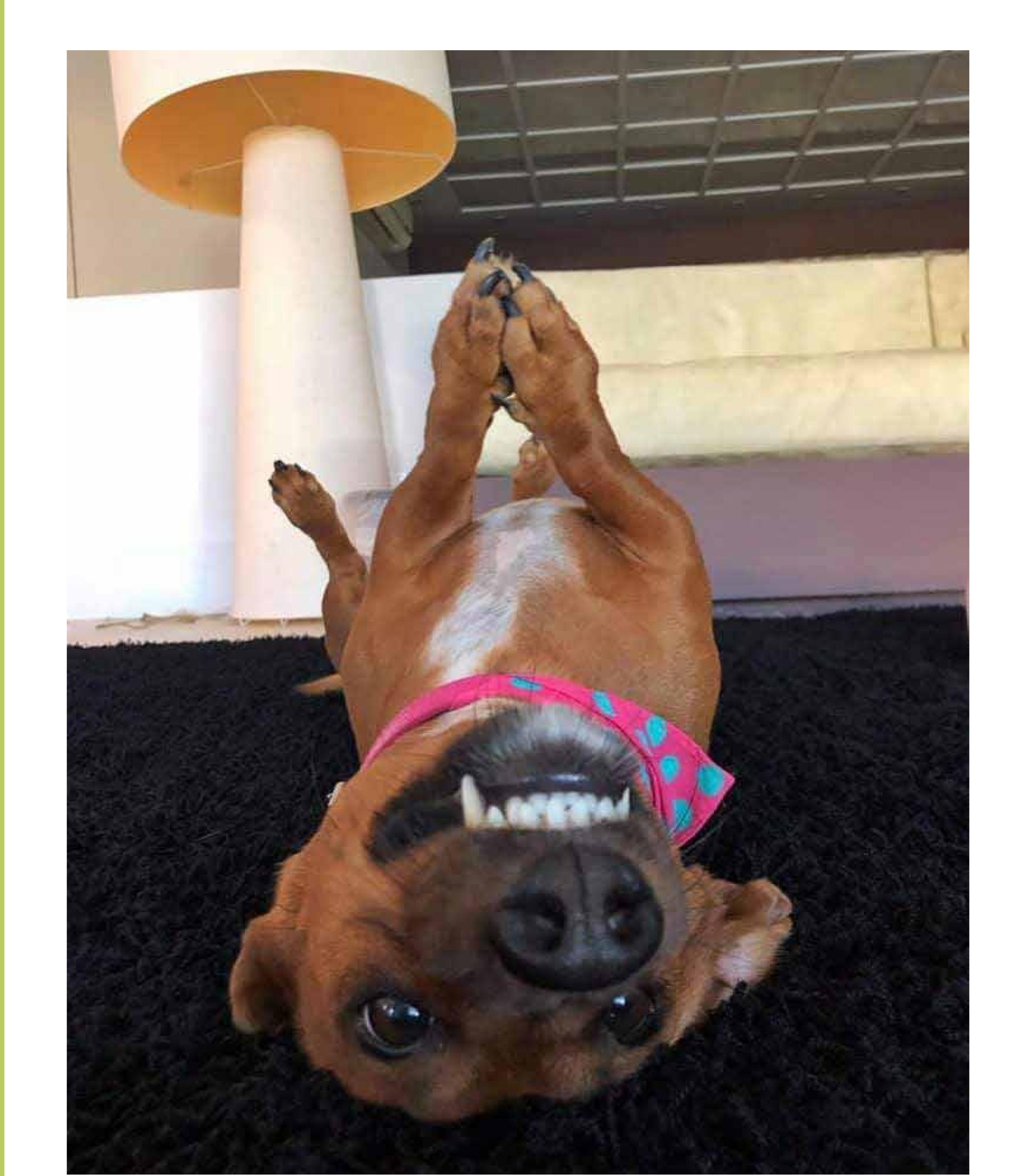
*Brooke*

During the teaching phase of training behaviours, we do not produce behaviour with our voice, body language gestures, our posture, our energy, intention or expression and we do not use tools including a leash or harness, to cause the behaviour to happen.



