

Faith Hill
COMM 318
Retirement Speech

Good afternoon everyone,

For the longest time I always thought my career would be in fine arts, and I can only imagine the surprise on my younger-self's face if I told her that I would one day be a world-renowned dog trainer. While I had a love for animals growing up, nothing truly took shape in my head until I began High School and started training our family dog, earning a number of trick titles through the AKC in only a couple years, and even moreso despite him being a senior dog on top of it. You never forget your heart dog; they stay with you in every dog you train until the very end.

I remember that first day working for Shea Hughes-Gorman at his facility, my first foray into the dog industry, and finally understanding exactly why anyone in this field needs to have some very thick skin to make it work. Without the guidance, and a little ego bruising, from Shea and his various mentors, I would not be standing here today at the end of my fruitful and fulfilling career. While passion for the work you are doing as a dog trainer is a major requirement, passion alone will not ensure your success, it requires a level of true dedication to perseverance despite hardship that goes along with the passion you carry, and it is this 'grit' that makes or breaks your future success.

At first, my only goal was to simply survive in the industry, keeping my head low and gathering as much information and as many connections as possible. As I continued making a name for myself, it was inevitable that I would encounter others like my younger self, just beginning their journey and filled with passion. From that moment on I vowed to not simply uphold the tradition of the industry< but to make waves by being a guiding and open figure for any and all individuals interested in this corner of the industry. I wanted to show others that, yes, it was possible to survive the criticism and negativity, and that the way forward was with a positive and accepting environment.

Looking around the room today, and seeing all of these new, fresh faces that before would have been nearly unheard of, I believe my mission over the course of my career was a success. I know you all will carry on this legacy into the future dog industry and continue to make change in the demographics that participate within it. I look forward to seeing how my ripples in my career turn into waves throughout yours, and trust that I will be watching.

We cannot cry for new, younger people in this industry while simultaneously breaking them down the second they step foot inside. While there will be hard decisions and difficult situations in any career field, the less of those that we directly cause for others impacts the future of the industry tenfold.

Despite my retirement from dog training, I will continue to be present in the future of our shared passion for dog training, I do not think it is something I could ever truly separate from. However, I cannot wait to embark on this journey of relaxation and self-reflection as I fully hand the reigns of my business over to my team of Master Trainers.

Thank you all for your support over these decades, and for this new chapter of my life. As the old adage goes, "Run your dog, not your mouth."