

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG Hey everybody. Welcome to Susan Garrett's Shaped by Dog. It's January 1st, 2020, and I set a deadline for myself that I wanted to do a podcast in 2020. February 1st, I thought ... I want to launch this podcast. So, there's a lot of planning. What kind of format? What do I want to talk about? And I woke up this morning and I thought, you know what, Susan, done is better than perfect.

And this is a great model for everybody to adopt in life because a lot of times there's things that we want for ourselves or our dogs, but we're a little bit afraid. There's a fear of attempting something new. There's a fear of maybe failing. For some people there's a fear of being successful and what kind of attention that will bring or expectations to follow up with.

In order to improve something, you need to start with anything. And so, you've got to put that fear aside and just do something, have one thing that you can then improve upon. And that's what I told myself this morning when I said, hey, let's just do our first ever podcast episode. And you might notice that the environment isn't perfect. I'm going to get trouble for having, for those of you watching this on my blog, you can see in the video I've got a studio light showing. Oh, gasp, cue the dramatic music.

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Done is better than perfect. I decided I wanted to get started and let's start first, I'm going to talk about the name. Well, I'm Susan Garrett and so I decided to call this Shaped by Dog because I realised many, many years ago, if you are on YouTube and you've seen my video [The Journey](#), it talks about how I release that when you are training dogs you're actually getting lessons in return.

And if you're open to those lessons, they will improve your ability to train your dog and improve your life. And if you don't get those lessons, if you're not open to learning from your dog, the lessons will tend to repeat with every dog you get. I really believe that in the circle of how our life goes on and how it's all really interconnected.

And so, my life is truly shaped by dog (I'll use the generalisation of dog, that it's just, it's a dog, it's all dogs. It's my own dogs, it's students' dogs). My life is shaped by dog. And it's a little bit of a play because I am dyslexic and so my life is definitely shaped by God as well.

And what is this podcast going to be about? Is it just going to be about dog training? No, it's going to be about how my life has been shaped. I've been blessed to have some of the most amazing mentors, and I want to share the lessons of those mentors in this podcast and a lot of those lessons came to me while training dogs.

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And when I talk about that circle, that everything seems to be related and it comes around to us again, if you look at the way that we, if you are in my tribe, you have made a conscious choice on how you train your dogs. And basically, the way I look at it there's four ways we can train a dog.

Number one is train with hope, meaning I get a new puppy, yes, he's destroying the furniture, yes, he's peeing on the carpet, yes, he's digging in the garden, yes, he pulls on a leash, I hope he'll outgrow that. And we actually have a rescue dog, Tater Salad, half bulldog, half terrier cross that his owner hoped for



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that, but three destroyed couches and a bunch of other personal items destroyed, at 14 months he was given up and we adopted him. And he's an amazing dog because we don't rely on hope.

So, hope is number one. I think it's probably the number one training of choice. People just hope and wait for the go to outgrow things. Number two is blame and punishment and here's various degrees of blame and punishment. It could just be the big sigh, your hands on hips. What did you do you might say to your dog. You're blaming him. He did something, you don't like it, he should know better, they should be pre-programmed to know that this isn't the way things are done. And it could also escalate from there.

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So, training with a collar that might correct the dog with a chain, or some people might use electric collars or electric fencing. Some people just yell or throw things. It is the dog's responsibility to figure this stuff out. I put in all the training you should need and now you need to figure it out. So plain blame and judgement could be the foundation. And some people, they all use words to, like balanced trainer, like I've put in a lot of food and rewards to train him and now he needs to know better, so he needs to have correction. That is a consideration.

Third way to train is with food lures. But if food lures are continuously used, they're just bribes. And if the dog's not hungry, there's a myriad of reasons why I don't believe food luring is going to create the dog of your dreams. It definitely works for a lot of dogs. There's too many accomplished dogs out there that have been trained just with food lures for me to say it doesn't work. Sure it works, but it not works a lot as well ... it not works for a lot of dogs.

So, the fourth choice, and the choice that I use, is science based. It's a choice that works with everybody, with every dog because it is science and it is using shaping behavior to get a response you're looking for and reinforce it with something the dog loves.

So four ways of training your dogs; hope, blame and shame, food lure bribery, or science-based shaping. And so the one you pick, I believe, and this is a huge epiphany I had, is that we can become the person we're meant to be in life by training a dog, but it depends on how we train that dog. So stick with me for a second, let me walk through this.

