

Training

Brick Walls, Sweat and Tears

By Glenda Brown

I had been reading "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch which is an extremely inspiring story by a man who has only a very short time to live. What does this have to do with a dog training article? Comments he makes about life in general and the necessity to live life always to the fullest and in the moment, do carry over into working with your dogs.

One quote is "The brick walls are there for a reason. They're not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something."

Often we may hit what appears to be a brick wall in training. What do you do when this occurs? You can brain storm either alone or with others. You can see if there is a way around the wall. How about a tall ladder to take you over the wall? Maybe the use of a hot air balloon to fly over to the other side. There are a variety of solutions, but you have to be willing to go beyond your comfort zone at times to explore different possibilities. You may have to work very hard to overcome the problem. If

you really want your dog to have that Senior Hunter or Master Hunter title, are you willing to put in the time and effort needed to attain it? Will you be willing to keep an open mind, read articles, books, watch DVD's, consult with a pro if necessary, and put in the (what I call "wet saddle blankets") hours needed to work through to the other side of the brick wall.

Years ago I helped some persons with training their dogs in regard to tracking. We met each Sunday morning, and with the use of my pedometer, I learned I often covered ten miles before breakfast! When we started, we had a good little group---but! Excuses started appearing in that some said they couldn't track early in the morning---no problem, I said, track at any time of the day or early evening. The next week some would have another excuse, then they would miss a Sun-

day, and pretty soon, we didn't see them anymore. The ones that remained and put in the hours and effort all went on to get a TD title on their dogs. The others wanted the title but not badly enough to put in the exertion needed to reach their goal. Their dogs were willing, but their owners found out that it required hard work - obviously their brick wall - and they did not wish to move out of their comfort zone.

Since then, I have seen this happen with regard to field work. When starting out, all

badly they want something. Maybe despite all the effort and hard work, the barrier cannot be breached. Perhaps the dog does not have the attributes to become a Master Hunter no matter how much the owner wants that title. What the owner can do in a case like this is re-evaluate the goal for this particular dog and then take all the lessons learned and apply them to their next dog who was chosen for the qualities lacking in the first dog.

There will always be brick walls. Some can be breached



seems to be going well. The dogs are having fun and so are the owners. Then the first barrier appears. Maybe it is when they move to doing multiple marks. Maybe it is with reference to water work. There are always barriers of one sort or another, big and small. This is when you find the persons who are willing to show how

through considerable effort or the use of creative thought, others cannot. With those that you cannot break through, take the knowledge and insight you gained, and use it wisely to move on towards reaching other goals you may have with your dogs and/or towards training the next dog you get. If you never try to overcome this barrier, how will you ever know what you are truly capable of accomplishing?

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