

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG Hey everyone, welcome to Shaped By Dog. I am Susan Garrett. Today, we're going to pick up where we left off on [episode number 14](#) of Shaped By Dog. Where I was talking about intentional interactions in the dogs that live in my house. If you have multiple dogs in your house, the relationships can just grow 'hopefully' where you go "well, I just hope they get along, I hope he ends up liking each other".

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Or they can be intentional, and you intentionally set them up so that they are BFFs, all the animals in your house. And it doesn't matter if it's cross species, you might have a bunny or a cat, and you want to intentionally set that up so that the dog actually doesn't hurt the cat or the dog. The five stages of coexistence that I have observed within my household and that, you know, dogs who really love each other and get along great inside the house and outside their house. I described them as they adore each other. Step number two was they acknowledge. They get along.

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They like each other and everyone's Hunky Dory, no problems ever. The third stage is the tolerate stage every now and again, they might have to leave the area because they just. You know, I've had enough of that dog. Number four is the aggravate where the dog is a little more edgy. And how can you tell this? Go back to [episode number 4](#) in Shaped By Dog, where I described the T.E.E.M.P. the "TEMP" of a dog. Your dog will tell you before they ever have to open their mouth and use their voice of growling or snapping. They're going to let you know with their body language, how they're feeling about the dogs in their environment and nearby.

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I don't ever want them to have to get to a place where they're aggravated enough to show you that they're aggravated because number five, and you don't want to wait till you get to number five because this may be the point of no return. When you have dogs who hate each other. My goal for all the animals in my house is to be confident and comfortable.

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That's my job as their owner. And, you know, I call myself the keeper of the joy. I want to make sure by dealing out joy anywhere I can, that. My dogs show me with their body language that they not only are comfortable, that they're super confident in any environment. That's really the goal. In order to get that you have to be present for the relationships that are happening right now within the dogs. And remember that dogs, if you just kind of like, "oh yeah, you guys have at it, you're family now and get along". Now, chances are what if they ended up getting super bonded?

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Yeah. If a dog spends more time with other dogs in their household and gets more reinforcement from the other dogs in their household, you will find it more challenging to train that dog because the reinforcement doesn't come from you. It comes from the environment and the other dogs.



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So be mindful of that. Okay, today I'm going to go through some guidelines that I have in my house that helps to maintain that. All the dogs are confident and comfortable. You know, you're going to have to change this. If you have a puppy, what makes a puppy's environment comfortable and confident is going to change as they grow up.

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As my dogs age, my goal is to always have my dogs to live, to be 20 or beyond. I haven't yet got there yet, but you set a goal and the journey is getting there. But I have had dogs who've made it very close to 18 years of age. And so. I have to alter the environment to make sure they're confident and comfortable at every stage in their life.

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So here are some of the guidelines that I have in my house that works for me. And remember, I've had terriers, I've had rescue dogs in and out of this house. I used to bring in people's dogs where I would train them. And they lived as one of my dogs in the household. So, we've had a lot of dogs coming and going, and I need that confident and comfortable.

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And I got to tell you the origins of this. Many years ago, I think it was 1998. My husband at the time, my husband has passed away, but he got a dog back then. They didn't really gel. This was a really, really nice border Collie. He actually is the great grandfather of my current dog momentum. I really liked Quid. John and Quid never... never hit it off. And they were kind of adversarial. Like not that John has ever hurt him or anything in training. You could just tell he didn't like the dog long story short, the friend of ours who used to look after Quid, whenever we would go away, she would take longer and longer to bring him back.

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And sometimes she would get tearful. And one time I just said, look, I don't think John really misses Quid. So why don't you keep him until John asks for him? John never asked about Quid again. And I said, you know what? Let's just sign him over and let him that own them because. Here's my belief. Every dog deserves to be somebody's special dog. Every dog on this planet deserves to be somebody's special dog. And I could tell Quid he wasn't a special dog. I had six dogs of my own, including a six month old puppy when Quid came into the house. And so I didn't have time or space to make him one of my special dogs. I loved him. I trained him. I tried to give him time, but he definitely was one of Anette's special dogs.

