Premack Principle

How do you get good behavior from your dog if you don't have treats on you? What if you accidentally get too far into a situation to get your dog's focus back on you, how do you turn that into a training opportunity? Luckily, it's pretty easy with the "Premack Principle."

The Premack Principle states that you can use what your dog wants to do **right now** as a reward for what *you* want him to do. Basically, you're using "functional rewards" to get the behavior you want.

Let's say your dog wants to sniff a tree and he starts dragging you toward it. Instead of just going along for the ride, you can use this as an opportunity to reinforce loose leash walking. When he pulls, stop and wait for him to put slack in the leash and look at you. Then, praise him and reward him by going to smell the tree together. There's a nice infographic about the Premack Principle by the very talented Lily Chin. Remember to use your own enthusiasm so the dog understands that you're walking over to sniff that tree *together.*

Here's a good video of using Premack to train for attention even though there's a distraction, and (though she doesn't show the steps completely) it can turn into an emergency recall if needed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RFPkvpuklA.

Here's a good video of teaching an auto focus at the park: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_rURgm7FG8. Notice the dog is doing it all on her own.