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 off today's episode with just a little bit of heaviness, but we're going to bounce back really quick. One of the undeniably sad truths in life is that, there are dogs who get hit by cars. The majority of dogs that get hit by cars they could have been avoided.

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The dogs are maybe street dogs, they're feral, they might get hit by a car. However, a lot of these dogs are family pets. I remember when I was 12 years old watching my friend, Joey's, Siberian Husky, Chaka. Chaka was six months old when she got hit by a car. Happy ending, in that she wasn't seriously injured, but I remember it like it was yesterday, the squealing tires, Chaka screaming. It could have been avoidable had everybody involved with Chaka at the time known what I'm going to share with you today.

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And that is my 5C model for growing a new capability in your dog. And if you're sitting there saying, "Oh Susan, I know this, this is really good". Let me tell you I've tweaked it a little bit. To help grow understanding. The 5C model of growing a new capability is going to be like a true North for you when you're training your dog. So, let's jump right in. And I'm going to tell you the very first layer, the bottom layer previous known as consciousness is now called connection. And that is before you attempt to train a dog, you need to be present for what you're doing, and the dog needs to be engaged with you. The two of you need to do be connected. Now, how can you do that?

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If you go back to episode 18, I shared with you four puppy training games which are appropriate for any age dog. So, you could start with a game like tug. That's a great game to build connection. It changes your dog's arousal state, and it helps the dog focus on you more and less on the environment. So, it helps to grow the connection so that when you stopped the game of tug, you've got a transition moment where the dog says, "okay, what are we going to do next?". That's when you start your training. If you are thinking of the groceries that you have to put away, or the shopping that hasn't been done for those groceries, or you're just feeling a little bit blah, go and have a piece of chocolate, do something to get yourself up.

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You owe it to your dog and only, you know, dog training sessions should only take a few minutes of your time. Get yourself up then move on with the day. I promise you a good dog training session could be an inspiration that bounces you with more motivation into the activity that you have to do next on your day. It all starts with the bottom layer of connectedness, previously known as consciousness. You two are on the same page and now you're like, boom, let's get training some thing. Now, for some dogs that might be my training session. If I have a rescue dog in that I am training to be a great family pet, then many of the first training sessions, that's all I'm training is connectedness. I'm not moving up that pyramid to train anything else.

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And as my relationship with that dog grows, I might do, 95% of the training session is connectedness. So, I might play a game like the search game that I shared with you in episode 18. I might play some tug game, depending on the dog. Uh, I might play some other of my Recallers games just to build connection, nothing with the intention of an outcome that is challenging the dog. Your dog may need to just stay at connectedness or connection in your training session.

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End it and move on and do whatever it was that you were planning to do. Level two is now clarity. Okay so we're connected, I'm stopping the tug and I'm immediately growing into creating clarity for what I want. Now let's go back to Chaka. It might've been, I want to create clarity for my recall, that might break into a few different games that you can play. Get clarity from your dog so your dog goes, "if I do this I'm right", and you go, "yeah, that earns a reward". It might be you saying yes, or it might be you throwing a cookie. It might be you clicking a clicker to let the dog know this is correct.

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But when you're at that clarity stage, your dog's experimenting with what is going to earn the reward, you are going to be evaluating the dog's choices and reinforce the correct one to help gain clarity of 'this is my expectation right now'. Now I'm just going to put in a little side mention to my great mentor, Bob Bailey. He has this amazing... he has so many great training-isms. One is be a splitter, not a lumper. So, when you're creating clarity, don't try to create clarity for this massive behavior. Take a little piece of it. And you're just working on the small piece of that clarity, clarity for a part of a behavior.

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So, if it was, I want to teach my dog to come when it's called, I might just be going back to episode 18, working on Collar Grab. So, the dog understands when I say your name that you need to turn and look at me and then I'm going to grab your collar and something amazing is going to happen. So that is clarity. We quickly… more from clarity into confidence. Now, if this is a training session, the connectedness session might happen in, I don't know, 60 to 90 seconds.

