

# How Long Does It Take to Train a Dog?

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG Hey everybody, welcome to Shaped By Dog. I am Susan Garrett, and I'm going to start today by asking you a question; When do you consider your dog to be trained? Like "the box is checked. I've trained my dog. It's done. He's good." Is it... like for some people it might be when you've trained them to not be on the carpet, like to go potty outside.

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For others, the dog pees in the apartment or in the house, like for their entire life. I've seen people put up with that. Oof, that bar set really low. When do you consider your dog trained? When he won't like, run away. When he comes, when he's called? When he would not pull on a leash? When he doesn't bark or jump on your guests? Doesn't steal food from the counter?

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When is your job done? When is that dog trained? While you're thinking about that. I'm going to tell you what I've got going on today. I am going to share with you my answer to the two most common questions that I get. I get these questions all the time, but before I get to those, I'm going to ask you to think about this.

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Do you own a car? Trust me on this one. We're getting somewhere. If you don't own a car, do you know anybody who owns a car? Now, if you own a car, very likely you do regular maintenance on it. Like what, how often does that happen? Every three, four months. I don't know. Depends how much you drive. I guess you might need the oil change more often than that, but if you do regular maintenance on that car, then you can just use it, right?

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Just drive it. Don't give it another thought you could check your box "my maintenance is done". But let me tell you, that's a machine and dogs aren't machines. So, you can't check a box with dog training. It's not done. And today, I'm going to share with you why it's not done.

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Two most common questions I get asked. All the time. Number one, how long did that take to train or how long does it take to train that? And if I train the way you're suggesting Susan, when can I stop giving all these cookies? When can I stop using treats? Like when will he just do these things for me, ? Going to give you that answer... the answer to those two questions.

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I want you to think about this though. Yes, dog training is science, but dog training is more like having a relationship with a loved one than it is having a relationship with a car. No disrespect to all you car folk out there who I know have relationships with your car and you love them. I don't want to disrespect, I just want to draw a parallel here.



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If you see a - think of a couple you know, that get along - see, they just get along great. They've been together for years. They seem to laugh and have a lot of fun together. They do things together. They want to spend time with each other. They spend time apart. They have their own interests, but they're very loving and caring towards each other.

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Do you ever like say. How long, how long does that take to get, how long am I going to? How long do I have to do that before I get that? Do you ever ask that question? Like, when are you going to stop holding her hand? And when do you get to stop saying nice things to her? Or when can you stop making her supper?

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When do you stop telling him how great he is, or like, when does that happen in order to have that great relationship? Like, I want to know. Right? Here's the thing when you have, or you're working towards a great relationship, every act that you do that helps contribute to that great relationship actually brings you as much joy as it brings the person you're doing it for.

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Think about the qualities of a great relationship. Now, I'm not a relationship coach, but I think of great relationships that I've had in my life or that I have in my life. And there's respect, there's mutual respect, like fairness. There's there's playfulness. Definitely there's playfulness. There's trust and honesty.

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There's in a relationship, you grow in confidence, you have security within that relationship. There's great communication, both ways, right? There's great communications. Yet, each of us are unique. You aren't trying to change that person. You might be trying to live with their quirkiness. And see how that can work for you, but you're not trying to make them into something that they're not, or that they don't want to be, or they're not intended to be. Correct?

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It's the same with dogs, right? Like when we have a great relationship with another person through that give and take relationship, your weaknesses, start to turn into your strengths. And the same is very true both with the dogs in our lives and with us when we're working with those dogs. Because at first, we may not know how to teach a dog, how to not pee in the house, but the more you get curious about what's going on. The more you actually learn, and that's what relationships are about, that while you're sharing you're learning and it's a two way street and it's something you just love to do every day.

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When can you stop giving your dog treats? Well, treats, or reinforcement, and reinforcement comes in many, many forms. And so, there's lots of different ways we reinforce our dogs.



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Now you can do this little test and that is - don't have any treats on you, walk outside and ask your dog to do five or six things in a row. You can say yes or good dog in between. If the dog's willingness to do these things without treats on you or their engagement with you is different.

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Then that tells me you haven't got the transfer of value from the rewards into the relationship or into the behaviour you're asking them. That your inappropriate use of the food has created a relationship where the dog says "You got money for me, bud? If you ain't got money, I ain't your girl. I gotta go."

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So you can fix that with your dog. I don't know about your girl, but you can fix that with your dog. We want to work on not putting the food first, not showing the dog mommy's got a cookie before you ask them to do something (or daddy's got a cookie). We've got to get the transfer of value. And I've talked about that in past podcast episodes, and I promise you, I will be talking about it in a lot more podcast episodes, that when you look at relationships with your dog, you know, dog training is science, but a great relationship with another person is just science as well.