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Now, why am I telling you that story? Because what I noticed Quid and my dog Buzz who - Buzz at the time was probably two years old when Quid came around. Quid was a very confident dog. He never had a fight with anybody. He was just a confident dog that other dogs just seem to get along with. Buzzy didn't like him and I didn't recognize this. Buzzy never snarked at him or snapped at him. And this is how I noticed that Buzzy didn't like him. He wasn't confident and comfortable. When Quid went to live in his new forever home for the rest of his life with Anette. I mean, he would come visit us quite often, but I noticed that Buzz changed.



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I hadn't noticed it happened because it was such a gradual change over the three years before Quid left, but Buzzy would never stay in the same room with Quid. So, we'd sit down to watch TV and Buzzy would always go and lie by the front door. I always assumed he wanted the coolness of the tile out at the front, but as soon as Quiddy no longer lived with us, Buzzy came back and hung out with us as a family.

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So that kind of was heartbreaking that for three years of his life, I wasn't present to the fact that he wasn't confident or comfortable. And that's what really led me to be intentional with my dogs relationships. They don't have to be BFFs, but I want them to be confident and comfortable. That's super important.

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Okay. So, here's some of the rules that I have. Dogs can play in the house, things like bitey face, where they lay down and they are, they can play bitey face with each other. I'm cool with that. They can do some wrestling if it goes up a couple notches and we start doing, you know, Indy racetracks around the house. I pull the plug on that. Let's not get carried away and knock something over and that's just not going to be good so they can wrestle and play bitey phase and play bow and goof around, but not up and down across the furniture and around the kitchen and all over the place. Also tugging is a let's play it by ear.

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My dogs have never really tugged with each other outside. We'll let other dogs - Swagger loves now to him and Tater Salad - they'll tug on a leash. It's not something I've ever encouraged. When I see it happening I evaluate it. What is the T.E.M.P Of each dog is the temp good? Then I'll let it happen. What isn't allowed in the house with respect to play is policing.

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So, a third dog is not allowed to come in and be the play Buster and say, knock it off you guys late. No, no, you don't. You don't get to rule who gets to play and who doesn't get to play. Also, like I said, the all-out ripping. Indy 500 racing around the house. That's not allowed either. Now outside. What is acceptable play, outside, chasing each other, maybe nipping at your heels.

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If you're a herding dog, again, I'm evaluating the confidence and comfort of the dog getting nipped at. Like Encore loves the nip at Feature's heels and Feature doesn't seem to care. So that's a hundred percent. Okay. They play the hide and seek, or the Smoke Ya! game from Recallers. They like to chase each other around things.

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That's fun. I love watching my dogs play it. Love, love, love, watching them play with each other. What isn't allowed outside is you are not allowed to body slam another dog. So, you're not allowed to run beside them and kind of hip check them like you were a hockey player. You're not allowed to cut off a path, which is something that almost all of my border collies want to do.



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They want to cut a path like the one dogs running and the other dog just cuts them off, potentially ending up at a T-bone. Also, I don't want you to obsess about one dog. I don't want you to be constantly in their face when they're trying to move. You're kind of herding them. I have herding dogs. I'm okay with them herding from a distance, but you're not allowed to decrease the quality of life for one of the other dogs in the household. Okay. Then you're all probably gonna wonder, well, what are you going to do? What are you going to do? But when it, when it happens, I'll get to that. Patience, grasshopper.

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Other things I don't allow. Resource guarding. I used to have more resource guarding. But since I've been very intentional about, Hey, here's some resource guys, everybody could adopt a control position and I'm going to dole out the resources. I may even let you share resources. So, it starts with a game like ItsYerChoice.

