

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG Hey everybody, welcome to Shaped by Dog. I am Susan Garrett. Do you have more than one dog living in your household or are you thinking of getting another dog for your household? If so, you are going to want to pay attention today. I am going to be sharing with you, the intentional way I set up harmony in my house for my dogs.

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Now I am on the verge of adding a sixth dog to my household, which is really crazy for me because I think my sweet spot is four dogs. I love the flexibility I get with four dogs. Those of you who have one dog, there's a lot of benefits to just having one dog. Visiting family and friends is super easy because quite often if that dog's well-trained, if you've been through our Recallers program, then your dog will be welcome anytime you show up at anybody's house.

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Now with me being soon to be a, well depending if you count Tater Salad, five to six dog household, I can't just pack them in a car and show up somewhere. So, there's definitely advantages to having more than one dog, but there's, you know, some great advantages to having that one dog.

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But when you go from one dog to a multi dog household things change. And they need to be intentionally changed. Sometimes it works out if you aren't doing this with intention, but sometimes it turns out disastrously. And let me share with you what I mean. Some dogs, I see the dogs that I've shared a house with over the years, there's five stages of togetherness let's call it that I have observed in these dogs. Now some dogs have the top stage of adoring. They adore each other.

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So, when you have one dog and you bring in another rescue dog or a new puppy, and you don't intentionally set that all reinforcement comes through you so you get a transfer of value and you just say, "Hey Sally, I brought you a new friend, it's Henry, hey, you guys are going to be great friends", and you kind of just let them work things out and be BFFs, very quickly you're going to learn that, although you, Sally, you had first and you trained her really, really well and she will listen. Henry will tend to bond really super fast to Sally and will not be as mindful to you as Sally was. It doesn't have to be that way. You can definitely change things if you separate them while you create that great relationship with Henry.

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Yeah, give them time together to play together. I don't mean separate them and never let them see each other, but that there's a lot of one on one time with you and Henry that's super important. Okay. So, these five stages that I noticed dogs go through. There's I adore you, you adore me, we're BFFs. We play together inside. We play together outside. I just love being around you.



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Then there's what I call the acknowledge stage where, you know the dogs in my house, I would say they, they go between acknowledge and adore. So, Momentum and Feature sometimes play with each other. Feature and Tater sometimes play with each other. Feature and Swagger, outside play with each other a little bit.

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But I would say they're more acknowledged. They're like, yeah, hey, you're here, I'll sniff your butt occasionally and you sniff me, and you know, yeah, we're good. They don't want to hang out and play and no one's inviting anybody over for supper, but they acknowledged. So, there's adore, where they play together all the time, they choose to lay with each other. There's acknowledge, where, I mean, I like you, yeah, you're cool.

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Then there's tolerate. And that is a stage where, we're not going to have words I put up with you, but my preference is not really to be in the same room as you are in. So maybe if that one dog is in the room I might, I might go to the other end of the room. I don't know. I tolerate the nonsense, but not really my cup of tea. Then the next stage, stage number four is aggravate. That dog aggravates me. And that will be shown by the dog, there's a several signs that I will see in that dog and I'll get to those in a second, that will tell me that I am aggravated by that dog.

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And then the top level is I hate this dog. I hate this dog. And that is not a good level to have in any dog, in any household. Because when they absolutely hate that dog, they will try to hurt them if they get a chance. And that's where people separate, they put up a, gates to separate these dogs and more they'll have a muzzle on one dog and this... Here's the thing guys, you can move, you can be intentional as a dog trainer and you can help a dog move from hate to tolerate, possibly, not always but you could. Now if it's a long-rehearsed pattern, possibly not. And possibly you not, it, depending on your relationship with the dog, it may not happen.

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I moved my dogs all the time from tolerate to acknowledge. I don't want, I don't want, I want them all to be in the adore or tolerate stage with each other. I'd prefer that they not be in the aggravate stage. Because I just don't think that's fair to my dogs. Now I personally believe that having two dogs live together with separates and baby gates and muzzles is way too stressful.

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It's too stressful to each dog who can smell each other in the house and have to always be on edge that, is this the day a barrier is going to be let down and we're going to have world war three? I think it's stressful to you. Did you lock the gate? I'm letting out bimbo don't let that, that dog is, you got the muzzle on? Way too stressful. I think it's actually selfish to live with two dogs in that way. Those dogs could enjoy their lives living in another home. And I think that in fairness to those dogs, they deserve to be in a life of complete relaxation where they have a great life and, as much as there's shame associated with, I couldn't work this out and now I have to rehome a dog, it's really the best thing you could ever do to a dog. Let them have a great life.