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It's the study of behaviour. It's the study of what makes that person happy. And if what makes that person happy is something that makes you happy when you're giving it that's what makes a great relationship. And it's just so true of dogs. One of the things that I've learned, probably one of the worst things we could have done is used the word "dog training", because I don't really think we're training.

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Think about education, like what is the best way to learn anything? And it's proven the best way to learn anything. Is number one, to have the skill broken down into small little steps. So, you can just become proficient at one little step. And then when you're great at that one little step, you might add a second one, get really good.

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You've got to then practice. If they're mechanical skills, you're going to practice those things. And then the best way to really solidify your understanding is going to try and teach that to somebody else. Now the great thing about those of us who own dogs. We get to teach that to our dogs every single day.

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But the thing is, you've got to look at it, not as a teacher, but as a learner. Because when you are saying, okay, I got this really cool thing, and I'm going to attempt to teach this to you. So, I'm going to do this as the first step, and you demonstrate the first step and then you learn. By your dog's responses if they understood it.

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Oh, did he? Yeah. Oh, he got it. Okay. Now I can go to the second step. I'm a dog learner in this regard. I'm not a dog trainer. I'm not an educator. I'm a dog learner. I'm looking at the dog evaluating. Here's what I'm giving you. Did you get it? By looking at his responses. And I look at a dog like Tater Salad, who is our rescue dog. Who's been living with Kim who works here at Say Yes.



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Kim and myself, we kind of co-share Tater Salad. He lives with me full time and Kim's here four days a week. Tater Salad is half Bulldog, part Boston Terrier and part Pug. Now I've worked with a lot of Pugs. I've showed Pugs in agility. I've worked with many, many Terriers.

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I've owned many Terriers and I've actually trained many non-sporting breeds. None of that helped me. I was a dog learner with all of those dogs, but Tater Salad is his own unique person with his own unique challenges. And by me approaching what he presented, as a learner, I not only was able to help him be an amazing family pet, I was actually able to get lessons for myself that I would be able to share with the rest of our community. Like you listening to this podcast right now. A good friend of mine, Dr. Ellyn Bader, she runs an online site called the Couples Institute. She has this great line and it is when you feel furious, it's time to get curious.

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So, if something your dog is doing, and I would think of this with Tater Salad, like there would be times I would be frustrated, like I've trained hundreds and helped thousands of people with their dogs, but this one is not doing what I expect. Why? He had a long history of learning to be sneaky and getting what he wanted and playing keep away and not following rules, making up his own rules.

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He had that long history when he came to us. So, it wasn't so much about the breed mix he was, as much as the reinforcement that he came with. When I feel furious, which, "furious" is pretty harsh word, but it rhymes with curious. So, you could say when you feel puzzled... it just doesn't sound the right.

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When you feel furious time to get curious. Get curious about why, what you just thought you taught the dog isn't being shown back to you in the way that demonstrates the dog understands what you're teaching. If you're a dog learner, you're going to evaluate what that dog understands, and you're going to learn how you need to change your approach.

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This is true with anything. So, if, if you're a parent, you're a child learner. You're going to be curious about everything that's going on, the things are going in the direction you want and the things that aren't. If you're a co-worker, then you're a team learner. If you approach anything that could be a possible education opportunity from a place of learning for you on how you can deliver those lessons better then it makes you a more effective communicator.

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It makes your relationship with your child or your co-worker, or if you're the boss with the people on your team. I hate that word boss, by the way, I prefer leader. It makes for relationships and understanding so much better all the way around. You're not going to question "how long did that take to train?" ever again. Because you know, every layer of training or learning for that dog is an opportunity for you to deliver joy, and to enjoy the process. Just like you're building a relationship with any other creature that has emotions and drives and feeling and needs just like your dog.





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All right. So, think about how can you be delivering understanding and delivering joy for yourself with every interaction that you have with your dog. And think about it with every other person. Some guy cuts you off in traffic, hey, be furious time to get curious. That's it for today. If you've got, please, please, I hope you are subscribing no matter where you're listening to this podcast, I hope you hit the subscribe button.

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Please leave me a review. I love to read back what lessons you gleaned from my podcasts. I'm having a great time doing this. Please keep listening, send in your ideas of anything you'd like to have me talk about here on Shaped By Dog. We'll see you next time. Bye.

### Resources

[Shaped By Dog Podcast Episode 2: Reinforcement](#)

[Blog: What's a Reward for Your Dog? List of Reinforcers](#)

[Blog: Lurers Anonymous \(Luring vs Shaping\)](#)

[Dr. Ellyn Bader \(The Couples Institute\)](#)



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### 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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