

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:10

SG In dog training, and I think this is pretty true of anything in life, there's really only one reason why we would get frustrated. And that is when the outcome doesn't match our expectations. That we have a vision of what's going to happen when we do X, and it doesn't happen. And we get frustrated because of that. The frustration isn't important. What's important is what happens next? Do we troubleshoot? Or do we blame? Kind of like when you hit print on the computer and the printer doesn't kick in. Do you start yelling and throwing things? Or do you troubleshoot? "Oh, yeah look the plug's unplugged. That's all it was."

00:00:51

Today I'm going to share with you my what used to be a four-step trouble shooting process that I would go through with my own dogs when the outcome didn't match my expectation, when my dog failed at something I'd asked him to do. I say it used to be a four-step process because it is now a five-step process after a very bad dog training experience that I had this week. I'm going to share all of that with you, including the video of the event right here on this episode of Shaped by Dog.

00:01:25

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. If you're watching this from YouTube, you're going to actually see those clips. And if you are watching this on YouTube, please smash the like button right now. And if you're not a subscriber, subscribe and hit that little bell icon so you can get notifications from me when I am posting a new video.

00:01:43

Before we jump into today's episode, I want to share with you a post that I got tagged in Facebook. And it really was the motivation for this episode. I was tagged in a post, the subject line was: Share one thing that somebody told you early in your dog training journey that you still think is important today.

00:02:06

And a student that I haven't seen probably for 15 or 20 years tagged me in this post. She at the time was training a Great Dane in obedience and she shared this line: "Susan Garrett said to me, train the dog that's in front of you." And that is just so unbelievably important. Reading that made me so proud that she would carry that with her because it's just such an important concept. And it is the topic of today. It goes hand in hand with frustration.

00:02:40

You may find yourself saying things, something like, "Um, yeah, I know he knows this. Like, you've done this a thousand times, buddy. I know, you know this. I don't know why he's doing this. You know, we just did this last week." Or if you get more frustrated, it could be "Ah, he must be going through that rebellious teenage stage, he's just being stubborn." A lot of times this kind of dialogue happens when somebody you respect is watching your training. But not necessarily. You need to remind yourself to train the dog that's in front of you. Because the dog that's in front of you doesn't know this. Because if he did, he would be showing you that he doesn't know this.



Is Your Stubborn Dog Frustrating You?

00:03:22

So, let me skip back to a session I had with my 15-week-old puppy just this week. And let me set the stage for you. It was nine o'clock at night and I'm going to preface this by saying, I normally am getting ready for bed at nine o'clock. I go to bed around 9:30, but I decided I was just going to do, I was really excited to try this one behavior.

00:03:44

It was a brand-new behavior. And it's a complex behavior, and it's actually an accumulation of a number of different behaviors put together. Now you're saying, "Susan, why on earth would you try a complex behavior that's an accumulation of a bunch of other behaviors that you've never tried at nine o'clock at night?" I know I'm asking myself that same question. But I learned a very valuable lesson proving after 30 years in dog training, I too continue to be Shaped by Dog. Let me get to that.

00:04:20

So, the behavior was side step. Now to side step, the dog keeps their body straight and I guide them to reach out with same side legs and step to the side, whatever direction I cue them to do so. That's what I wanted to train or teach my 15-week-old puppy. She knew all the little bits. We had put all those little behaviors done in isolation. I was just going to put them all together at nine o'clock at night. The first time through, it actually wasn't so bad. The second time through, she got confused and put her back feet up on the board that only her front feet should have been on.

00:04:59

So, she didn't get a reward for the second time. She did for the first. The third time through, she did the same as the second. Again, didn't get a reward at which point she left the training and just went and sniffed something. And so, what I did next was I said, "Okay, it's nine o'clock at night. We're ending this." I turned off the video camera. I tossed her a toy. Now Swagger was in the room with her. I tossed her a toy and then I left the bedroom. I just stood outside the bedroom door for about five seconds saying, "Well, that was silly Susan to try and do this at nine o'clock at night." Probably the things you said at the beginning of this podcast.

00:05:38

And then I came back in and she was waiting. She wasn't sniffing the floor where she was. She was waiting right by the door, looking up at the door. "Where'd you go Mum? What were you doing out there?" I came in, had a little play session, took her outside, final pee, got ready for bed. And I went to bed. I woke up at five o'clock the next morning, before I even looked at my journal notes or my video, I knew what I had to do.

