

FROM CATHY & TEILA

The best decision I made was to start e-collar training 2 weeks ago. After 2 years of frustration and 18 straight weeks of traditional positive-based classes, where my dog was always most improved, but still no where near being the calm, balanced dog I wanted, I worked with Victoria Warfel and an e-collar. Today my dog and I took a calm, fun, relaxing walk through Petco.

I chose to use an e-collar on my most difficult dog because positive training, daily exercise routines, and round after round of training sessions for over two years didn't work. I had the rope burns, bite marks and bruises to prove it and the life my dog was leading in her crate, and on lock down, was not the life I wanted for her. Most people told me she was a lost cause, and I should just learn to deal with it. But I knew different. She'd already been abandon once in her short life, and I wasn't going to let it happen again. In her best moments, she was the sweetest and most loving dog —she has no people aggression—but I never knew when that sweet moment would end, and I'd end up back in the emergency vet after having broken up a dog fight in my own back yard. After every incident, I'd reflect on what I could have done to prevent it. So away went all the toys, all the treats, anything that might start a fight, and all her freedom. I couldn't trust her with the other dogs in my home. I love my dogs and I would do anything to get her into a calmer state of mind so that she was no longer a danger to herself or the other dogs. I was committed to continuing her training.

Frustration and complete failure doesn't begin to describe how I felt. My other dogs responded to positive methods, and a few sessions with a trainer, but not Tei. And I felt for her; she lived on edge, she was not happy, I was not happy, and the other pets in my house were not safe. Yes, I considered re-homing her. Maybe someone else would have better results. But then I thought, who's going to want a dog, who needs to be an only pet, is high spirited, escapes from crates, sees a 6 foot fence as an inconvenience, has no boundaries, needs continuous private training sessions, daily work and would likely kill the neighbor cat/dog if given the opportunity. And given her bite history, she'd go straight to the euthanasia list if surrendered. Until you walked a day in my shoes you will not know how much I agonized over how to improve my beloved pet's quality of life. I love her and I want her to have the best possible life. I was open to any method that might make that happen. After extensive research of my own, I weighed both sides of the debate and



decided for me, with this dog, e-collar training was right. Before putting the e-collar on her, I put it on my own arm, and felt what she would feel, and it's not pain, it's not inhumane. It's an electrical stimulation, not unlike a person would feel using a rehabilitative TENS unit (which many people use for back pain).

I took the Freedom class with Victoria at Dream Dogz, and now Teila has just that—freedom. She is now a calmer, more attentive dog, with an instant recall, and for the first time since she made her way into my home, I can say I trust her. My life is no longer about managing her behavior. We have finally begun the work to improve it, I feel safer and that makes her feel safer.