

Hi Fred,

It was really great to meet all of you yesterday. Max is such a great puppy and it is exciting to think of all of the adventures and fun that are ahead of you. Below is a summary of the plan we discussed. Training, especially when we have high expectations of our dogs like you do (this is a good thing, BTW!) takes time. Small, consistent bits of time spread over a long period. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to look for training programs that go beyond the initial Puppy K class.

Proper Paws in Concord is great and I have also heard good things about the MSPCA's program. You can also do many things on your own. I really like Kikopup's resources  for puppy training. This [3-hour video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dbzPoB7AKk&t=267s) goes over the first things you should work with on your puppy. If it is too long, she has a [puppy playlist](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF26FD559887E7EA4) that might fit your needs better.

My recommendation would be to get into Proper Paws Play and Train and Level 1 classes to start. If you like Judy's class and style, you can progress to the more advanced classes. While you are waiting, let Kikopup be your guide.

You do have 2 unique needs for Max:

1- Living with a cat

2- Future plans for adventures where recall is going to be critical.

The cat may end up being very challenging simply because they are going to be so rewarding for Max.

I would suggest starting out by simply calmly petting Max when your cat is around. Basically, we want to condition her to direct her energy to you (not the cat) when the cat is around. If this does not work, you are going to have to layer in lots of management (e.g. keeping them separated when you are not around) and obedience (e.g. go to place work).

I also think it is really important that you understand WHY this is such a big ask for Max, especially considering her breed. [This 1-hour video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9C_XRcbI_Q) (that up until recently was $100!) is a must view for anybody with a working dog, like an Aussie. Herding dogs are addressed at 47 minutes, but it is worth watching the entire video.

For sure, you are going to have to:

- Manage Max's environment so that the cat is not an exciting intermittent reward.

- Have a rock solid place command. For him, I would work on a place command first on a mat and later on a raised bed like [this](https://kuranda.com/dog-beds/standard-dog-bed). The reason that the raised bed is so helpful is that it is a VERY clear command for the dog -- you are on it or not!

-Find an outlet for her herding energy. I have heard great things about the [sheep ball game.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8n_31T5tUrU)

A last resource to consider is this [book on dog body language](https://www.amazon.com/Canine-Body-Language-Photographic-Interpreting/dp/1929242352/ref%3Dasc_df_1929242352?mcid=94666c31c4093bc1b8a9c9c6f756b5e7&tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=693607660279&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=8502692077707721235&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9002081&hvtargid=pla-453259687080&psc=1). so that you can better understand what Max is feeling.

Please feel free to reach out if you run into any specific problems that are not addressed in a class. For example, you might want to work exclusively on recall and place work with varying levels of distractions.

Congrats once again on making such a great puppy a part of your family.

Best regards,

Meghan