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If you go to our DogsThat and find [Recallers](#) or Recallers.com. ItsYerChoice is one of our Recallers games. So, get on the wait list for that. And we'll send you some great information, including how to play ItsYerChoice. So, I'll play, [ItsYerChoice](#) with one dog and then two dogs. And then I might throw cookies on the floor at the same time you get yours and you get yours, but that doesn't mean you have to try and get each other's, but just it's controlling the sharing of the resources.

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To the point now I have six dogs. If somebody comes to the front door, I just throw handfuls of cookies all over the floor. And I don't worry about anybody guarding anybody's resources, because I've been present to that one dog, then another dog, then two dogs in the same room, then three dogs and four dogs.

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I don't just expect, or I'm not hoping that relationship figures it out. I am present and intentional. The late Helen King, who was a friend of mine. She used to call it Easter biscuits. If I throw Easter biscuits in the air, you can get the ones near you and you can observe, are you going for that one? Cause I'm going to go for that one.

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That's kind of the way it looks to me. I have no idea what's going on in my dog's heads. That's me anthropomorphizing looking at what's happening saying, "hey, it looks like you guys are kind of sharing the resources, It's really nice". I believe that happens because I dole out the resources intentionally and nobody needs to have to be boss to get the most resources they don't have to, because they know the resources are never ending when you are playing with me and playing by my rules in the house.

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Okay, I also don't allow obsessive or obnoxious, you know, like some dogs into another dog's face in the house and just lick their face, lick their eyes and like their ears. No, you don't have to do that. Or just bugging another dog now. I don't mind if like a younger dog is trying to engage an older dog in play.



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# CSI Tips for Managing a Multi-Dog Household

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That's helping me to move you from maybe a stage of tolerate to the stage of acknowledge, or maybe from the stage of acknowledge into the stage of adore. But if I have a dog who I know is already in the stage of aggravate. And another dog comes up. I'm probably not going to let that happen because aggravate can go to hate.

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I don't want that to happen until I can get you from aggravating to tolerate. And then maybe the puppy can encourage you to go from tolerate to ignore. So, there'll be dogs like when a puppy comes into my household and we'll have to talk about this in another episode, I'm very intentional how I set up those interactions because I don't want a puppy to get injured. I don't want a puppy's confidence to be lost. Nor do I want an adult dog to have to put up with nonsense badgering from a puppy that's just not right. Confidence and comfortable. Is your dog confident and comfortable? So, I don't allow for those obnoxious things to be happening to a dog in the house. So, what's my role in all of this.

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Think of the acronym CSI. Yeah, I'm kind of the governing body. The C is "Create". It's my job to create an environment of success for both dogs. Now, if you go to [episode number 6](#) in Shaped By Dog, I talk about the art of manipulation, super, super important in dog training that you are able to manipulate environments so that your dogs have success.

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I've created an environment where if I am going to allow two dogs who maybe aren't both at the acknowledged state that they're going to interact, I might like if it's a young dog, I might have like a table or something in that room where the young dog can get under the table. If they feel like they need to have a safety zone or the older dog has a higher table, that they can get up and get away from a young dog, for example.

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So, I want to create the environment that it could possibly be successful. Now that may be of course, with a puppy going right back to Baby Gates or Ex-Pens. We'll talk about that again in another episode. So, the create is. Manipulate the environment for confidence and comfort. Keep those sessions short. So, I might be in the kitchen and I see the dogs are interacting and playing and being goofy. I'll let that go on for five minutes, but I don't want to let it go on until a dog is tired and then somebody, you know, gets a hurt feeling. So, I'm manipulating the environment. I'm keeping the sessions, you know, relatively short, depending on the threshold of each dog.

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So, it's super important you know your dog and you know what their tolerance is and you know what their safety is. You can read their body language. I'm also going to create an environment where it's really easy for me to give high value reward. So, I've got to have high value rewards on hand and the escapes that I mentioned that there's a high escape, there's a low escape. So, manipulate the environment, short sessions, high value rewards and escape possibilities. So, the S in my CSI is for me to "Supervise". I can't just go, Oh yeah, you guys figure things out. I'm going to go and do a podcast episode. No, and you're not supervising like you're watching TV and you're allowing this to go on at the



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same time. You are present for the interactions that are happening with these dogs, unless they're like in bed, sleeping or chewing on bones and happy on their own you are present for what is going on.