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The clarity might take another 30 or 60 seconds. And you quickly go into confidence. Confidence is where you repeat what the dog just did and tell they go, "Oh, I think I know what you want. Oh yeah, I, yeah, I get, I get it, I get… And then you can see the dog's confidence grow. How do you know that the dog's confidence is growing?

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You refer to episode number four in Shaped by Dog where I talk about the TEMP. Because that is how you're going to tell that your dog's body language will give you… it's as if the dog speaks your own language and says, "yes, I get it and I want more". That's what growing confidence is. And you're going to have to be able to read your dog's body language, to be able to know, Hey, he's confident.

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So now we have a dog that we've moved on to our third layer that our dogs got confidence. Now we introduce challenge. Now challenge comes in three forms. Let's say you're working on the dog, holding a sit until you give them a release cue. It might just be the distance away from you that you're challenging.

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So, I've always had my dog beside me for their sit. Now I'm going to take a step ahead and then move back. The distance might just be, you know, one body length away. It also could be the duration, the time that you're asking the dog to perform something. So maybe it's to hold that sit position for 10 seconds and you'd like to grow it to be, as I gave an example with Buzzy, 45 minutes. You're working only on a little part of the duration at a time.

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You're not going to go from 10 seconds to 45 minutes. You're building it up. Think of it, ping ponging, back and forth. So, one minute up to one minute and 10 seconds, back to 20 seconds, up to a minute and a half, down to a minute, back up to two minutes, ping ponging your way up as you grow that duration.

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And the last thing under the challenge label would be the distraction factor. So, what is the distractions that you are exposing your dog to when you are expecting them to show you this great confidence in the skill that you're working on? Are you asking your dog to do it in your small little bathroom with no other distractions? That's an easy one. Are you asking your dog to do it in your living room while your kids are running around? Or in the backyard with your neighbor's dog running up and down the fence. Or as we did with Chaka, we took the leash off with this little six-month-old Siberian Husky, near a busy road and expected that he would just want to hang out with us.

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Yeah. Huge distraction. Way way more higher expectation than capability. And remember the phrase that pays, we're talking with reinforcement-based dog training, our dogs are always doing the best they can with the education we've given them in the environment that we're asking them to perform in. So, going back to Chaka, did she have a great education to come when called? Heck no.

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Did she have a great education to come when called in her backyard? No. So then why would we take her to a park with busy traffic and rabbits and other dogs, not rabbits, squirrels and other dogs and expect that she's magically going to come when called. It's not going to happen. And it could have ended really badly. Luckily for Chaka, she didn't get injured when she got hit by car. But I still remember that the squealing tires, it was, it was very traumatic for me. So, the challenge layer, three parts, build them separately. You're either going to work on the challenge of a distance or the challenge of the duration or the challenge of the distractions in the environment.

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Work those in separately. And what happens is you build one of those three and then you slip back to the confidence level and say, has my dog's TEMP changed because I added a new distraction. And if they're a normal dog, yeah. They might go from years on the top of their head going, this is easy to maybe their eyes get a little wider going, "Wow I, uh, I don't know how to get my reward now".

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So, you're going to go back to the easy challenge back and forth, develop more confidence, challenge a little bit more, confidence, challenge a little... So, you're not going to just go challenge, challenge, challenge, challenge, challenge, you're just putting too much pressure on the dog.

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They're going to go, "you know what? It's not worth it". You always build this pyramid by focusing on the middle layer. That is your dog's confidence and your confidence too. So, let me just take aside. If you're doing this in a training class and the instructor is depleting your confidence, you need to take a step back and work on it and away from that instructor, because they're just creating a distraction that is making it overwhelming for you.

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Work on your confidence, work on your dog's confidence on that behavior. Go up and add another distraction. Go back and forth between challenge and confidence. And when you've exhausted your ideas between duration, distance, and distraction, then you can go to the top of the pyramid and up there sits the word choice.

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Now you're going to say, "well, Susan, haven't I been giving the dog choice all along?". Yes, we have. However, what we're looking for is in any environment with any distraction, what is my dog's default choice? You always want to be able to bet me like a hundred dollars that I know my dog is going to choose exactly what I expect them to choose. And remember, how do we grow to a place where we have expectations? We wrote that place through the reinforcement we give in our training. This 5C model, it's the 5Cs to growing a new capability. It's something that you can use for any animal.