*Zizi*

We produce the behaviour either with a food lure or a target or we set up the environment so that it's likely that they will perform a step in the direction of the behaviour we want, of their own accord, and then mark and reinforce it with food, play, affection or environmental reinforcement - such as going outside to explore.

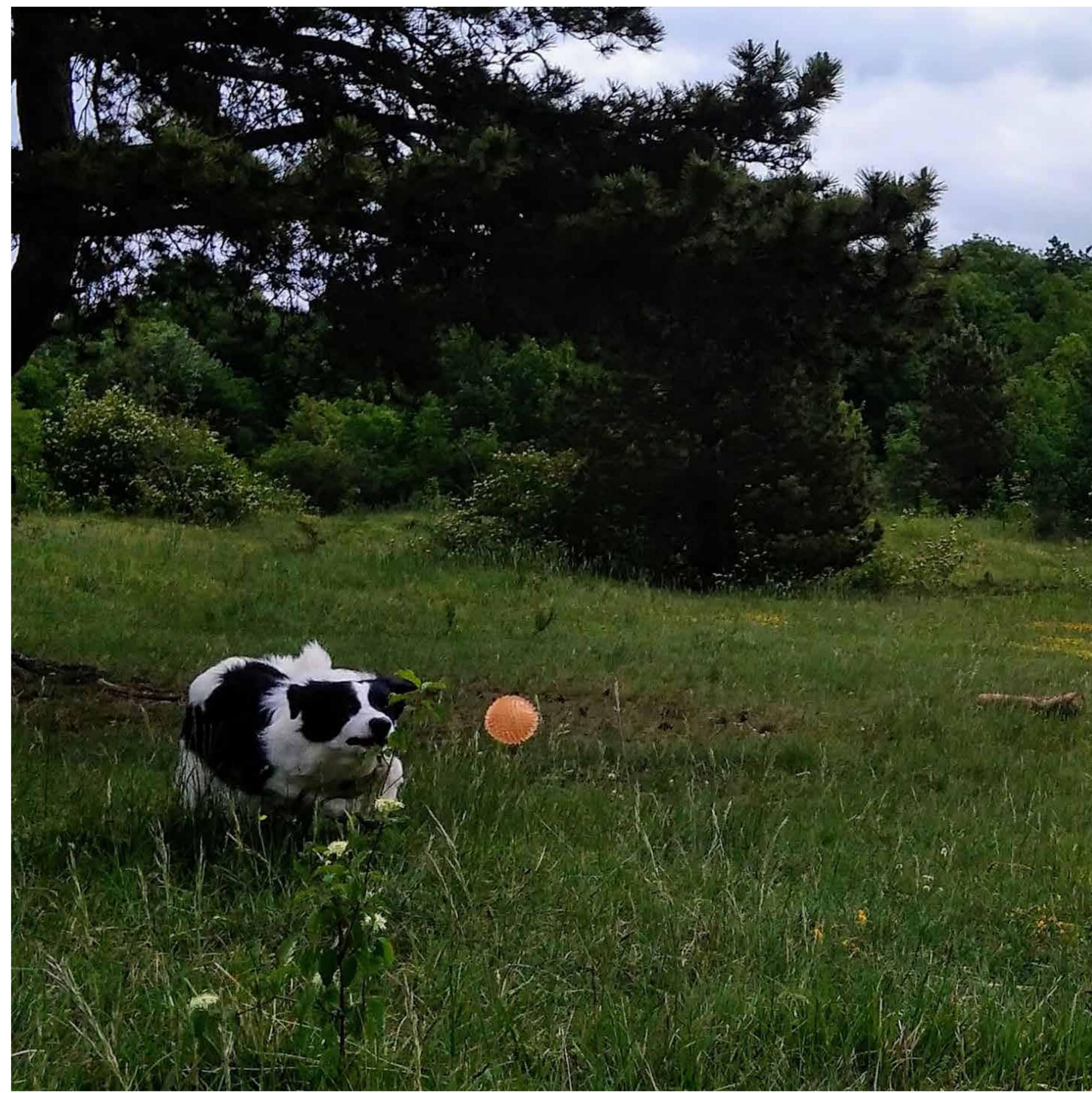


*Lia*

## 10. The Dog Decides

For food, play or affection to be considered to be a reward - positively reinforcing (and not a relief - negatively reinforcing), our animal must not be irritably itchy, hungry or food-frustrated. Animals who are discontented, stressed or frustrated find it very difficult to focus on their own behaviour, and their learning is impaired.

