

## Get a Behaved Dog by Celebrating Milestones!

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG Hey everyone. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. I am Susan Garrett. I have a question for you. When you get a dog, whether it be a rescue dog or a new puppy, what is your expectation of that dog? Like when you see it in your home, what does that look like? So, when you go out and get a new puppy, do you have a vision of what that looks like?

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Now you might say, "Oh well, I hope that he doesn't pee in the house and I hope he sleeps through the night. Ideally, he doesn't bite me." What does that look like? A lot of people have their lists of what they don't want their dog to do. "I don't want him to jump on my guests and I don't want him to be too noisy. Ideally, he doesn't, like pull on a leash when I walk him, and he'll come when I say his name yeah, that's— I don't want him running the garbage or drooling all over when I'm trying to eat my dinner or begging at the table, yeah, yeah, I don't want to see that."

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So, when I ask people, they start thinking about all the things they don't want. But how do you convey that to a dog? When you bring this new rescue dog or puppy into your home, what do you do? Do you just go, "Oh, I'm so glad you're here! I love you already. Oh, you're so cute." You probably put a lot of time and energy researching into what would be the best dog for your home or your family, but then when you got that dog, what then? Like, what are you doing?

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"Oh, I'm signing up for a local class." How do you know the local class is going to give you what you need if you don't really haven't given much thought to what you need? It's like, let's say I hire somebody to join our team. Let's say we're going to hire somebody to help with the podcast here. And we say, "Hey, you got the job. Congratulations. Welcome aboard. And, well we hope you do a great job, and everybody likes you. Good luck." And then day one, the person comes in like an hour late. Day two, you're waiting to see new ideas about the podcast, you haven't seen anything. Day three, you check it.

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"Hey, how is it going?" "Yeah, it's going great. Yeah, it's going great." He's, this new person is like watching online porn. While he's on the job or she's on the job. I'm not making any kind of, you know, judgment on he or she might be watching porn. And you know, maybe a week or two goes by and you're like, "Ah, what are you doing for the podcast? Like any— well, I haven't really given it some thought, are you going to tell me what you want?" You can't blame that person.

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Now what if this was the way we brought somebody in to help with our podcast. We say, "Hey, welcome to the DogsThat team. We're super happy to have you on board. Let me introduce you to our team's core values so you get a little understanding of what's important to us as a member of our team. And, you know, uh—" I won't go into detail what that it looks like.



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“And then let me introduce you to the standard operating procedures for how we go about making sure the podcast gets produced each and every week. And let me then show you the details of how this podcast has grown in the last six months.” I don't know. Have we been out for six months? Let's just say six months. “And our goal for you would be to help grow our audience every month larger than we did last month so that we can help even more dog owners. And if you've got new ideas on how to make the lessons more tangible and usable to our audience, then that would lead to the potential for you maybe even earning a bonus here at DogsThat.”

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Do you see how the expectations are clear? But what I've done is I've set milestones. So, this is how you can become a productive part of our team. And this is how you could actually earn bonuses on our team. So if you have milestones for your dog, when they come in and what I mean by a milestone is, you know when you've achieved it, you celebrate and then you know you've done something well. And that drives you on to the next milestone.

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And if you go, “Oh Susan, I just want a dog. I just, you know—” As I've mentioned time and time ago, again, you can get a dog and just hope that it works out, but there's a lot of dogs in rescue with owners who have had that approach. It doesn't always work out, actually a lot of times it doesn't work out. But it can work out if you're very intentional about it and it's super easy. I break it down into three categories. So, it's what I call the *basics*, and then there's *manners* and then there's *extras*. All right.

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So, the basics would be, we need a dog that will sleep through the night. We need a dog that won't go to the bathroom in the house. We need a dog that won't bite us. You know, that's pretty basic isn't it? Like you might add more to your basics than that, but I don't know that, maybe I want to be able to trust my dog loose. So, if we're going to add one more, they sleep through the night, they don't go to the bathroom in the house, they don't bite me, and they don't destroy my stuff if I leave them loose in the house.

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So, like, there we got four biggies, right? Like it's not a big deal. That's the basics. Now, a lot of people don't have the basics, right? The dogs don't have that level. The next categories would be manners. And so, when you get the basics, you celebrate. You have a dog who sleeps through the night. They don't wake you up anymore, celebrate. And then by celebrating, think about the dog. “Hey buddy, wow. Really appreciate that you're not waking us up anymore in the middle of the night.”

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And I've got a podcast that will help you if you have a dog that wakes you up in the night. [Episode number 26](#), check it out. And then you go to, now I need a dog that doesn't go to the bathroom in the house anymore. And so, then you might mark it on a calendar, but look we've gotten two whole days without the dog going to the bathroom in the house. Oh, we've gone a week, we've got a month let's celebrate. I think we've got this problem licked. And you're going to carry on with your four basics that you're going to celebrate that you've achieved success.