00:06:01

Now two really important things I just said there. Before I looked at my video of my training session, which I always video my training or before I reviewed my notes, which if you're not journaling your notes, how are you going to improve? It's super important. Before I did that, I knew what I had to do. It hurt me in my heart that I walked away from that puppy. It hurt me at five o'clock in the morning I can't believe how upset I was. It was such a benign thing. I stepped outside the bedroom door for five seconds. But what in fact I was doing is I was walking away from her, giving her a little timeout. Now in my brain, I wasn't saying I'm giving you a timeout, I just needed to pause. And mentally, I don't think it was too taxing for her, but it wasn't the right thing to do. It was unfair to that puppy.



Is Your Stubborn Dog Frustrating You?

00:06:56

And so I'm going to share with you now my five-step evaluation of what I should have done and what I encourage you to do when things don't go as you plan in your training. So, step number one is I get a failure and I just repeat what I just did and evaluate was it just a one-off or was it a really some confusion. Really important that before you repeat any time you evaluate your dog's TEMP. T-E-M-P. Now that is all in [episode number four](#) here on Shaped by Dog. Is the dog engaged in what you're doing? If not, then there's no need to repeat a third time.

00:07:45

That would take us to step number two. And this is the mistake that I made, and this is the new step that I have added. You need to consider and have this in the front of your mind before you start training. What stage of training is my dog at in this behavior? So, this goes back to [episode number 44](#), where I talk about arranging coincidences and the chart that I presented with the stage of training and how early in the training, which let's face it, this is a 15-week-old puppy. Bringing together a brand-new behavior, you don't get any earlier in the training, you need to make the correct choice incredibly obvious.

00:08:33

I don't believe I did that. I did two more sessions after that and they were brilliant. I will show you the outcome of how my puppy now proudly and happily knows how to side step. But I digress. Step number one, you have a failure. And after every failure you evaluate TEMP. Step number two, and these could be reversed. Remind yourself where this dog is in the training progression chart. So, if I was doing this with my five-year-old dog, I would have no problem with her failing two or three times. I know that she wouldn't leave training. Why? Because the reinforcement for working with me has been built up through a history of fun and engaging training.

00:09:18

So, she would be okay failing. A 15-week-old puppy, we're getting there, but we're nowhere near where we are with my five-year-old. Evaluate TEMP, ask yourself where you were on the training progress and number three, what I should have done is take a break, do something easy, put the dog away, and now, that's number four. Take a break, do something easy, number four put the dog away. Number five, we're going to evaluate what just happened.

00:09:48

That would be looking at your video. And you're looking for these three elements and these are the reasons why dogs fail in my opinion. It's an acronym PEP. We need PEP in our training. So, number P. Number P? So, the first P is there could be a *psychological* reason why your dog failed, or your puppy failed, or your puppy left training. And quite often it's stress. Is it that you've gone too long between reinforcements? Is it that your training session has gone on way too long for the stage and the age of that dog in training? Is it that your training is too boring? That it's mundane.

00:10:32

You need to put some games and some life into your training. Could it be as I mentioned before the stage that you're at and that you haven't made the correct choice obvious and easy? The stress could be there because of you as a trainer. Maybe it was your mechanics. Maybe your criteria was very inconsistent to the dog so you cause confusion. So, there was some stress from the dog, or the puppy based on the confusion of "What it is that you want from me? Because I don't really get it."



Is Your Stubborn Dog Frustrating You?

00:11:04

Possibly you were using a lure, a food lure before, and you took the food lure away and you expected the same outcome. And the dog's like, "Well, I don't get this." Or your mechanics, you altered your mechanics. So, these are just a few examples of why there might be stress that the dog's psychology is having them wanting to get away from the pressure to leave the training. It also could be fear. Does the dog sense that you're getting irritated and they're getting a little bit worried?

00:11:35

Or is there somebody new watching? You said to your friend, "Hey, watch what my puppy can do." Or maybe there's another dog in the room. Or it could be another psychological stressor. Could be the dog's too excited, the dog's overexcited so they're not going to repeat what they just did. Okay. So that's our first P. Second E, *environment*.

