



Counter Conditioning with Dr. Sophia Yin

Animals display all sorts of interesting behaviors. Sometimes the behaviors they present can be fun and other times they might be a little scary. It is our job to try and make sense of these behaviors.

There are specially trained people who help animals when they express certain behaviors. They are called **BEHAVIORISTS**. A behaviorist has spent a lot of time studying animal behavior and has learned how to manage it.

Dr. Sophia Yin was a very well known veterinarian who was also a behaviorist. She believed that fear was a big reason for animals acting out in scary ways. Dr. Yin began to teach a method of training called **COUNTER CONDITIONING**. The counter conditioning method slowly teaches an animal to think positively about something that may usually scare them. For example, let's say you are usually terrified of spiders. Any time you see one, you yell, cry, and try to run away. However, if we started to give you your favorite food only when a spider was near you, and the food distracted you from the spider, then you might be less scared of the spider over time.

Watch this video of Dr. Sophia Yin as she uses the counter conditioning method to help a scared, aggressive dog learn that toe nail clipping isn't so scary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-WZUcLfHXLE>. When you've finished watching the video, answer the questions below.

1. In the beginning, does the dog like to have his toenails clipped?

2. What emotions do you think the dog was feeling?

3. What did Dr. Sophia Yin and her assistant start doing to change the dog's mind?

4. After they started counter conditioning, how long did it take for the dog to change his mind?



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5. Do you think the dog felt differently about nail clipping after counter conditioning with Dr. Sophia Yin? Explain.

Now that you have become an expert in counter conditioning, learn more about Dr. Sophia Yin's humane behavior modification and handling methods by visiting drsophiayin.com. Then list 3 facts you learned about Dr. Yin's methods below.

1.

2.

3.
