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Voice of the Vet: **Work Like a Dog**

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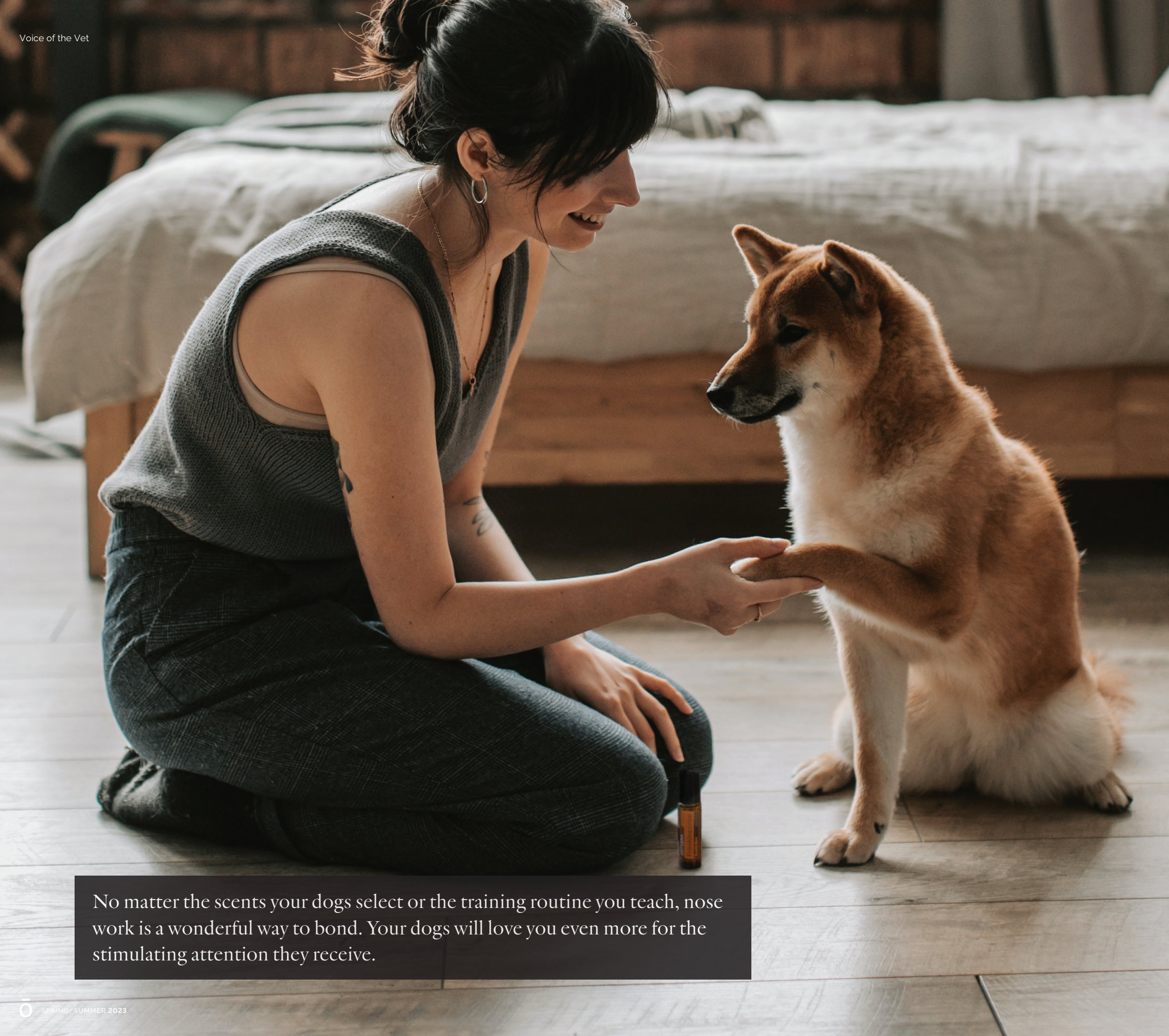
My dogs are a special part of my family. I want them to be happy and healthy, just like my own children. Dogs have a strong desire to please, either through work or emotional support, which inspires an innocent happiness in us humans. Our desire for their happiness and their desire to please us strengthens the human-animal bond.

One way to reinforce this bond is through nose work, which allows dogs to use their natural scent-based hunting skills. Smell is memory, and olfactory receptors are responsible for detecting it.

Humans have about 6,000,000 olfactory receptors, but dogs have 300,000,000! Because dogs have so many olfactory receptors, they love nose work, finding it to be stimulating, rewarding, and even relaxing.

Nose work is most effective for dogs that are already house-trained, because they already have a solid understanding of motivation and rewards.





No matter the scents your dogs select or the training routine you teach, nose work is a wonderful way to bond. Your dogs will love you even more for the stimulating attention they receive.

Motivators and Rewards

I have three adorable standard poodles at home. One absolutely loves the smell of **Copaiba** essential oil but isn't a fan of **dōTERRA Breathe**®. This may not be the case for your dogs because dogs have individual personalities and are stimulated by many different smells, just like people.

Allowing your dogs to identify scents they like will give you the opportunity to incorporate those smells into nose work and subsequent rewards. But remember some essential oils are toxic for pets, so research an essential oil before introducing it to your dogs to ensure it's safe.

Over time, your dogs will identify their favorite essential oils. You can even teach your dogs the names of those essential oils. When my **Copaiba**-loving dog hears the word *copaiba*, she gets so excited and is ready to obey to receive it as a reward.

Smell can evoke a specific response. Isn't that amazing? Essential oils can act as both motivators and rewards because so much of a dog's world is identified through smell.

Time to Train

To begin smell identification training with your dogs, start with a diluted version of an essential oil like **Frankincense Touch**. Hold the bottle in one hand—with the cap on—and treats or rewards in the other hand. Your dogs will obviously go for the hand with the treats first. Let your dogs lick that hand but don't hand over any treats yet.

Once your dogs are fully aware of the treats, let them smell the essential oil, but keep the treats right next to it. This approach teaches your dogs they'll get a treat if they can recognize that essential oil smell.

Your dogs will love this new game, but they may lose interest after a few minutes. Keep your dogs stimulated by working their noses in shorter spurts and be aware of attention levels. When your dogs give you cues that they're tired, stop training and pick up from there tomorrow.

The same process can be used to train your dogs as they wind down. Hold a diluted bottle of a calming essential oil aroma your dogs love, like **Lavender** or **Adaptiv**®, with the cap still on. Let your dogs identify the essential oil through smell while calming down. The diluted aroma will help remind and motivate your dogs to wind down because they'll want to smell the essential oil more.

As your dogs relax, give them nice belly rubs with the essential oil. Allow the natural smell memory to catch on so they each learn. Repeating this process will create a smell memory for your dogs, and they'll accept the soothing smell as both a motivator and a reward for being calm.



“The measure of intelligence
is the ability to change.”

—
Albert Einstein