00:11:54

You've got to look at what are the distractions in the environment and what is the value of reinforcement that you're using in that environment. If I'm just working at home, I might not use— and I'm doing something that the puppy already knows, I'll use a lower value rewards. Boring, more boring rewards. If it's a new behavior or if it's a new environment with more distractions, the distractions could be smells on the ground or there's other dogs around, or maybe the footings different.

00:12:22

We've never worked on this footing or there's people around it's crowded. You've got to take that into consideration and people will say, "Oh well, you know, my dog should just work for me because it's his job." I'll give you an example. Let's say you went into a bar with a friend and it's crowded. There's hardly any tables left, but they find one table and they sit you at this table and your server comes and you order a drinking and it takes a while, but you get your drink.

00:12:51

If you then go all spider monkey on that server and say, "Well, holy crap! I would, you know, I could have gone and got my own drink. This has taken, it's been here 10 minutes and you just now bring me my drink. I bet you that beer is warm." It's her job. Yeah. She supposed to bring you drinks. And when your drink is done, she supposed to check on you to see if you need more.

00:13:14

It's a crowded bar. How likely is it that you're going to get top A service? As opposed to, you waited 10 minutes, the server comes in and she brings you your drink and you say, "Wow. It's crowded in here tonight. And I bet you, there's a lot of people that are giving you a hard time. Here's a 20 for our drinks and here's a 20 just for you." If the bar is crowded people, you tip with twenties.

00:13:39

And if the distractions are high, you use high value rewards to make sure it's worthwhile for your dog to work through those distractions. So, we have psychological reasons, we have environmental reasons. It could have been that you had props before to help your dog get the behavior and then you took them away. It could be that the dog is just overwhelmed with everything that's going on around them in this environment. You know, you might say, "Well, my last dog did all this." Train the dog that's in front of you. Your last dog may not have been as soft as this dog. And that's okay.



Is Your Stubborn Dog Frustrating You?

00:14:15

The third P is *physical*. I can't tell you how many times Lynda Orton-Hill, who works here at DogsThat, she is like, we call her the poop queen. She sees a puppy training and maybe not getting things right and she says, "I think that puppy needs a poop break." She's almost always right. So physical. Has the dog been out to pee or poop recently, if it's a puppy?

00:14:36

Maybe they've got an upset stomach. Maybe they're hungry. Have you ever been hangry? I know I don't do my best work when I'm hangry. Maybe it could be something physical like they got, you know, something on their pads. So often with agility dogs, they might be missing weave pole entries or popping out of weave poles because they've got a rib out. They need an adjustment or they just, their body is sore somewhere.

00:15:02

They could be thirsty, they could be tired, there's a number of reasons, physical reasons why the dog isn't doing it and you have to dig deep to figure it out. So, P-E-P. When you have a failure, you need to evaluate and that's exactly what I did. I evaluated how I failed my puppy at that 9:00 PM training session. I then had a list of ways that I could do things better. And more often than not it's unrealistic expectations. If there isn't a physical reason and if it's not an environmental reason and it's not a reward it's more often our expectations. We set criteria that that dog or puppy just wasn't able to get to.

00:15:53

We leaped too far ahead. We made the task too difficult. Even if the environment was a simple one for the dog to succeed in. You need to consider, if the dog knew what you wanted, they would do it every time. So, when you find yourself saying, "But I know he knows that." train the dog that's in front of you. The dog that's in front of you does not know that so what are you going to do?

00:16:18

Are you going to get more irritated? Or are you going to evaluate the dog's TEMP, evaluate where you are in your training session, take a break, play, do something easy, take a break from the training, put the dog away and then evaluate PEP? Psychological and environmental and physical reasons why you may not have got the outcome you were expecting.

00:16:42

That's it for me on Shaped by Dog. And hey, thank you so much for all the love you guys have been showing us my last podcast on YouTube. I got tons of great comments and I love the like button. So, thank you so much. If you are watching this on YouTube, I hope you took notes and I hope you wrote down the statement, 'train the dog that's in front of you'.

And if you are listening to this podcast and you're in your car, look for a tattoo parlor, jump in there and tattoo somewhere where you can see it. "Train the dog that's in front of me". That's all for today. I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Blog Post: How to Embrace Videoing Your Dog Training](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 44: Using Coincidences and Positive Associations in Dog Training](#)



Is Your Stubborn Dog Frustrating You?

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>