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All right. So those are the, the stages. And I intentionally set up my life, so that I want my dogs to be in one of the three stages: adore, acknowledge or tolerate is where I really, really would like them to live. And most of the time I would say my dogs are acknowledge, there in the acknowledge stage.

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I would, I'm guessing with Feature, she would be at the tolerate stage with Tater. She used to be at the aggravate stage, but she definitely is at the tolerate stage now. And dogs can go between those... And this is Susan Garrett arbitrary scale by the way, this is not a scientific fact. This is just what I've observed with my own dogs. I observed them and I've categorized them so that I can intentionally move them. Because I want them all to get along. I don't want to have a problem. It may be different at different stages of their life. For example, when Momentum's in heat and I have an intact male, they might jump to a door right away and she might jump to aggravate right away.

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What I look for, and here's what I want you to be aware of is, if I see another dog get a stiff body when another dog is nearby, give another dog cut eye where they freeze and they just, you know, give them the look through the eye, those are happening before I hear a little, "rrrrrrrr", like a little bit of a growl, okay, that was a wimpy growl. But if I hear growling, those three signs to me are a dog saying, "yo mom, he's bugging me, I'm uncomfortable with this, I need you to acknowledge it". And so, Susan is on it. Susan then says, okay, I need to develop some reinforcement to get these guys on the, I call it the togetherness project. And I get intentional about building value for spending time together with those dogs. I need to move them to tolerate.

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Alright. Now I might have a dog who's at the aggregate stage around mealtime. I'll just work on that. If you ignore or just aren't present to the growling, cut eye and stiff body, it would make, go to snarking. And what I call snarking is when that dog goes by, the other dog might bite in their face and then leave the room. That's snarking. If you just go, Oh, well I don't know what's bothering him today, and you move on and don't acknowledge that, after a couple of weeks of snarking you might get to jumping. I'm going to jump yah. And jumping often leads to fight without bite. That is, it sounds bad, somebody is talking about their mother and their army boots.

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And when you, they finally just break it up. There might not even be a saliva trail on anybody. There's no holes, it's a fight without a bite. Somebody got jumped. All right. If you don't do anything about jumping, you're going to move into a dog fight. Dog fight moves into bloodbath. Now you have dogs who hate each other.

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That could have been prevented if you'd known it, possibly. I'm not saying in all cases, it could have been. I'm just saying I've lived in houses with three intact Jack Russell terriers and dogs, rescue dogs coming and going, and I just set it up intentionally that I acknowledge, and we moved to togetherness project. I believe part of why I get dogs getting along is because of the rules that I have in my house.



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You can choose to adopt some or all, but I believe this is what helps having this house be in harmony. Number one, if there's value given out, it comes through me. So if I bring a puppy into the house and my adult dog adores a pup, then when the puppy, the puppy gets sent to get to play with that dog and then I'll call them out and they play with me a little bit and then show me a control position. The value of playing with your friend comes through me and the permission I give you. So, then you look, I, I get to carry that value. I start to get some of that value. That's what I'm looking for. In these rules of the house, it's all about where's the value and how can I transfer it to me.

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All of my dogs sit before they go out the door and I don't tell them to, I just put my hand on the door, and they sit. That comes through crate games. That shows control at the threshold. What they want is to go outside, value through me. This isn't about dominance, this isn't me about being an alpha, this is me trying to create some value through me. And it's also safety. Because if I have, I currently I have a 16-and-a-half-year-old dog who's, you know, the pins aren't so good underneath her anymore.

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So, if I just opened the door and all the dogs go busting through, Tater Salad's, you know, rambunctious 50-pound body could pin her up against the side of the door and she could get hurt. So, we have control at thresholds, always, all dogs, all stages of life, they all have control at threshold. I don't make Encore sit because she [inaudible]. So, as a 16-and-a-half-year-old dog, she doesn't have to sit, but she still waits to be invited to go outside.

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Okay. Next, no dogs sleep on my bed. Therefore, nobody has to say I get to sleep near mom. No, I get to sleep with your mom. No, that's my spot. No, don't you get my spot? It's my spot. I was here first. None of that. So, I've got dog beds all over this house. I have probably like eight times the number of dog beds as I do dogs. Lots of places for people to sleep. No dogs are allowed on the furniture. Not, they're not allowed on the couch unless I invite them. They love snuggling with me, but they get invited. Transfer value for what you want.

