



Episode: #22

The Invisible Bubble of Pressure and Your Dog

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:10

SG Hey, everybody. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. I am Susan Garrett. And today we are going to talk about pressure. Now I'm not talking about the pressure of making sure your dog's leash matches the collar when you are walking them down the street. I'm also not talking about the pressure of your dog looking good in front of your friends.

00:00:32

I am talking about an entirely different kind of pressure and it will make you look like a dog psychic once you understand how to apply that pressure. But first I want to talk to you about something, a little more technical. About the internet technicalities, about something I know nothing about. And so, I rarely talk about it because it's probably best to stick to what you know something about. How I understand it is in the world of podcasts there's fairies. And they prepare these algorithms that control who gets to know that I have a new podcast.

00:01:09

And the way these algorithms work, the fairies add up how many people have subscribed to my podcast. And when a lot of people subscribed, the fairy says, this girl might have something good to talk about. Let's share it with other people. So, if you haven't yet subscribed to the podcast, either on YouTube, iTunes, or on Podbean, or wherever you're watching or listening, most of you would listen to podcast, please subscribe. Make the interweb fairies happy. And that will allow the show to be seen and heard by a lot more people.

00:01:46

And that's my ultimate goal, is to help the dogs all over the world. That's it about me getting technical. Pressure. Imagine there is an air bubble between you and every dog you encounter, your own dog and other people's dogs. It's kind of like people have a bubble. Like if you've ever seen the Seinfeld episode of the close talker, do yourself a favor, it's a good one. We have this socially acceptable distance that we want to be away from other people when we're talking and with the world of COVID, it's gotten to be two hockey sticks away, right? Dogs are no different. They actually are very respectful of this. And when you know this, how it works with dogs, it will help you train your own dog, but it will actually help you communicate with other dogs much, much better.

00:02:36

And if the world knew this one little lesson, a lot less people would get bit. I'll share that spoiler alert at the end of this. But first I want to ask you, are you a hugger? Like when you meet people you know, do you hug them? What about when you meet people you don't know?

00:02:56

I personally am a hugger. I hug people I don't know. I hug, I've never been arrested for it, but that's my preferred way of greeting people. Far, far, prefer it over shaking hands. Now I know there is several of my friends that if they're listening to this, Anji McKelvie, are squirming in their seats because they do not want to be hugged.



The Invisible Bubble of Pressure and Your Dog

00:03:20

Now that you know that, it's a personal choice. Dogs are very similar, but there is a universal rule about dogs, and it goes back to pressure and that bubble. So, if you assume there is a bubble between you and any dog you are interacting with, an air bubble. I'll give you an example in the sport of dog agility where I have won many gold medals at world championships.

00:03:44

So, I know a thing or two about dog agility. When you step towards a dog, you are putting pressure on that dog. You don't have to touch them. It doesn't come from a history of ever touching them, but the dog immediately moves away from that pressure. Just leaning in, will have the dog move away. And if I was to draw my shoulder back, imagine like you were going to throw a ball and when you draw your shoulder back, that causes the dog to come towards you.

00:04:17

It's like a vacuum. You're releasing the pressure, but you're creating a negative pressure towards you. Step towards and a pressure pushes the dog away, step back, and it pulls the dog towards you. Now, why do you care about this? Number one, safety. I remember many, many, many years ago I had a little mixed breed puppy, Jack Russell and Border Collie.

00:04:41

She was a young puppy. And John and I were in our RV and we took a 44-hour trip down to Arizona. Now this little puppy, I think she was maybe four months old at the time. It was Decaf. I went into the store to shop as I do, you know, and so John thought he would be a good guy and he'd take the puppy out for her walk. Now this big mall was right on the side of a highway. I got back in the motor home and John is sitting in the driver's seat and I was all cheery about telling him what I got. He said, let's just go. And I said, what, what, what, what, what's going on? He's like, no, let's just go.

00:05:20

So, he told me what had happened. He was so upset. He took the puppy out to exercise. She had been cooped up in this motor home for, you know, I mean, we did things at night, but it was a long trip down to Arizona. She was super excited bouncing around and the buckle on her collar opened, this little puppy had freedom and took off towards the highway.

00:05:42

And John started trying to chase her, but I mean, this puppy was fast. And he remembered the games that I play. When you run towards a dog, that air bubble is putting pressure on the dog to go faster, run in the same direction you're going, go faster away from me. So, what John did is he called her name and he turned in the opposite direction and started running back towards the motor home.

00:06:06

And sure enough, before she got to the road, she screeched to a halt and started chasing him back. That's how pressure works. Yet so many people, even if they know it intuitively, even if they have heard it before, the first instinct is to lunge for a dog to grab. If they're getting away it's to chase a dog down. That is just putting pressure on them to say, get away. This little tidbit could save your dog's life the way it saved Decaf's life that day when I was in shopping. So be respectful of that pressure. Now here is where that pressure also plays a massive role. And that is when a dog greets another human being. Now, let me just say my dogs love me.



The Invisible Bubble of Pressure and Your Dog

00:06:59

And if they were to, let's say like, when John used to pick me up at the airport, occasionally he'd take a dog and as soon as the dog saw me, they'd get all wiggly. And when I'd get close, they would choose to close the pressure and jump all over me, which of course I let them do. But for some reason, a lot of people who don't understand dog's body language.

