

Pro Dog Trainer's Secret to Help Your Naughty Dog

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG If I told you there was one thing that you could do that would almost guarantee you could overcome your dog training challenge, would you be interested in knowing what that one thing was? I bet you would, right. Before we begin though, I've got a little bit of news I want to share with you. First of all, if you're watching this on YouTube, go ahead and hit the like button because this is going to be a good one.

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Secondly, if you're not watching this on YouTube, I want you to know that we are within 1500 subscribers. I'm hitting the magical 10,000 subscriber mark. And I mentioned a month or so ago on social media that when we get to 10,000 subscribers on YouTube, I'm going to do a YouTube live and I'm going to talk about any dog training subject that you guys are going to pick.

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So, I think we can get there by the end of the week. Because 90% of you who watch this on YouTube haven't yet hit the subscribe button. So, here's what I want you to do. [Come on over to YouTube](#), hit the subscribe button. Of course, hit the like button on this episode because it's going to be awesome. Hit the notification bell so that you will know when it is I do go live and leave a comment right here on this video, what topic you would like me to address when I do this YouTube live.

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Now I'm going to do it up here. I'll have a training area so I can bring a dog in to give you a demo if that's something you'd like, let me know what that topic is and hit the subscribe button, tell your friends to come over and hit the subscribe button. The faster we get there, the faster I'm going to do that live. Okay. What is the number one thing that's going to almost but guarantee— I mean, there's a lot of other things that are going to have to come into play to overcome your challenge.

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You've got to have a good plan. You've got to have good execution on that plan. But the one thing that is going to make the world of difference is the one thing that I've been talking about for 30 years that people do not want to do. And that is keeping records. Have a journal.

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And that is the only way that you are— For example, it's the only way you're going to be able to know if you're progressing or if you're regressing with any behavior. So, this journal is all about what I mentioned in [episode number 66](#). My puppy had a resource guarding challenge. And a couple of things that are really important when I talk about the fact that my puppy had a resource guarding challenge is number one, she had it, she doesn't have it anymore. Although I keep looking for opportunities to reinforce her because she's still a six-month-old puppy and things could change. And I also said she had a resource guarding problem. Now that's very different than me saying my dog is a resource guarder. Because when you label your dog, it's so much more difficult.



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You've rehearsed for your subconscious that's what your dog is, and you just look for confirmation bias and everything that goes on in your life, "Oh yeah. Look at her. She's aggressing again. That's just who she is. I'm going to have one of those aggressive dogs." So, when I started record keeping with This!, it was February 10th was when I decided I need to do something about This!.

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And I started record keeping and I had 14 to 15 incidences of her resource guarding towards one of the other dogs in the house. And that's my summary. I just showed you my summary chart. She would resource guard me against the other dogs. She would resource guard things she found valuable, like where we cut her nails or if the Dremel was left on the ground.

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She would do things like lunging. She would all out like muzzle grab and a lot of growling. And it took, in looking at my records here, by February 18th, so just eight days after her two back-to-back 14- and 15-day incidences, she had a zero. Incidents of zero that day. Now the next day we went back up to five, but then we had a two. Then we had another five and then we had a zero, one, one, zero, one, zero, zero. And we've had zeros or one every day since.

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And so, what's important is your approach, of course your dog training plan, but what is it that you are keeping track of when you're record keeping? So, first of all, when you have a dog training problem, I'm going to steal this question from my friend, Jean Donaldson. So, Jean is just a brilliant dog trainer. She has a master's degree in animal behavior and she's a fellow Canadian. Shout out to Jean Donaldson.

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So, Jean has this great question. And when you're dealing with a dog training question, she wants you to ask, is the dog upset? Now upset could be taken a lot of different ways, but let's just say, is the dog fearful or anxious or highly agitated?

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This isn't, is the dog super excited? But [is the dog upset?](#) If the dog is upset, then your training challenge should focus on that dog's [emotional state](#). And what that looks like for me, most of the time is counter conditioning and desensitization, which is what I did for This!'s resource guarding. In my opinion when a puppy starts showing aggression, it's they're upset about something. So, let's fix that emotional state.

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Now what people would say, "Oh, it's a six-month-old puppy, just knock it around and say 'Hey, knock that off.'" Give them a little shake, "That's not right. Don't do that." You can get a dog to stop doing that. But what you're doing is you haven't addressed the emotional response.