We think that's a pretty good start! Can you think of any more?



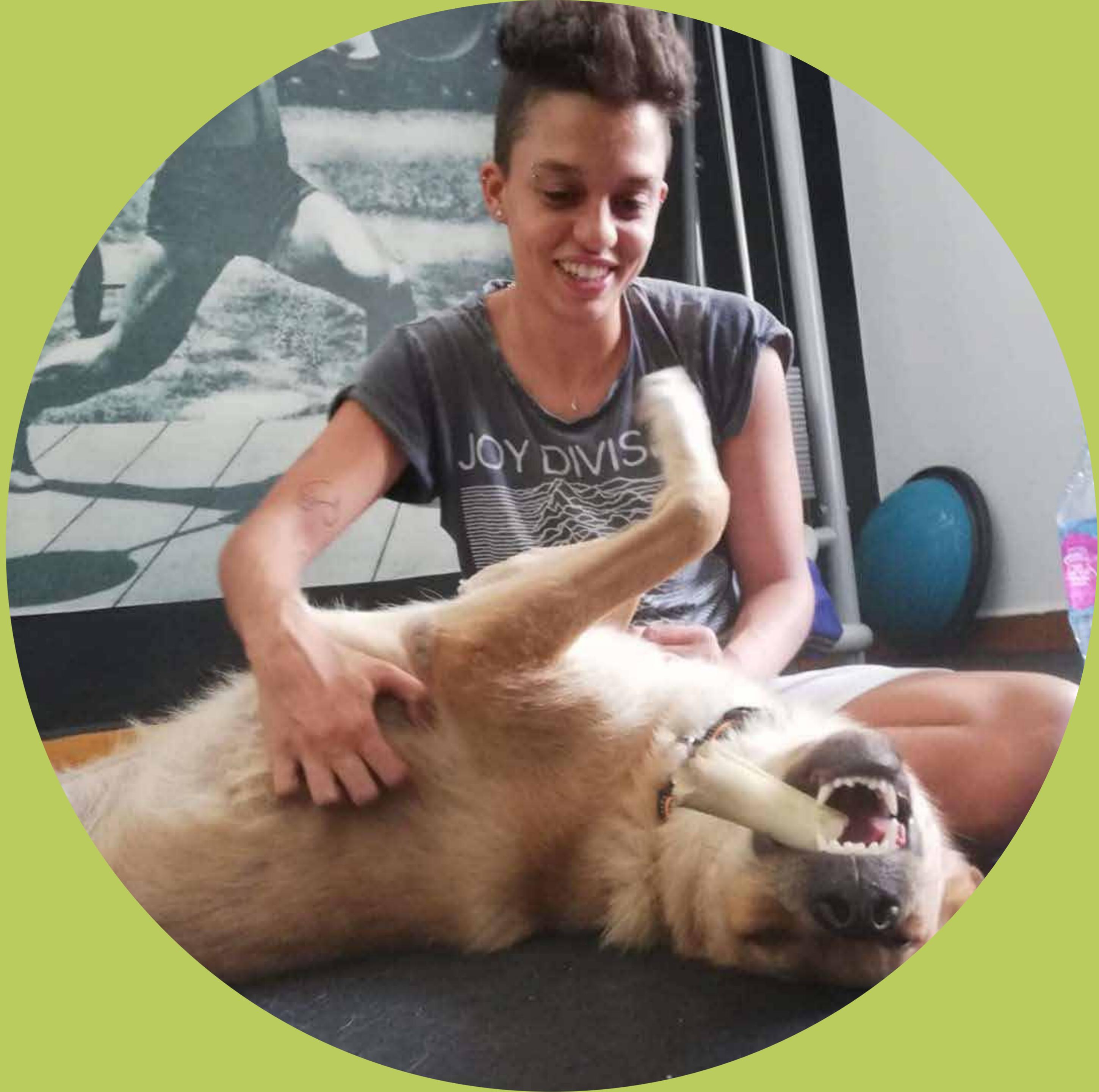
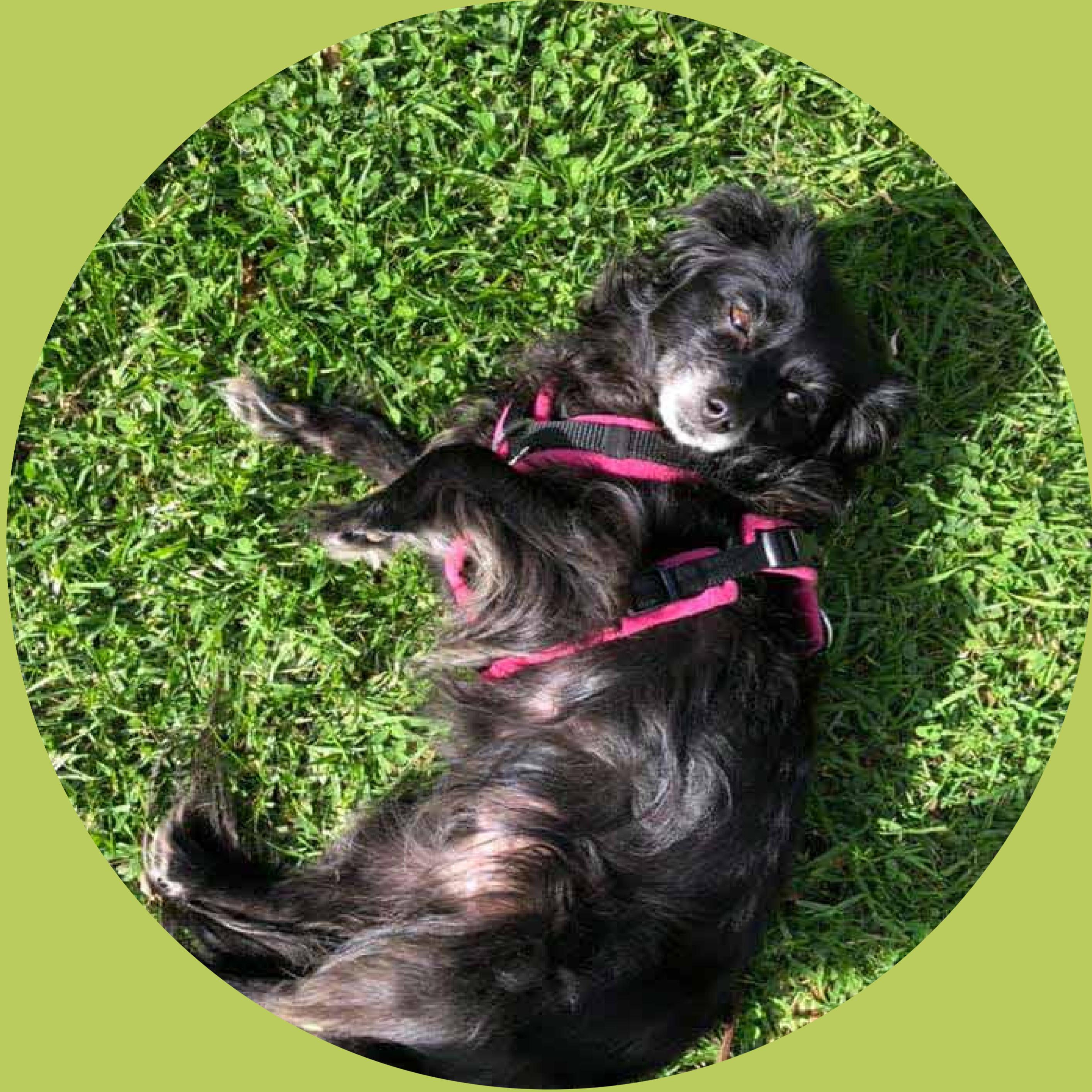
*Malusi*

If you feel you are struggling to achieve one or more of the above with your dog then feel free to ask a question. We LOVE questions!

Every Dog Deserves a Happy Ever After

Please feel free to contact us via the Hound Charming page on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/houndcharming/>



*and they all lived happily  
ever after...*