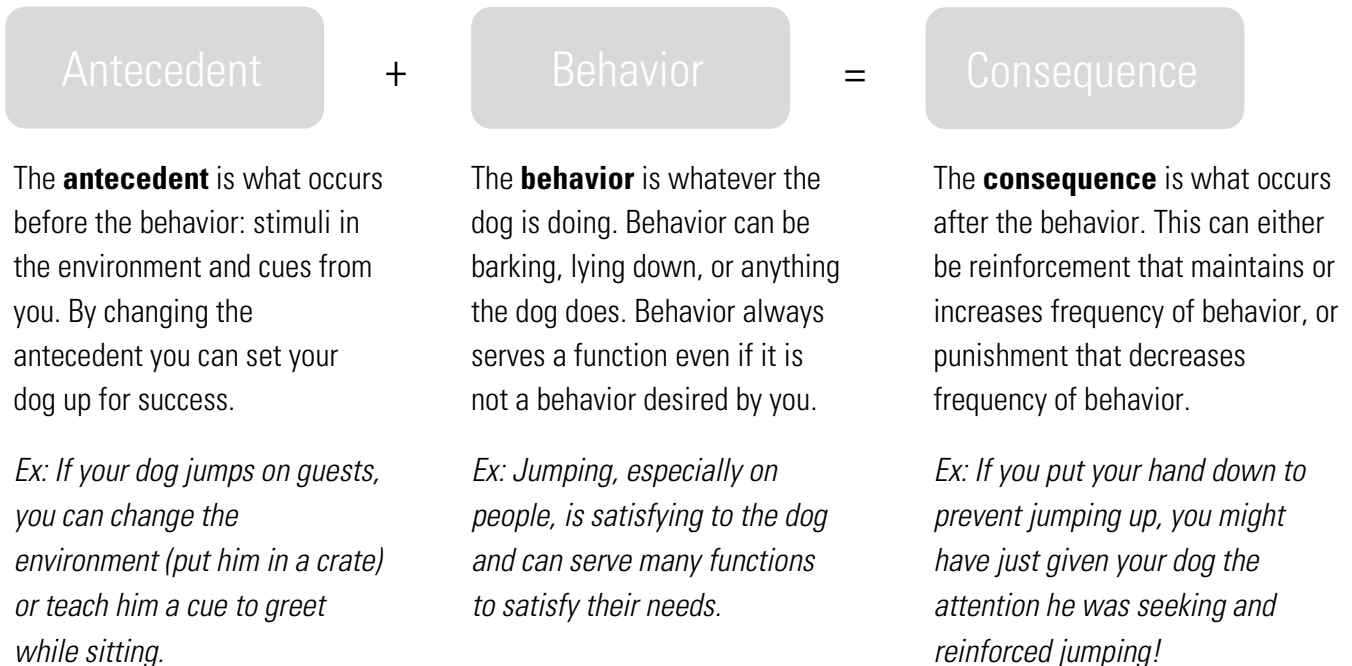


## How Dogs Learn

Like humans, dogs behave according to the Law of Effect in that dogs do what works. Their behavior always serves a function, and this function is most easily seen when we observe their behavior in three parts:



If your dog is frequently doing behaviors that you do not like, consider the antecedent, behavior, and consequence to find out what's in it for the dog? What do you do immediately after the behavior? If you want to change this behavior, you should consider the following:

- 1) How can you prevent the reinforcement of this undesired behavior?
- 2) What need is this satisfying for the dog and how you can fulfill this need in a different way?
- 3) How can you be proactive and set you and your dog up for success before the behavior even occurs? Can you change the environment? Can you teach a different behavior?

Once you've asked yourself these questions, the answer will become clear how you can influence both the antecedent and the consequence of your dog's behavior. The answer will probably be a mix of preventing the reinforcement of the unwanted behavior, proactively changing the environment, and teaching a new behavior.

When teaching a new behavior we want to set up the same ABC's:

- Antecedent: new cue/food lure/distraction free environment
- Behavior: the desired new alternative behavior
- Consequence: positive reinforcer – whatever the dog finds valuable