



## Episode: #49

# How Your Questions Instantly Improve or Sabotage Your Dog Training

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG What if it was possible to dramatically improve your dog's focus, their skill and their overall behavior, just by changing the questions that you're asking. No pills, no magic pixie dust, not even any textbooks to read. I am confident it is possible and I'm going to prove it to you before the end of this podcast. And I'm going to give you the four-step process that I give to all of my online students to help them to become more resourceful dog trainers.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett and welcome to Shaped by Dog. Why is this important to dog training? It's particularly important for those of you who believe in training dogs the way that I train dogs, because reinforcement based, game-based dog training is just different. And solutions to problems requires more outside of the box thinking than traditional dog training would require.

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For example, pick any dog training problem. Let's say a dog has chewed your slipper. Now old thinking the first question would be who's to blame. Did somebody leave the puppy loose? Is the puppy to blame because they're just naughty? Old thinking is someone's to blame. Outside of the box new thinking is how can I alter my puppy's motivation, so they do not see the value in chewing a slipper or whatever it is that your dog training problem is?

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You see the human brain is an amazing computer. If you ask it questions, it's going to give you answers. I'm going to give you proof right now. I said I would, before the end of the podcast, I'm doing it right at the beginning. For those of you who are driving, I want you to pay attention to the road. But I want you to listen to this question and I want you all to listen to the answer or the answers that your brain gives you. Okay. You ready for this question?

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Why do some people avoid spending time with me? Ask yourself that question. Why do some people avoid spending time with me? Alright. Now your brain is probably spitting out all the worst things anybody's ever said about you. Well, because you can be mean sometimes. Well, because you can be aloof, and you can be snobby. People avoid spending time with you because they're intimidated by your brilliance. Like they just don't want to be around people who think they know everything. All right.

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So, you ask your brain this question, it's going to give you the answers. What's a better question? Same thing. Why is it that the people I resonate most with love spending time with me? Well it's because you resonate most with people who like to have fun in life, who see the value in kindness. You resonate most with people who are constantly trying to make the world a better place or be better to each other. Ask yourself a better question. Tony Robbins says that "Successful people are successful because they ask better questions."



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Imagine you get home from work and your plan is to train your dog. Now you're getting your stuff ready and you're thinking about your last training session or what you have to do, and you say to yourself, "Why do I suck so bad at this? Why is it my dog just can't get it, like, is he stupid or something?" Now, what kind of headspace does that put you in? You feel it overwhelm a little, you feel maybe alone, slightly depressed, uncertain for sure.

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How likely is it that (a) - you're even going to go through with training the dog or come up with some hole on Facebook that you fall down or Netflix that you "Oh, before you know it is 11:30 at night and I didn't get my dog train. Yeah, we'll get around to that tomorrow." Now, what is a better question? "Oh, I got to train my dog tonight. Okay. What one thing could I do right now that is going to make my dog better than they were yesterday? What one thing could I do to grow my dog's confidence in skill X?"

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Now your brain is going to say, "Hey, these are the three games that you played early in the week you had a lot of success with. Boom, why don't you go play those?" Or your brain is going to say, "Hey, log into [Recallers](#) you haven't been on that program for like a week and a half. See what the last game that you were playing. Start your session off with that, and then jump into a new one." Now your mood is inspired. It's supported, it's motivated and it's prepared. And boy o boy, you will be training your dog.

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Ask yourself a better question. It puts you into a better frame of mind and you will take action. Now you ask yourself the wrong questions and then you couple that with the darkness of some social media posts, like for example, if somebody post something on social media that's got a lot of drama or open questions, like "I can't believe they did that again." you're going to see 75 comments on that post like that versus somebody says, "Wow, I had a great day today." "Everything just seemed to click for me." "I am walking on cloud nine." You might get like 10 out of boys. Yeah. The challenge with social media is they reinforce you asking crap questions because you get more dopamine hits by people putting comments on your post.

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Stay away from the darkness, stay away from the drama. The truth is humans generally have more compassion for complete strangers than they do for themselves. It's a true story. Let's imagine you are a first-time dog trainer, and I'm going to put you as one of my online students. Maybe you're in [Home School the Dog](#). You're training your dog in the park. And somebody happens by and they say, "Oh my gosh, you have got such a well-behaved dog. I am in awe of that." "Hey, you look like you know what you're doing?" And you're like "Me? Uh, okay yeah? Yeah, my dog's kind of cool."

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"Well listen, I'm having such a challenge with my dog. We've got this eight-month-old puppy and all he wants to do is eat the cookies out of my kids' hands. And, you know, I really want them to be a part of my family and my kids really love him and he seems to fit in, but this has got to stop. It's just driving us all crazy. Do you have any suggestions?" Instantly that question comes into your brain. What can these people do? "Well hey, if you have a couple of minutes, I belong to Susan Garrett's online program, Home School the Dog. Let me show you her game, [ItsYerChoice](#). You could go home and teach it to your kids. And then the dog's going to not maul their hands."



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“And by the way, I suggest you jump on and listen to her podcast Shaped by Dog. She's got a lot of great ideas there. And if you are in a position, join one of her online programs.” So, you've given this person, this complete stranger three great ideas. Your brain would do the same for you. If you started asking better questions. You see everybody is somebody's expert. You just need to start showing up as somebody's expert to yourself. I'm not saying you will have all the answers, but it just puts you into a frame of mind to find the next best step.

