



PITBULLTEAM

## Where Does the Hatred Come From?

Cofounder of SoCal Pitbull Team takes a deeper look into the psychology behind pit bull hatred

*By Barbara Telesmanic, RN, CPON*

As pit bull advocates, we are always focusing on education, positive imagery, advocacy and celebration. We also need to be aware and very familiar with our opposition. As James Joyce said, "Never let us do wrong, because our opponents did so. Let us, rather, by doing right, show them what they ought to have done, and establish a rule that dictates reason and conscience, rather than of angry passions."



I have always been so perplexed at how difficult it is to get people to understand that dog behaviors and conduct are stemmed primarily from owners and not particular breeds. It seems logical that we as humans impart behaviors on our dogs, good or bad. We achieve this through training (reward based vs. punishment based), socialization (constructive vs. destructive), and human or canine interactions (positive vs. negative). It led me to my theory that maybe there is an underlying issue (aside from media bias), a deficiency or disorder, perhaps. So, I began to study and research psychological perspectives and insights. Here is what I've learned ...

The topic of breed-discriminatory legislation (BDL) has both sides vehemently defending their stance and believing their perspective is right. I feel this issue ultimately comes down to interpretation; how one receives information and, ultimately, how that information is processed. According to renowned scientist and Nobel Prize winner Ivan Pavlov, you can condition your mind to think negatively or positively. Some people learn and grow, some wither and degenerate.

From [PsychologicalHarrasment.com](http://PsychologicalHarrasment.com): "The way you think can be conditioned and a person can also be psychologically manipulated to have a negative thinking pattern, to always see the negative side of things or expect the worse. To see the negatives out of a situation or event reflexively instead of being open minded or thinking of the positives first."

On the contrary, the opposite is true as well, "You can condition your mind to think positively or expect positive outcomes," hence the expressions: "Look on the bright side," "Put a positive spin on it."



### **The Opposition**

The main focus of certain victims' groups seems to be based on retribution rather than resolution, and they appear to subscribe to this pattern of negative thinking, in addition to demonstrating an inability to empathize. It reflects the "victim to bully phenomenon." According to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' stages of healing, some individuals exhibit an inability to achieve the final stage, which is that of acceptance. This is where, according to [Gumbypana.com](http://Gumbypana.com), a "peaceful resolution wherein the victim accepts what has happened, makes peace with it, and is able to move on."

### **Why the Hate, Why the Revenge Methodology?**

Anti-pit bull hate groups and BDL supporters appear to subscribe to a theory commonly referred to as [Collective Punishment](#). This states the punishment of a group of people (or dogs in this case) as a result of the behavior of one or more other individuals, (dogs) or groups. The punished group (dog) may often have no direct association with the other individuals or groups, or direct control over their actions. In other words, punish the breed not the deed. This involves All-or-Nothing Thinking which is defined as a distortion, and is described as thinking of things in absolute terms. All-or-Nothing thoughts



often contain words like never, always, all and every. For example, "every pit bull is vicious" or "all those dogs are bad." It would appear their group focus and mission is not to make society safer or promote compassion but to impart revenge and instill fear.

According to [PsychCentral.com](http://PsychCentral.com), one in three Americans are suffering from a mental disorder in any given year, or *over 75 million people*. We see staggering instances of this every day,

in particular with unscrupulous organizations. For example, someone suffering from a syndrome like narcissistic personality disorder may, according to [PsychologyInfo.com](http://PsychologyInfo.com), "lack empathy and readily exploit others to achieve his or her goals. To others he or she may seem self-absorbed, controlling, intolerant, selfish, and insensitive. If he or she feels slighted or ridiculed, he or she may be provoked into a fit of destructive anger and revenge-seeking. Such 'narcissistic rage' can have disastrous consequences for all those involved."

### **The Tragedy of Revenge**

As quoted on [EmotionalCompetency.com](http://EmotionalCompetency.com): "The passion for revenge is strong and sometimes almost overwhelming. But our intuitive logic about revenge is often twisted, and dangerous. Revenge is a primitive, destructive, and violent response to anger, injury, or humiliation. It is a misguided attempt to transform shame into pride. Choose another path."

And from [MentalHelp.net](http://MentalHelp.net): "In the novel 'Moby Dick,' Captain Ahab is obsessed with seeking revenge on the white whale, Moby Dick. His long struggle results in the death and destruction of the entire crew except for Ishmael the storyteller. Unfortunately the destruction described in this fictional account is often too accurate an account of revenge in the real world."



Our mission is no longer an option: This is right versus wrong. Creating a culture of well informed, compelling pit bull crusaders that impart knowledge and truth upon our society is imperative. Be heard. William Faulkner once said, "Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty, truth and compassion against injustice. If people all over would do this, it would change the world."