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They will know, "Oh, I'm going to get in trouble if I do that so I can't do that." But you haven't changed the fact that they are upset. So, you're burying emotion on your intimidation. And what happens is you create a ticking time bomb. And it will go off at some point. Probably throughout the dog's entire life. But if you deal with the emotion of the challenge then you can teach a different outcome.



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So, you're just creating a dog who looks forward to seeing other dogs around because they know that's when good things happen. So counter conditioning, like if I just use the example of what I did with This! it's important that the dog be able to understand if this then that.

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So, if I see another dog, then all of a sudden, good things happen to me. And you can try to do this just by taking your dog for a walk and every time he sees another dog, just start feeding them. Now, to onlookers it's going to look like, "Oh look, she's feeding that dog for being aggressive." If the dog is emotionally still in check that they will take your food, then this long term, if you stick with it long enough, will work.

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It isn't that best approach in my opinion. The best approach is what I did with This!. I set her up with an Ex-Pen. You can go check out that episode where I talked about keeping her, what my goal is with any dog training challenge, our number one goal is - number one is [eliminate or reduce](#) as much as possible any kind of rehearsals.

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So that's one part of it, which I was able to do just by creating a different environment from her. We went from 15 episodes of aggression to 15 and 14. The very next day it went to 11. Now there was an Asterix beside that because she was up in my office almost the entire day.

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The next day it was 11. So, we went from 15 to 11 to 6. And we never ever had double digits again. So, changing the environment. Now, did the training do anything about going from 14 to 6? That counter conditioning and desensitization might've had a small effect in the first four days, but really it was changing the environment.

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So, eliminating the possibilities for her to have those rehearsals. At first, we picked up all the bones and the toys in the house. The bones and the toys are all back in the house now and life is grand. So, This! project, the look at our resource guarding that was going on, it took less than two weeks to get things back to toys in the house and bones in the house. And another two weeks of continuing to do some counter conditioning to get her to the place where on the weekend she had a toy and Tater came up and grabbed it out of her mouth and she didn't respond. She was just like, "Oh, okay. Things happen."

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All right. So, you've got to ask yourself with your dog training challenge, you've got to ask that question: Is the dog upset? And if the dog's upset, dog training alone is not the answer. You need to look at the emotion and fix that emotion. And so, what I did with This! as I had her in the ex-pen, and I would walk by, I would give her something good that she wanted like a big meaty bone. I would walk by, by myself. She just kept eating. "Well, I don't care about you." She wasn't resource guarding things against me. If she was, I would have done things a little different. And then as I walked by, probably the third time or so I would take a dog with me and I would have the dog walk far away and I would just throw cookies in her really high, high value cookies into her ex-pen as I walked by with a dog.



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Now she was growling. She'd stop eating and she would growl. But after two repetitions of that she, "No, I'm— good things are gonna happen. I can eat my bone and eat these cookies because there's another dog around here." And then I would go back to me walking without a dog, me walking with a dog so that what I want to help condition in her brain and remember this isn't training, she isn't choosing to growl. It's a fear response. There isn't a choice, "I'm going to growl at you right now."

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And so that's why conditioning works. Okay. Because we aren't waiting for the dog to not growl before we feed them. We're just reinforcing them so that the sight of this means this, if this then that. Okay. So, what are you going to write in your record book? What I want you to write first of all, is the times you saw your dog respond well. And so, for the first day, our first few days when I had her in her new Ex-Pen it would be, if another dog went by the Ex-Pen, now we didn't leave resources in there for her to, like high value resources. There were things that she could play with her, chew on that really, she never guarded in the past.

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Anytime a dog went by we would like, whoa, that would go in the book. And we might if we had cookies nearby, just toss her cookies whatever was handy. So, when you are record keeping you need to, first of all, acknowledge and write down the times that you saw good choices from your dog. That's number one.

Then you're going to look at, write down the times that you saw inappropriate responses from the dog. And that could be what you're going to write down is the time of day. Super important that you write down the things that preceded that like we had just come back in from a big walk.

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So, a lot of, by keeping great records, I found out that a lot of the times This!'s worst incidences were happening after 8:30 at night. And so, for me I'm like, she's still a puppy, she doesn't stop. I'm going to give her a forced nap in the middle of the day where nothing's going to happen. She's going to go in her crate. She's going to go to sleep. We're going to leave her there for an hour or two, and then she's going to come out and she's going to go to bed before 9 o'clock at night. So that she isn't overly tired and responding inappropriately.

