

A FOUR-LEGGED APPROACH TO TEACHING CIVILITY

Media Personality and Communications Expert Fights Rudeness with a PAWSitive Approach

It's no secret that kindness, caring, and compassion are in short supply these days. Turn on the TV, go online, or visit a store or restaurant, and chances are you will witness any number of examples of people behaving badly. So how do we encourage youngsters to fly right when adults are screaming at one another, using their fists instead of their wits to settle disputes, and swearing every chance they get? Mary Jane McKittrick decided to turn to her four-legged friends for help with this two-legged challenge.

“Why is it adults will spend countless hours and dollars taking their dogs to obedience training,” McKittrick asks, “while at the same time, their children run screaming through the supermarket? A well-behaved animal is a joy to be around. Teaching children good behavior that will pay off later in life is essential. How do we make the connection?”

This simple observation and more inspired a former media personality and communications expert to create a series of stories for children to help them learn good behavior in a fun-filled way. The ***Boomer and Halley*** © episodes feature Boomerang, an Australian Shepherd dog, and Halley's Comet, a silver streak of a cat. The four-legged “children” are adopted by Harold and Edna Sanders in the small Southern town of Shady Pines. Each humorous storyline introduces multiple core values like, manners, respect, healthful eating, teamwork, etc. Boomer and Halley are always getting into mischief, as youngsters will do. They are guided back to good behavior by their “parents” without violence, anger or bad language. Currently, three books (for ages 4-8) are available at: www.boomerandhalley.com and on AMAZON.

Here are some examples of the ***Boomer and Halley*** approach to introducing core values:

Cleaning up Messes: Oh sure, it's fun for a dog and cat to race through the house during a scavenger hunt knocking things over and scattering items everywhere. Cleaning up the mess they've made teaches children responsibility and is a building block for helping them learn to be accountable for their actions.

Sportsmanship: It's really easy and fun to win at a game. It's very difficult to lose – especially to a sibling or bully. It's the grace with which we teach children to approach both situations that helps them learn leadership. Despite what Boomer and Halley sometimes think, pouting and biting are not allowed!

Obeying Parents: Why is it so hard for a couple of critters to follow simple instruction? The adults in their lives are older and wiser and seem to know better. When Boomer and Halley ignore good advice, things go haywire really fast.

Working Together: In theory, when people are able to apply their individual talents to a mutual goal, they can be successful. Boomer and Halley don't always see it that way. When they butt heads, they see stars! When they work together, they are stars.

ABOUT MARY JANE McKITTRICK

A native of Los Angeles, Mary Jane McKittrick grew up in the San Fernando Valley with horses, cats and an Australian Shepherd dog named Boomerang. She later enjoyed a successful career in television entertainment, news, and corporate communications. Her recent experiences living on a historic horse farm in North Carolina – and her love of communication – inspired her to create children’s stories using her own blend of animals, people, and core values.