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The next best step, that's what you want. You want to rehearse for your subconscious, that you are resourceful. I'm not saying you're not going to have struggles. We will all have struggles. And here's the four-step process that I ask all of my online students when they are wanting to post a question to our community.

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Now, the coaches, myself and my coaches, if we read a question that starts, “Oh, I'm so helpless. Oh, I just suck. Oh, I don't know what I'm doing in this program.” You know it starts us on a, “Wow. Downer, Debbie. I don't know if I really am up to answering this time. I might have to go pour myself an adult beverage before I can answer your question.”

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All right. So here is the four-step process. I encourage all of our online students to use when they're posting a question in any of our programs. Step number one write an empowering question. And an empowering question will start with “Here is what I currently see with my dog in the game I'm playing.” “Here is where I like to be, this is what I'd like to get.” “I'm looking for what would be the next best thing I should do.”

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That's step number one, write out the empowering question as if you— you know, I'm describing what I've got, I'm describing what I want and I want help with what would be the next best thing to do. Or what could help change what I've got to what I want. Now step number two, after you've written this empowering question is you read it out loud to yourself like you are the person in the park asking your brain. “Hey brain, I'm playing It'sYerChoice and my dog seems to get it right the second time, but I'd like to get it right the first time. What do you think is the best thing I could do to make that happen?” And then your brain's going to give you a bunch of great ideas, write them down.

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And step number three is you might then do a keyword search on our classroom in Home School the Dog if that's the one you're in or Recallers, wherever you are. Write keywords. And you could even go to the podcast here and do a keyword search there, [or the blog](#), if you really want to be thorough and get ideas to add to the ones your brain gave you. So now you've got a collection of ideas. I want you to write a plan.

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This is what I want, and this is step number four. You're going to write your own training plan. It might only be two or three lines, and then you post that to the coaches. In an empowering statement. “Here's what I've got. Here's what I want. Here's what I was thinking I'm going to try.”



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"I'd love for you to give me some feedback if you think I'm on the right track." Now that is an empowering question. You follow that four-step process. You write that empowering question, whether you are on one of my online programs or you're just a student who is listening to everything you can from my podcast. What you are doing, you are rehearsing for your subconscious that you are resourceful dog owner. That you are every day, you are adding to that confidence. So that you do become that inspired, motivated, prepared, and supported person when you're training your dog.

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There's [a great book by Susan Scott called 'Fierce Conversations'](#). And she says in that book, one of the opening chapters says, "The conversation is the relationship". So, we're creating conversations with our dogs through these questions. That conversation is the relationship. These questions that you ask, it's not just helping to shape who you are. It's shaping your dog. It's shaping your family.

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You ask a question, let's say you you're trying to get support or help from a family member. You're trying to train your dog in Susan Garrett's program and they're just letting the dog out the door, they're not asking for a sit. They don't do crate games. Now you could say to them, "Why, why does it seem you're purposely sabotaging my training?" or "Why can't you help?" or "Why can't you see that the dog needs help?" And those kinds of questions, your partner or your adolescent kids are going to say, "Why does it seem like I'm sabotaging? Yeah, maybe I am." "Why don't I feel like helping? Well, because I got this, this and this in the go."

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"Why do I not want to help with the dog? That's your deal. I'm not interested." These are not empowering questions. You know, an empowering question to try and get a family member on board might be something like, "Hey, do you have a minute? I'm playing this game in this online program. And I would like to teach it to somebody because what Susan Garrett says is once I think I've learned it, if I can teach it, that will really help solidify the learning."

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"Could I try and teach it to you and then you play it with the dog? Or "Do you have a minute? I'm doing one of Susan Garret's online programs, and I'm going to play this game. I would love for you to watch this video and see him if I'm getting the mechanics right." You know, you don't have to get them onboard that much, but you could ask empowering questions that is going to make them at least do one thing.

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"Hey, are you liking having a dog?" Or "Hey, do you see, have you seen a difference in Rusty's behavior since I've been doing this training? I would love if you could support me in this one way." "Do you think if I asked you to get consistent with one thing that you could, that would work for you?" "It wouldn't?" "What would that look like if it was going to work for you? What would I have to do to help support you so that it could work for you and Rusty?" So, ask empowering questions without nagging or belittling or threatening or say "Woe is me. I can't do my work."





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And at the end of the day, guess what, if your member of the family just isn't on board with this, the dog is still going to get trained. Maybe not quite as fast as if everybody was on board, but the dog will learn to listen to you and just not listen to the other person. And that's okay. The conversation you have with that person is the relationship. The conversation doesn't - if they don't want to be involved with the dog training, don't let that hurt your relationship.

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Ask better questions, have better conversations, have better relationships and enjoy your best life. That's it for today, but hey, if you're watching this on YouTube, I would love for you to just hit the like button. Let me know that you're enjoying the podcast as my team and I are putting them together here for you to see on YouTube.

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And if you're watching this or you're listening to this in the car, please, please, please give me a ranking on iTunes or Spotify or wherever you're listening. And I'd love to read a review from you. And please be sure, let your friends and those people that stop you in the park, let them know that we've got great information to help any dog owner right here on Shaped by Dog. I'll see you next time.

### Resources:

[Recallers](#)

[Home School the Dog](#)

[Game: Learn How to Play ItsYerChoice](#)

[\(IYC\) Susan Garrett's Dog Training Blog](#)

[Book: Fierce Conversation by Susan Scott](#)



# How Your Questions Instantly Improve or Sabotage Your Dog Training

### 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>

