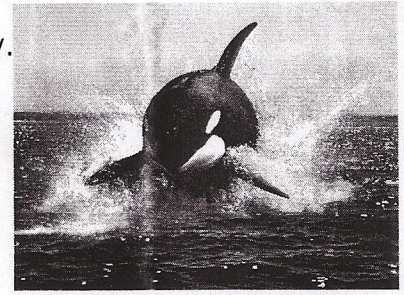


This is a very nice article which I found that I think you will enjoy.



Have you heard of Shamu?

Shamu is a 19,000-pound killer whale that actually killed his trainer a few years ago. The trainers at Sea World have succeeded in getting Shamu to jump 22 feet out of the water and perform other tricks. What techniques are effective in helping this animal accomplish such a task? Extreme discipline and harshness? Electric shock or other means of force?

**Shamu's training course contained none of the above. The chief methods used were a combination of making sure "the whale can't fail," and strong positive reinforcement.**

Initially, the rope Shamu was to jump over was placed right under him, at the bottom of his tank, in such a way that he could not help but go over it. Every time the whale went over the rope, he received positive reinforcement. He was fed fish, he was played with, he was patted, and he was given other forms of positive support. As Shamu began to go over the rope more often, the trainers at Sea World began to raise the rope. Little by little the rope was raised, until eventually it reached a height of 22 feet above the water.

What happened when Shamu failed to go over the rope? Absolutely nothing, There was no punishment at all. The unwanted behavior was not acknowledged in anyway.

The main techniques used to spur this whale to success were:

- (1) Making it (ridiculously) easy for the animal to succeed and
- (2) Consistently strengthening the desired behavior through positive reinforcement.