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Mealtime. Everybody has a hot zone. That's a spot where you belong. And you stayed, you get, you know, I might throw the odd tidbit especially if I'm seeing somebody moving to a, from an acknowledgement to a tolerance stage with another dog, I might make a point of giving out really good treats while people are in their hot zone, people, I mean my four legged people, right? You get that. That's how I roll. I'll give them a food while they're waiting for me, but to prepare the food I give them treats. Slowest eater eats first. I give him his bowl and then I mix up everybody else's bowl. Swagger's always been the slowest eater. I think it's a function of being a Singleton.

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And then everybody gets their food and their, wherever, they're not locked in a crate, they're all in this area, but in their hot zone when they're eating and then when they're done, they can lick each other's bowl I'm okay with that. However, if I'm going to, I might take a bowl, maybe somebody left a little bit of food, hot chances, likely Swagger, if it, if it was, and then I will have everybody sit. And I'll call a name and you get a slurp and you get a slurp and you get a slurp. So, there's nobody needing to get puffy and muscle up, I get the first, I get to eat the bowl first.



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No. You know what, value goes through me. I give everyone a slurp, don't worry about it, it's chill, everyone's going to get it. There's, also some things that I do when I, when I go out in the garden or something, you know, I have a big house and people, dogs can go where they want. I'm going to leave the house for an extended period of time, I'm going to separate dogs that are in the tolerate phase, right. I'm always going to separate my geriatric dog from the rambunctious ones. I don't really crate anybody anymore. But I will separate, like I have a baby gate where I'll put some dogs in one area and I'll put other dogs in another area. I just think that's smart.

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And if you want have dogs that just tolerate each other, put them in different rooms when you go out. Why ask for somebody to step on somebody's toes when you're not around. Also, calm arrivals and departures. I don't say anything in his walk in, and I ignore them for the first little while. And then I talked to them a few minutes later.

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There's a few key things that can disrupt harmony. Getting a new dog, a new puppy, a new rescue dog, uh, inviting, like I, I have friends who I babysit their dogs for a few days, that could create some disruption. So, we'll go back into the togetherness project, building value for dogs and hot zones. Door eruptions, right? Let's see, the UPS driver comes knocking on the door. That's a good time when you know, somebody's terrier could say somebody, something about somebody's mother and it could go bad.

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But it doesn't if everyone has a role, when somebody knocks on my door or rings a bell, everyone knows where they should be. Nobody's at the door frantically barking. They can be barking, I mean my dogs aren't perfect, but they need to be in their hot zone when they're barking. So, fear is another area where there could be some interactions. Because if one dog's like afraid of thunder and they're really quivering, the other dogs could show that as a sign of weakness and beat them up. So, make sure your thunder robot dog is separated. Health, a dog with a thyroid problem might all of a sudden jumped from adore to aggravate right away. A dog in pain, they're going to jump from adore or acknowledge to aggravate.

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So, don't be too quick to rule out health as a reason for a dog, suddenly not getting along with another dog. And age, right? So, a dog, an adolescent that kind of is playing with their hormones, they might feel all puffy and they need to tell everybody about how the lay of the land is going to be. It doesn't have to happen. I just step in and make sure the value comes through me. I got this. Nobody else has to, you know, to show their stripes.

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It's all about living here in harmony. Also, geriatrics. What I've noticed is if an older dog who has kind of been the ringleader of the dogs, is getting older, that may cause somebody who used to get along great to suddenly not get along great.





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So, I have rules in how dogs are allowed to play in the house. You know, things like when I was a single dog household, I didn't care if my guests came over and played fetch with my dog. But not today. No, you're not throwing a toy for a dog, one of my dogs when I've got five others who say, I think I'd like to get that toy.

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I'll talk more about some of the rules that I have inside the house and outside the house and how I make sure I engage all of my dogs throughout the day and how I train in a multi dog household. All that I'll cover in an upcoming episode of Shaped by Dog.

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But hey, if you're enjoying these podcasts, I would love it if you shared them with your dog loving friends and family. And I'd also really love it if you would give me a star review. I am not going to tell you which one of the, from one to five, but if you would hit the one that rhymes with five, that would be awesome. And also subscribe so you won't miss the next episode of Shaped by Dog. I'll see you next time.

### Resources

[Blog Post: Second Dog Syndrome](#)

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Blog Post: All About Dogs Sleeping in the Bedroom](#)



# Creating Intentional Multi-Dog Household Harmony

### 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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