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Now let's move on to manners. Now manners might be, when I say your name, you give me a response. Like you go, "Yeah, what?" It doesn't matter if I'm in front of the refrigerator holding a cheese stick, or I'm out in the backyard. I get what I call a head whip when I say your name. That's manners. You know how to appropriately greet my guests. That's manners. You don't muddy up my mother-in-law's you know, dress.

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That manners would be you walk calmly on a leash. And you know how to chill in the house. So, when I relax, you relax. Like that's just kind of everyday manners that you had set as milestones. How do I get my dog to this level? You aren't excessively noisy, so you're not whining or barking, and you don't stare at me and drool when I'm eating my dinner, nor do you try and grab food off the counter or off my plate.

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So those would be manners. You might have some more and there might be some more that I'm forgetting. Now, the extras would be things like teach your dog a trick because maybe your partner or spouse wasn't really keen on getting a dog, but you teach it a couple tricks and wow, that's impressive. And its extras but you could set milestones for that. I would like to teach my dog one trick. How am I going to do that? Break that down.

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Teaching your dog retrieve. You could say that's a trick, but I think it's a life skill. It could be something very functional, like every week my dog Swagger retrieves the newspaper for me because it's delivered at the end of the lane and it's all a long way out there and especially when it's wintertime. So, retrieving, teaching a trick and having something that you guys can engage in a form of exercise, those would be extras. And you might keep growing your extras. Maybe it is I want my dog to catch a Frisbee and that might lead you to different sports.

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There's so many different dog sports out there that everyday dog owners can learn to love and enjoy. It gets a great bonding with you and your dog. It gets your dog some exercise. Gets you in a community of likeminded people who love their dogs and love doing things with them. Of course, there's things like agility that I love to do. There's all different kinds of sports. So those are extras. We've got your **basics**, your **manners** and your **extras**.

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Now, if you go to somebody's class, you just mindlessly go through the lessons but where are they leading you? So, think of your milestones. I want my dog to walk calmly unleash. Well, there's probably some lessons in those local classes. They're going to help your dog walk on a loose leash. My point is, what are you doing to intentionally hit these milestones? You only need like a handful of milestones to have a pretty awesome family pet. And the more milestones you add, the deeper that bond develops with you and your dog and the more that dog blossoms.





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So, somebody who gets a dog in order to chain them to the back yard and, you know, change their water bowl once a month, maybe they just keep dumping water in that big old bucket and give them, you know, maybe even just open a bag of dog food and stick it in the back of there dog house, highly unlikely they're listening to this podcast. But if you are welcome, everyone's welcome here. But there won't be a lot of milestones for that dog. "Maybe can you not bark all night? Cause you're keeping up the neighbors." But the more you welcome your dog into your home and into your heart, the more it becomes part of your family, the more milestones you may want to set for your dog. Because that's what allows the dog to be successful.

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You've showed them how to be successful by setting out those milestones. I need you to tick these boxes together. We're going to tick those boxes because I am responsible for all of your good behavior and I'm also responsible for all of your naughty behavior. I take that on myself and I'm going to be intentional about ticking the boxes that lead towards you and I celebrating yet again another amazing milestone.

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And if you take something like exercise, that actually takes a lot of those other naughty behaviors off the boards. You have a dog that destroys your furniture, runs off with your remote control or runs off with the sock and won't bring it back, they get into the garbage, things like that. Or they bark at the window all day when you're gone. A lot of those things are eliminated when you grow some of the extras.

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Because if you get a dog who you've engaged their brain and you've given them some exercise, what happens is that dog is mentally and physically exhausted. They tend to relax and chill around the house when you're home or when you're not home. That means you have minimized the opportunities for them to get into trouble. A lot of the times dogs are just happened to have all this extra energy and there's been nothing set up on the calendar for them to achieve. And that's when they get into trouble.

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But I'm sure if you're listening to Shaped by Dog, that is not you and your dog. And if it is, then what's your first milestone going to be? What is it going to be one of the basics that you've let slide because you thought it wasn't possible with your dog? If it was, leave me a comment. Let me know what it is and if I haven't spoken about it, I'm going to do a podcast to help you out.

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Or maybe it's a manner, some inappropriate behavior that your dog is showing towards somebody in your family or to others or to other dogs, that could be your milestone that you are going to set up. And you can have more than one.

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I would suggest you know, maybe have three to five to start. Celebrate even getting partway to one because that momentum is going to lead you to the other. And you will find that a milestone like retrieve will minimize things like running off with a toy. So, or running off with a sock or running off with your remote controller, or your glasses.





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When you teach a retrieve that goes away. It's funny how that works. That's it for today. Good luck with your milestone. As always, please leave me a comment. I love to know what you think of the podcast. And if you haven't done so yet, would you do me a favor? Share Shaped by Dog with just one family member or friend who has a dog and let them know all of the things that you're learning here.

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I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 26: Pro Dog Training Tips to Get Your Puppy to Sleep All Night](#)

If you would like to have fun while showing your dog your expectations on manners, train a trick, teach your dog to fetch, and have ways to exercise your dog at home, you can join me in [Home School the Dog](#).



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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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