

Secrets From a Celebrity Dog Trainer

Former model turned dog trainer offers his expertise to celebrity clients.

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Canadian born Tyson Kilmer, 37, left modeling to pursue his true passion: training dogs. Based in Los Angeles, Kilmer used his connections in the fashion industry to land dog-owning celebrity clients such as Sheryl Crow, Rob Lowe, Mike Tyson, Joni Mitchell, Rose McGowan, and others.

Kilmer's dog training philosophy focuses on successfully integrating dogs into their owners' lifestyles. And because celebrities have such unique and busy schedules, his talents have come in handy with his clients.

Kilmer is currently working with Jon Bernthal of "The Class" on CBS, teaching the actor how to stay in control of his pit bull so that he can take his dog to work. "We trained his dog to be present on set during live filming," Kilmer says.

Kilmer says he has also trained singer and actor Aaron Carter's dogs to walk off leash so that they can accompany him down the red carpet during events. Kilmer has even worked with Mike Tyson, training the heavyweight boxer's dog to "participate with him in his life pursuits," which include working out at the gym together.

"I've trained dogs for other celebrities to go on tour with them," Kilmer adds. "We teach the dogs how to get out of the tour bus and go to the bathroom."

"My goal is to try to educate people and teach them about the possibilities of living with dogs," Kilmer says. "People assume they don't have the time it takes to create a meaningful life for their dog." But by working training techniques into everyday life, it doesn't take a lot of time, Kilmer says.

He provides clients with a training "template" in the home – strategically placed dog beds throughout the house – so that the dog can be present during daily activities, but not in the way. For example, when the doorbell rings, Kilmer teaches dogs to run to their dog bed, instead of barking at the door. By clearly communicating to the dog what is expected of it, Kilmer explains that it's possible to involve the dog in many parts of your life.

"In my experience, a lot of people have a very low expectation of what their animal is capable of," he says.

Kilmer imparts one final piece of advice to potential dog owners: "If you are in the market to get a dog, remember that training should start on day one – the day you bring the animal home. Part of the process of finding a suitable animal, is finding a suitable training course for your dog and family."

Kilmer will share his expertise in two forthcoming books, as well as a series of dog training videos out later this year. Learn more about Kilmer at www.tysonkilmer.com