



THE WORKING KELPIE COUNCIL OF AUST INC.

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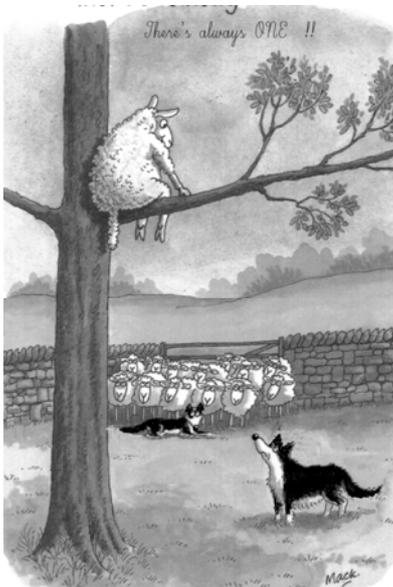
The Handler. By the Late Arthur Hazlett

The hardest thing I have noticed people have trouble with, is handling their own feelings and emotions, when working their dogs. If their dogs do anything wrong, they are sure that the dog has done it to make them look stupid or to embarrass them. But the dog doesn't know how much has been paid for it or how big a reputation, the owner has built up for it at the local pub. Owner's embarrassment is a major cause of death in working dogs.

If you are after useful working dogs to do your work. You should be firm and consistent in everything you do with that dog. Frustration and bad temper by the handler will not make good dogs, only cringing scared ones. I want dogs that will come in close to your body or your horse. Especially when penning up, yarding up or putting sheep over a bridge or through a bad gate way. Water crossings and driving sheep through long wet grass in a good season, putting pressure on a mob of hungry sheep, especially when just out of the yards onto short green pick.

You need a dog that has had a good basic foundation of some months of balancing the mob up to you. With the right breeding and the right sort of eye. This sort of eye when developed with the right basic handling gives that dog confidence. They believe that they are always in the right position and. doing the right thing. So if any thing does go wrong the dog should know how to put the sheep together and then you can just do what you first started out to do.

If and when something does go wrong, keep calm. Stop your dog and give him time to think. He then should be able, to work it out for himself. Too many commands and whistles will only make him more confused. Remember always "Hurry slowly" and do the best you can in that situation. No one else can do any better, as they are not there with you. You and your dog are. As a good friend of mine in Queensland told me "The stock can't get away, Australia is an Island." Just a word on those people that tell all and sundry that when they go into a paddock they never miss any. They get every head of cattle and sheep that are there, always. Such complete conviction in ones self would be a comfort to the poor unsure souls that tell you this. These people often have what I call selective memory loss. That as they forget about the ones they saw and didn't get, the ones they never even saw in the paddock. Do they carry any stock that can't or won't keep up, in some conditions? Such as very poor stock in a drought that don't have the energy to walk to the yards. What about dense scrub or in vast paddocks out in the west.



Frank Scanlon told me once that if you were taking a mob of 300 bullocks to the saleyards and one ducked through a poor creek crossing. If you couldn't get him back without losing the other 299, then you had to let him go, take the main mob to the yards. Come back later to get the straggler.

Tomorrow will be another working day and if you are a stockman that will be 7 days a week. What will you do if you don't have a dog to help with the work? Too many people today have little regard for a good working dog and more importantly its welfare. , When your dog has had enough or you are in an "unwinnable position", pull up. Discretion is the better part of valour, so the saying goes. Come back with an idea of how to achieve what you want to do, when you and the dog are both fresh and not so frustrated

Don't take it out on your dog with physical or verbal frustration. The dog is rarely wrong, it is the handlers fault for not managing the situation Or stopping the situation when a good result is not possible, for whatever reason, not only by blaming the dog.