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So that was a big part that I learned from the record keeping. I also learned from the record keeping that things happened at the top of the stairs. Because that's where we go outside to do fun things. So, a lot of incidences were happening at the top of the stairs. So, I put in more reinforcement for her around other dogs at the top of the stairs. You're going to know that by writing those down in your book.

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You may think your vault can keep it all upstairs, but the book allows you to look at things and evaluate patterns because that's what's going to solve our dog's challenges is the patterns. So, you're going to write down the good responses that you saw during the day, the responses that you felt were inappropriate, what time of the day, what happened before, what you know, where the location that you were in, and then you're going to do a summary.



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And I want you at the end of every day to make sure that you're celebrating, "Oh, look. We went down from 15 to 14 responses." Okay, it may mean something, it may not, but when I went from 15, 14 to 6, then I knew we were on the right track. And we would intentionally, I would intentionally do this counter conditioning exercise with the other dogs walking by her Ex-Pen. And she was getting so many treats. We had to cut back her food because she was gaining weight. She was getting so many treats for the sight of other dogs when she had something she valued, that she was like loving this loving that.

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And of course, we would give cookies to the dogs that were being growled out as well, because we didn't want to create any tension any either way. And then we just, you know, when we saw that it was happening, her incidences went down, we gave her more opportunities back out with the other dogs and rewarded her good choices there.

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So, you want to be sure no matter what your training is number one is there an emotional aspect to it? If the answer is no, like my dog is peeing on the carpet, they're not like upset. Well, they could be. It could be that they are submissive peeing. That's a different story. But it could be just, I haven't really got all my [potty-training regime](#) and we have accidents in the house. That isn't a fear or a lack of confidence. That isn't anxious. That's just, "I got to go. I got to go."

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All right. So that's just dog training. You want to use your good dog training to fix that one. But when there's an emotional response, you want to deal with that first. Now, I brought all this up because I've got a lot of people asking me about [episode number 14](#). Now episode number 14 was called creating harmony in a multi dog household. And I mentioned the togetherness project, which is something that I've done with my dogs. And people have asked me about that. And I've been really hesitant to talk about it.

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But before I did, I wanted to talk about number one: record keeping, number two: differentiating between the dog training, the operantly saying, "Oh yeah, this dog's not upset." versus having the dog in an emotional state of fear or anxiousness that we have to train that differently. And sometimes the best approach when the dog is really emotionally upset is to use medication. See a behaviorist and get the dog medicated so that they can make good choices. Right.

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Just like people, sometimes dogs need better living through pharmaceuticals to deal with a challenge. And then the counter conditioning works so much better. Why fight against it when meds can help. And it might just be a short-term prescription for those meds. And then the training is easier for the dog. The counter conditioning happens faster.

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So those are two options. In an upcoming episode I will talk about what the togetherness project looks like, but I want you to know I do this hesitantly because I find a lot of times people don't really understand that dogs only have limited ways of communicating things to us. And the most obvious one is their voice.





Episode: #71

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And I've helped many students who've had Terriers. And when they're playing tug with them, when their Terrier starts growling at them, they get, they're like, "Oh my God, he's being aggressive towards me." So, if you're a new dog owner and you're concerned about your dog's growling or appropriateness with you, seek out first of all, just seek out the help of a reinforcement-based dog trainer. Somebody who isn't gonna use punishment or blame or corrections on your dog. And just say I'd like an evaluation to see how my interactions are with my dogs.

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And if you are pretty confident that the dog is serious, then I would really encourage you to seek out the help of a Veterinarian, Certified Veterinary Behaviorist. But upcoming, we're going to talk about the togetherness project when we aren't to that level. All right, so stay tuned. I got more for you.

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But remember if you haven't, go to YouTube, subscribe this channel. Let's get to 10,000 because I want to do a YouTube live. I have never done a YouTube live and I said I would do it when we get to 10,000 subscribers and I'm going to hold true to my word. Let's get there. We'll see you next time with Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

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[Podcast Episode 66: Resource Guarding: Dog vs Dog Aggression](#)

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

[Blog Video: Understanding Your Dog's Triggers](#)

[Podcast Episode 6: The Art of Manipulation](#)

[Podcast Episode 48: Potty Train Your Puppy in a Week \(Easy 3 Step Process\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 14: Creating Intentional Multi-Dog Household Harmony](#)



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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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