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Let's say you're an extreme blame and punish person. So the puppy comes into your house, you, ah, no, and you maybe give a little smack under the chin when they nip, that you teach the kids when you say sit, you give them a cookie, but if they don't sit you push down and pull up on their collar. These are lessons that we're teaching our children. We look for what the dog's doing wrong and we tell them, hey sucker, you're wrong, I'm disappointed you're bad.

If that's the way you train your dog, you are feeding your subconscious mind with way of going in life. Ah, Susan is just a dog. It's a dog that's sent to us to share lessons. And if you open yourself up to that possibility your life will change.

Because, let's flip this around, and the way that we train dogs, scientifically proven through shaping, it has a few accepted facts. I don't know if you can read on my blackboard. It says that all dogs are doing the absolute best they can with the education you've given them in the environment you've asked them to perform. That is a core belief that I have and any time my dog does anything wrong I look at is it the education or is it the environment that I've asked him to perform in?



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And suddenly you're saying, oh no, Susan, my dog's a rescue dog, so he's had some baggage, that doesn't apply. The behavior of a rescue dog today is a reflection of your adopting this philosophy. If you buy into this philosophy wholeheartedly you're going to look at the environment and the education.

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Now, I'm not saying that there isn't a challenge with different dogs because of who they are, the personality of who they are. Dogs are like people. We all have different personalities that make it easier for us to do some things and more difficult to do some things. And dogs have a definite personality that is formed from their genetic make-up, formed from the start, the breeder, ideally the breeder gave them, formed from the socialisations that they got early on as puppies, but they have this personality.

For example, I came from a very large family. I came from. I was born into a very large family. I'm the seventh child. I have eight brothers and sisters. My next older sister is seven years older and she was super shy as a kid. I was never really shy as a kid.

I remember, one of my earliest memories, I was five years old and my mom and dad were having some company in and my mom brought us into the living room. I just remember my mother, my sister and I standing at the threshold to the living room and one of the people in the living room asked my sister a question. She was 12, she instantly dropped her eyes and went in behind my mom and didn't say anything. And then I burst out from behind and said, it's okay, she's shy, but you can ask me.

Which of course made the room erupt in laughter, which of course reinforced the extrovert that was developing in me. Those kinds of experiences took what was naturally there and led them to come out to be me as somebody who, I feel super comfortable standing in front of a group of 10,000 people talking wither about dog training or business. I love, I'm driven to help people and that need to help people is reinforced when I can share what I know in front of a lot of people.

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My sister's a super awesome person and her strength and who she was has allowed her to do a lot of things that I wouldn't be allowed to do, that I wouldn't be good at because we're made differently. Our dogs are exactly the same.

Some dogs are super confident and outgoing. And you can look at that, there's a yin and a yang. That dog is independent. He's a freethinker. He blows you off. Or he's confident and how can I use that to my best ability?

So, yes, I'm going to say that who that dog is, and you have to accept who that dog is as your starting point. Love them unconditionally. Say this is who you are and now it's up to me and the education I can give you and the environment that I put you in that's going to make a difference.

I'll give you another example. You get a puppy, eight-week-old puppy. You bring it into the house and you let it have the whole house because you love dogs and you're not going to be one of those people who restrict the dog and put them in a box, a crate or kennel. Now, we're going to talk about that in upcoming episodes and how a box, crates, kennels actually can be super good and how you're actually being kind of cruel to your dog when you don't use one. That's another story.

But let's say you get this puppy and you give them the freedom to, you love them, so my house, mi casa, your casa, you can do whatever you want in this house. And you take them outside, and you give them praise and rewards when they piddle in the grass where they're supposed to.



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But, crap, Susan, here we are a month in and my dog's still piddling places. He actually piddles on my sweatshirt. I think it's dominance. Or could be that you have linoleum in your kitchen or in your bedroom and you threw the sweatshirt on the floor and actually it creates a better purchase for the dog, so her legs don't slide when she tries to piddle. And, hey, I like this, this is reinforcing for me to piddle on.