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You can use it for your kids, if you have kids. You could use it for a co-worker if you're helping to coach them on an, to grow a new capability around the office. Use it for yourself, but please, please, please always use it for your dog. And remember just like I do when I'm training a brand-new puppy, or when I'm training a rescue dog, most of the time I am training that dog, it's the bottom layer.

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It's connectedness. It's creating that consciousness, that level of consciousness between us, that we are connected, that we both want to work. When I say work, I really mean play because that's what all of our training is. We both want to work and engage with each other. And you get that first before you say, now, let me teach you something.

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Think about the very first time you ever went to a dog training class. Chances are, if it was like my first dog training class that I went to, my little 12-week-old Jack Russell puppy was very distracted and there were other dogs in the class. She was looking around. What was our level of connectedness? Not so great. Our consciousness. I was more self conscious about what was going on and how I would appear what I appear. Like, I don't know what I'm doing. And she was very distracted because she was a 12-week-old terrier in this room with all of this noise and activity.

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So, they start and say, okay, we're going to teach your dog to down. We're going to teach your dog to sit. We're going to teach your dog. We're going to learn all these things in one lesson. No, no. Oh, Nay nay to quote my, one of my favorite comics, John Pinette. Take it back, grow confidence in one area. Now I'm not saying you can't train your dog to do multiple things in the same training session, but what I would do, let's say I've got that new puppy.

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We've worked beyond connectedness and I'm going to grow some clarity. I might be growing clarity about collar grab from episode 18. I might do two or three sessions of that and then I'll get up and I'll move to a different part of the room and I'll start creating clarity about a new behavior. Maybe it might be a hand touch. Maybe it might be teaching the puppy a piece of the retrieve. That you can do multiple behaviors. I just like to change the environment, so it's like a reset button. When we were over in that part of the room, we were working on you touching your nose to my hand. Now we're over in this part of the room and we're working on you picking up a toy and giving it to me.

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So, consciousness or creating that connection, then growing to the clarity, then introducing or looking for the repeatability of confidence before we add challenge. So often people take their dog and they go to a new environment. They expect that the choice at the top of the pyramid is always going to be the ones that you want the dog to make. But you have to be able to say, before I take this leash off, I'm going to assess, in what environments do I have confidence for this behavior? I'm going to take and ask my dog to sit. Have I asked my dog to sit in 50 different environments and have I got a great sit? Yeah. Okay. Well go ahead, go to the park and ask your dog to sit. But how close… remember the duration distance.

So, if I'm going to introduce the challenge of other people with their dogs, how close the distance away I am from those other dogs. That's an important question to ask. Have I asked my dog to sit when there's other dogs playing with their owners 10 feet away? No, I haven't. Well then how about create more distance between the other dogs and you might be 50 feet, might be 60.

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You just keep asking until you get success. That's how you use this 5C Pyramid to your great benefit. That's how keeping this in your back pocket, I promise you I will instantly improve your dog training. I feel so confident about this. I want you to have a copy for yourself. So, if you go to Shaped By Dog, shapedbydog.com/21, just the number 21, a two and a one. I will give you a downloadable 5C Pyramid for yourself. The 5Cs to growing a new capability for your dog, for yourself, or for any living creature. Download that 5C Pyramid. Refer to it any time you're going to train your dog and I promise you it will be magic. I'd like you to tell me about how magic it is.

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So, go and download that. And while you're there, you can watch any of these episodes. This is episode number 21. So, watch any of the episode. There are videos there at Shaped By Dog. And if you've been listening to this podcast, you might want to check out one of our videos because they're very instructional. We might add a couple little extra scenes to those videos. I'll see you next time on Shaped By Dog.

Resources:

Podcast Episode 18: 4 Puppy and Dog Training Games for Acquired Bite Inhibition

Blog: Improve Your Dog Training by Playing Like a Dog

Blog: 6 Keys to Shaping Behaviour

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

Podcast Episode 2: Reinforcement

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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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