00:07:19

And by the way, if you don't understand dog's body language, please go and refer back to episode four in Shaped by Dog. Just go shapedbydog.com/4. You will get to an episode on TEMP, which explains the body language of dogs. So, people who don't understand this pressure, they'll see a dog on a leash, and they'll rush up. They'll maybe even put their hand in the dog's face, right? Like, "here, smell this!". There's this fictional world where somebody said, oh yeah, let the dog smell you and then you can maul them. It doesn't work that way because some dogs aren't very personal about who they let touch them.

00:08:07

They let their people touch them. And guess what? Dogs don't have to be friendly to you. Stroking a dog, scratching them behind the ear, is an intimate act that you may not be privileged to. Don't assume all dogs like it. That's like assuming all people love hugging. And by the way, virtually no dogs love hugging, on a side note.

00:08:35

So, what do you do when you want to greet a dog? First of all, you ask the person, "does your dog like greeting other people?". That's different than asking the question, "can I pat your dog?". Because asking the question, can I pet the dog, puts the person into a place of shame. Because if I say, no you can't, well then, I'm a bit of a B-something aren't I? And so maybe I'll say, sure. Most dogs... now there are some dogs that just love everybody. Just like, there's some people that love to be hugged by everybody. But most dogs love to close the pressure on their people.

00:09:15

So, when you greet a dog, what you do is you ask, "does your dog like to greet other people?". And if they say "yes!", then they might, even if it was my dog, I would say, "yes, would you like me to send my dog to greet you?". And if they say, "I would love that because I love dogs!", then I would tell my dogs two words that when I say them in this house, if any of my dogs around they might bark. I say, "go see", and the dogs will leave my side and rush up and being mauling all over you.

00:09:46

It is the dog's choice to close that pressure to make the bubble smaller. It is not your choice. So, when you put your hand in front of the dog to sniff it and they back away and say, "Whoa, that's a lot of pressure man". And then you say, "no, really take a sniff", you were saying... And especially if a dog is on a leash they can't really get away from that pressure.

00:10:19

Now pressure comes in, they can't relieve the pressure by backing away. The only thing they can do is show you forward pressure in the form of snapping at your hand. "Hello dude, first date. We don't know each other that well. I'm not inviting you into my bubble!". It's something that most people don't understand about dogs. If you were allowed to greet a dog, let that dog come to you.



00:10:45

And then please don't pat them on the top of their head. They love long body strokes along their back. Some dogs maybe like to be scratched behind their neck. But a lot of times that's something that's special between them and their people. It may not be a privilege extended to you.

00:11:03

Before you rush up to somebody's dog, ask the question not, "can I pet your dog?", but "would your dog like to greet me?". Ask it in a way that it makes it easy for them to say, "you know, I'm glad you asked because so many people just want to pat them and because he looks kind of like fun, but he really doesn't like it, like that just respectful". And it's a sign of respect for dogs.

00:11:32

There's a lot of dogs that have had a very bad upbringing. Meaning they may be a rescue dog. They may have been not been given the proper socialization when they were puppies. And so quite honestly, they're very reserved. They lack confidence around people who aren't their people. They might be great in their own house, but they actually might have a big bubble even in their house.

00:11:55

The bubble might be smaller, when they're out in the world, the air bubble is so big, they might want to hide behind their people's legs. Those dogs, they don't need to greet you. Right? If you own one of those dogs, please, don't feel that you're doing your dog a favor by saying, "Hey, can you feed my dog cheese?".

00:12:17

What you can do is go back to episode four on TEMP. Get to a distance away from that person, that your dog still has their eyes bright and they're comfortable. Because they've got their bubble. They're away from their people. They're away from that person. And then have that person get your dog's attention, call their name and toss them a piece of food.

00:12:41

That's saying, "Hey, I respect your bubble. I respect your bubble. I think you're cute. Here's some reinforcement". And if that happened enough with your dog, that bubble might get smaller. Now it might never be as small as some people would like, the close talkers of this world, but it will reduce. That's how you can help your dog.

00:13:06

In the meantime, when someone says, can I pet your dog? Don't feel you are being nasty. Just say, "actually, my dog's not really a hugger, not really a touchy-feely kind of dog. My dog is more of a, Hey high five from a distance kind of a girl, if that's all right with you". Just say it in a very playful way to make sure that you're not offending anyone, that you don't end the conversation awkwardly, but most important of all you help build your dog's confidence in new environments.

00:13:44

And every chance you get to build your dog's confidence, it deepens the bond he has with you, deepens the trust. He knows you've got his back or her back, and it allows him on his terms to grow that bubble.





Episode: #22

The Invisible Bubble of Pressure and Your Dog

00:13:59

So, remember ask, “would your dog like to greet me?”, and if the answer is yes, then they send the dog or they say, “sure, come on and say hello”, long body strokes, not like fast, long calming body strokes, or you know, you can just pat them on their sides and Hey, that's a little pat, that's cool, but don't be too personal. You have to earn the privilege to have that kind of intimacy with dogs.

00:14:24

That's it with Susan Garrett on Shaped by Dogs. Remember if you meet me? I'm a hugger. So, bring it in. We'll see you next time on Shaped by Dogs. Don't forget to subscribe, okay? Yeah, that's it. Hit the button. I don't know where it is. Just hit it. See ya! I don't know why I'm whispering.

Resources:

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



The Invisible Bubble of Pressure and Your Dog

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.



Meet Us Online

- Website <https://dogsthat.com>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/>
- TikTok <https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat>
- Pinterest <https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/susangarrett>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs>