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Grab a journal. I love, if you want to create intentional relationships, you've got to journal what you see, both the things you like and the things that you'd like to change. Grab a journal. Just create a new journal. If you don't want to mess up your training journal, create a relationship journal. Super important. If you're trying to move a dog from one level of relationship to another. So we've got the create, we've got the supervise. And what does that look like? And then the last, and I don't like to go to this unless I deemed I have to, is "Interfere". So, here's how I interfere. The good interfering is I reinforce you guys are doing awesome.

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I'm going to reward you for tolerating that I'm going to reward you for being, you know, appropriate. So, I am going to see dogs doing things that I like. Maybe they're lying down together, chewing a bone. Each, got their own bone look at I don't after resource guard my bone off after you, I'm going to come in. I'm going to give them both something more valuable to a bone. They can keep their bones. I'm just going to give you something more valuable. And then you're off on your own. Right? So, interference could be something really good. You guys are doing great. Here's some reinforcement. Interference is either reinforce, redirect, or reassign. Those are the ways that I'm going to interfere with dogs that are interacting.

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Of course, like, does this happen in my house? It happens with Tater Salad and Momentum, Tater Salad and Feature, and anybody else, the room's going to get a cookie just because I'm not just gonna dole out one to another. And this is something with Buzzy. What I used to do when we had new puppies and I allowed the puppies to interact with Buzz.

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He didn't want anything to do with them. He would lie the corner and be out of the way. And I would use a finger point. I conditioned a finger point meant "you're awesome and I'm going to give you something". So, I might finger point and throw a cookie when no one was looking that the dog in the corner would get that or I'd finger point and I'd get up and I'd give them a cookie.

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So that's just a way I could reinforce from a distance instead of a click. It's just a quiet finger point. Cause if I said, good dog, now all the dogs in the house are going to come running. Who's a good dog? Who's a good dog? Who's a good dog? I want to know who the good dog is. So, I interfere by reinforce.

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Redirect. So, if I see somebody obsessively face licking, I might say, here's your bone. You can go and lie down over there. If I know that dog might likely to chew on a bone, so redirect is to give them something else to do, rather than interfering with that other dog. Because from what I'm observing your interactions is creating a lack of comfort or lack of confidence in that dog. If the redirection doesn't work, I'm going to reassign, reassign might be, you could hop it up in your Hot Zone. Or it could be "you win the prize" and you win the prize is I'm going to take you by the collar, take you out of the room, either, put you in another room or put you in your crate and you might get a little bit of a timeout.





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Hate, hate to do that and I virtually will never do that to a puppy. Right? So, it's a last resource, right? Honestly, it might be when Susan just needs to come up with a new plan. So, I need to keep the safety of this dog, you are bothering them way too much. So, I'm going to reassign. Reassigning needs to be highlighted and starred in your journal

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So, you realize how many of these timeouts you've given a dog and it is a stake through your heart. Because this cannot be something that you're flip about. You have got to realize, because that is punishment, no matter how benign you think it is, it is punishment and punishment has a long-term effect on a dog. That's Shaped By Dog for another day.

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Please, please, please. I love to read your reviews. So, rank this episode, leave me a review. I read your reviews and if you have anything you, in particular, you'd like to listen to me chat about in an upcoming episode just leave it in a review and I will take it all in. Thank you so much. We'll see you next time on Shaped By Dog.

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 14: Creating Intentional Multi-Dog Household Harmony](#)

[Podcast Episode 4: T.E.M.P. \(Tail, Eyes/Ears, Mouth, Posture\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 2: Reinforcement](#)

[ItsYerChoice Game \(IYC\)](#)

[Recallers](#)

[Podcast Episode 6: The Art of Manipulation](#)



# CSI Tips for Managing a Multi-Dog Household

### 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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