

Milan says if we can learn to stop judging a dog's behavior by its breed, maybe we can learn to stop judging people by their race.

humans have against one another. Milan might be a celebrity now — a dog trainer to stars from Will Smith to Oprah Winfrey, with a hit *National Geographic* show and two bestselling books on dog training — but he still remembers coming to the U.S. 20 years ago as an illegal immigrant from Mexico, who didn't speak English.

Milan says if we can learn to stop judging a dog's behavior by its breed, maybe we can learn to stop judging people by their race.

"We already do it," he says of the way people create prejudices about other races and ethnicities. "The Chinese and the whites and the Hispanics and the blacks; we do the separation thing, and then we start blaming them," he says. "My goal beside rehabilitating dogs is to help people understand that concept."

If we start to enact breed bans and judge dogs based on their breed, rather than as individuals, says Milan, "We're just nurturing that concept." He says if we can move past "racism" against dog breeds like pits, "then we can move into the human relationship."

"We can't blame the breed," he says. "We have to see them as who they are; they're powerful and we have to redirect that energy."

Dogs and owners, according to Milan, should be matched according to their energy. You don't choose the right dog



PHOTO BY KELLY BEAL

based on breed, you choose based on energy. "The dog is not going to think 'Oh my God, this human just rescued me, he's such a great human, I'm going to treat him as a pack leader.'"

Continuing his metaphor between races and dog breeds, Milan says, "I'm going to speak as a Hispanic descendant. We have Hispanics who are low level,

medium level, high level or very high level energy. There's not a race or a breed that's better for certain people; what is better for certain people is the energy that they're taking home." A low energy person needs a low energy dog. Only a very high energy person can be the "pack leader" for a high energy dog, according to Milan.

Luv-a-Bull's hours of walks a day, love

and rehabilitation seem to work on even the most energetic of Lane County's pit bulls, but El Diablo, as it turns out, has a whole lot of energy for a Chihuahua. After working with the pint-sized terror, and an extensive interview with Wilhardt and Leiser, Milan decided to take El Diablo back with him to his Dog Psychology Center in Los Angeles. "My problem with Diablo is that I'm afraid of him," admits Wilhardt. Diablo's energy was throwing off Luv-a-Bull's peaceful pack.

Milan was so impressed by the Luv-a-Bull's balanced pitty-pack that he asked if one of his own pack dogs could be sent to Eugene to retire. A week or two after Milan's whirlwind tour of Oregon, Rakim the elderly pit bull was delivered to Wilhardt's door. Rakim was an escape artist in L.A., leaping off balconies and tearing through walls to get out of his owners' apartment before coming to live with Milan. Now Rakim (renamed Morgan Freeman) for the first time in his life will wander Luv-a-Bull's wooded trails in Eugene's south hills with Wilhardt and Leiser.

As for Diablo, Milan says the terror of the Wal-Mart parking lot has learned to swim for exercise, is settling into his new home, and well on his way to rehabilitation. **EW**

To find out the rest of El Diablo's story, tune into the *Dog Whisperer's* fifth season on the *National Geographic* Channel, or check out Luv-a-Bull at www.luv-a-bull.org

OLD MILL FARM STORE

- LANE COUNTY'S OLDEST FEED STORE
- TOP QUALITY DOG & CAT FOODS
- ALFALFA & ORGANIC HAY
- LOCAL INNOVATORS OF QUALITY ORGANIC FEEDS
- ORGANIC & CONVENTIONAL FEED,
- ALL ORGANIC LOCAL PRODUCE & GARDEN SUPPLIES

SPECIAL ORDERS WELCOME

942-3042 • 327 S. RIVER ROAD

Oh My Dog!
PET SALON

Coming this Fall!
on Coburg Road, near Oakway mall

omdsalon@gmail.com

Dogs Are Cool!

**Located at
5th St. Public Market**

**Dog Accessories,
Necessities,
Foods & Fresh Bakery**

**Exceptional
Grooming Services**

www.lexidog.com
541.343.5394

**First Alternative
NATURAL FOODS CO-OP**

**Your neighborhood
grocery and more...**

North Store
29th & Grant
452-3115
Open 7-9 Daily

South Store
1007 SE 3rd St
753-3115
Open 9-9 Daily

**Anyone can shop
the Co-op!**

**Get the good stuff
for your Pets!**

At the Co-op you can choose the best products for your pet's long life... from treats and tricks to bulk food and alternative diet options!