

To get a default sit or eye contact or both I clicked and treated any eye contact--however, I NEVER asked for eye contact. We did not even have a word for "attention"--he just didn't get anything unless he voluntarily made eye contact.

How did I train this? When I'd go to a door, I'd just hang out there with him until he OFFERED a sit--then the door would open. After a couple of days, the door didn't open until he just happened to sit AND offer eye contact. I did not say anything--just waited with a smile (so I didn't look mean when he glanced up). After a couple of days, we moved on to extended eye contact, building up to 30 seconds or so before I would open the door.

I used the same method for anything he wanted--he had to offer eye contact first. This applied to "food bowl being put on the floor," "dog getting petted," "neighborhood walk continuing," "toy being thrown," "dog getting in/out of car," "dog getting leash put on," etc.

Because clicker training taught him that at some variable point, all obedience behaviors would eventually get a c/t, he would make eye contact to get me to start heeling, or leave him on a recall, etc. Something else to work on is c/t-ing for eye contact when YOU are not looking back at the dog. To practice this, stand in front of a mirror and look in the mirror so you can see when the dog is looking at you--then c/t.