Why did that happen? Because you started with a dog who didn't have a lot of bladder control, because puppies don't naturally have bladder control, and then you put them into an environment where they have a lot of choices. More of the more poor choices than good to piddle where they wanted, and you didn't give them a thorough education to let them know where you wanted that to happen.

So that's where accepting this as one of your core beliefs in life is going to not only help your dog be brilliant, but it's also going to improve your relationship. Because let's get back to the thought that we become the person we're meant to be when we train a dog.

Because if you're a person who buys into the science that I have that says the dog is a product of the education and environment, then when my dog does something wrong I'm going to say, wow, what can I do to help you be more successful? How can I educate you more to love what you're doing and to want to do more with me? When you do that, you're a person who's basing everything you do with that dog in kindness. You are looking at how you can bring more joy to that dog through training and manipulating the environment that they're currently in.

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Do you think that makes you a better or a worse parent, spouse, if you run a team like me, team leader, friend, sibling? If you're somebody who is starting to programme your brain when you train your dog to never blame and not judge, but rather look to improve through education and environmental manipulation and acceptance of who that dog is, do you think that will help you in everyday life? That's how I believe we become the person we're meant to be by training a dog.

I'm not saying I'm a person who is perfect. But remember, as I said at the beginning, done is better than perfect. You need to start somewhere. We're all flawed humans, we accept that, but we want to improve that. In order to improve that, we need to have structure to educate ourselves. The structure is when I have a big, deep sigh because somebody on my team disappointed me, I recognise that did not help them to have the confidence to move forward and be better next time.

So put it out there, start today, look at how you can improve what you've got. And that's where this podcast is going to come in. I'm going to share with you the lessons I've learned, the flaws that I have that has allowed me to be open to new lessons. This podcast, sure, it's going to be about some dog behavior. It's also going to be about mindset and how our beliefs create the kind of outcome that we have.

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Now, if you've listened so far, then thank you. You may be thinking, well, Susan, you're a competitor, is this going to be about dog agility? There might be some dog agility episodes, absolutely. But my success as a world champion in dog agility, it all starts by having a focus of creating the most amazing family pets possible.

For two reasons. Number one, I know when my dogs, when I create from puppies, or when they're



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rescue dogs from older dogs, to have this drive in them to want to work with me, to want to do amazing things, it makes it easier to train things like agility down the road. Number two, my dogs are family pets for many, many, many more years and more moments in my life than they're ever going to be agility dogs.

When I put the focus first into creating great family pets, what I do for that dog is I give them a life of freedom. When I focus on them coming when they're called, doing what I ask when I ask, they get more freedom, they get more time off leash because I know they're going to make the right choice. They're going to want to make the right choice. They're not coerced, they're not blamed, they're not punished, they want to make the right choice. That's the way we train.

So if you buy into this, not only are you creating better life for your dog because you're creating a life with more freedom, but you also, the full circle is you're creating a life where you become a better person. And that's what this podcast is meant to be. I would love to get your feedback. I would love for you to ask me questions.

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I plan on having experts that I'm going to be interviewing. Everything I present is going to be based in a foundation of science. There will be some woo out there which some people, mindset is a bit woo, things that aren't as tangible, but they still have great scientific evidence to support them. I'm going to talk about things like nutrition or exercise or all the things that impact the quality of life that our dogs can have and all the things that impact our life in return.

So that is what Shaped by Dog is going to be about. I hope you subscribe so that you can get every update that I put out on the podcast. And I'm looking forward to a long and creative process with this podcast. This is the first, the first of many, Done is Better than Perfect. You're going to see a different format as time goes on because I'm going to learn from the feedback, I get from all of you. I'm going to learn from the experiences of putting out a podcast. I'm going to learn to adjust it.

So today we've talked about how it doesn't matter if it's something new you want to train your dog or a trick you want to train your dog, something new you want to try. Yes, you've got to plan, but you've got to take action as well. You've got to be brave to step and be uncomfortable, because done is better than perfect. You can improve upon it, but you can't improve upon something that you won't be willing to try, to put it out there to the world. So I would ask you to go and train your dog, try something new, video what you're doing and that's how you're going to be able to look at what you're doing and improve upon what you've got.

That's it today. I'm super grateful for everybody in this community, for everybody encouraging me to take this first step. I look forward to getting your feedback and we'll see you in the next episode of Shaped by Dog.

Resources

["The Journey"](#) – YouTube



About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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