

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG If you're like most people, you take your dog for a walk for one of two reasons. Either to get them a little exercise or to get them to eliminate pee or poop so that you can go about your business. Now that's pretty common. But when I take my dog for a walk, yeah, those maybe two of the reasons, but there's another few that are very important.

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And that's what I'd like to share with you today. Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. You'd be surprised the number of people who leave comments asking "Susan, please share how you go about walking your dog." particularly on YouTube. And if you are watching this on YouTube, go ahead and click the like button.

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How I go about walking my dogs is something that you think would be really, really, really interesting to you. Okay. Maybe even if it's just one that's really interesting to you, go ahead and hit that like button now. Everything that I do with my dogs is intentional. And I'm going to just, spoiler alert, I'm going to give you five reasons why I am intentionally walking my dog.

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Now the obvious it's elimination, it's relationship building, because everything you're doing with your dog is either tearing down or building that relationship. You know, relationships with our dogs are just like relationships with people. That we're either withdrawing on that bank account, or we're adding to that bank account.

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You can't have an interaction with that other person and it be even. It's you're building or you're withdrawing. And this very same thing is true of our relationship with our dogs. And so, I want to be intentional and make sure that I'm depositing into that. So, I digress. Those five things, really there's four but sometimes there's the fifth and I'm going to share it with you.

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It's to get my dogs to eliminate. Which I'll ask them on each and every walk to do that. It's to help build a better relationship between the two of us. It's to allow my dogs a chance to read the pee mail, which means it gives them a chance to go and sniff the trees or sniff the ground. And again, I'm very intentional about how I go about that. More on that later.

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And it's obviously exercise. I mean, I like to get my dogs out and get them to exercise every single day. My goal is 90 minutes to two hours. Honestly, sometimes it's only an hour but there's my goal. And the fifth and it's not a common reason but a sometimes reason is to socialize those dogs. And that is when I'm raising a puppy, I would like to get them out so that they get to meet and greet or sit and ignore people walking by on the streets, whether they be kids or adults or whatever.



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Okay. So, eliminate, relationship, read the pee mail, get some exercise, sometimes socialize. Now there are several different types of walks. Actually, I just have two types of walks, although I have the quick relief walk that is, I need you to go out, I need you to do your business and you need you to get back in the house. Now, those ones happen less than two minutes. So, my dogs will do both number one and number two on cue. That was a rhyme. I didn't mean to it for it to be, but it was. So, number one and number two on cue.

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If I think all we need is a number one, then my cue is "potty". And for my dear friends in the Southern hemisphere in Australia and New Zealand, I'm not saying 'party', I'm saying potty p-o-t-t-y. Like I want them to go to potty. Now, you know, it's I don't know, something we used to say when we're kids. Right. We're going on the potty.

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Number two, I use "get busy". Right. Now, it's really important that you put those behaviors on cue. And if you go to [episode number 48](#) here in Shaped by Dog, I will give you the step-by-step on how to do that. But I love that my dogs will do it within a couple of minutes. Right. And it just gives me such flexibility.

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If I'm taking the dogs for a big walk at the golf course, that's a 45-minute walk. I would rather not have to run all over the golf course picking up poop. So, we go to what we call poop alley here on our property, where they do their business. All that we do is have fun over the golf course. Okay. So, I may have the purpose of a quick relief walk and that's less than two minutes.

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How do you get it less than two minutes? Go back to [episode number 48](#). The other one would be a walk of exercise and engagement. Now there's more variables. That is are my dogs on leash or are my dogs off leash? Now where I live right now my dogs are almost always walked off leash. The exception being Tater Salad, who is our rescue dog. I will put him on leash when I'm getting near the road because he loves people.

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And if he sees people at the golf course before I see the people at the golf course, there's a small chance, I mean, it's getting slimmer as he gets, you know, has more and more time with us, but there's a small chance he might say, "You know, I think I need to stroll the 16th tee." And to get there, he has to go across a road. It's not a busy road, but it's a road where, you know, golfers come in. So just to be safe, we'll put him on a leash when we're approaching the road before the golf course.

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Now, the other reason I would put a dog on leash. I mean, there's the obvious of my dog is working through an injury. We may have to leash walk on the property. If I'm walking the puppy with my older dogs, there's a very good chance I will walk her on a leash. But there are times when I'll take my dogs, not my older dogs so often anymore, but my young dogs I'll take them to the city for socializing and for intentional walking where they're, you know, learning about different environments.



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And then there's a time when I'm, I mean, it's not, we're in a pandemic right now, but there are times when I traveled to Europe to go to world championships. And when I'm there I want to get my dogs out and they're not going to get the same 90 minutes to two hours of walking every day, but I will get them out to walk.

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Now, why won't I give them the same? If I can find a safe environment where I could walk them off leash that I know for sure is safe, that there isn't going to be some sharp things that they could cut their pads, because I don't want to invest all that time and put my dogs through the stress of traveling on a plane just to get there and have them cut open a pad, and then I can't compete.

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So, I'm not like a lot of people go to these foreign events and they like to go to these, you know, new forests and let their dog investigate. And I cannot tell you the number of times it's ended up with a bad story. So, I know at least three dogs right off the top of my head who cut their pads at the beach when they were at a big national or world championship event. I know one of the dogs sadly who died.

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And so, I'm very cautious when I'm in, not just in Europe, but any new location. If I'm out visiting a friend, one time, I went out and visited a friend in Whistler and I took my dogs off leash because I was with him and his dogs and he told me exactly what was going to happen. There would be bears, but the bears had runaway, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So, I am very intentional when I'm away from home. Very likely I'm going to walk my dogs on leash and if I'm walking them on leash and it's in the city, it's pavement, my dogs aren't used to that. So, I am not going to walk them as long.

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I'd rather they have a week with less walking, and I will do other things to engage their brain while we're waiting to compete. I'd rather, I air on the side of caution then take them someplace and have it not worked out for the best for all of us. All right. So, when I am in these environments, let me just take a step back.

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Anytime I'm walking my dogs on leash in the city, I'm acting as if I'm driving a car. So, when I'm driving a car, I am always on alert. I'm looking at what's ahead. I'm looking at what's behind. So, I'm always keeping peripheral. I want to know where the dogs are on the street. Are they loose? Are they behind a fenced in gate? Are they walking with somebody else? Are they coming towards us? And so, I will do things to keep my dogs safe.

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So, if I see somebody walking towards me, I may just step off to the side. Step on to somebody's lawn or whatever and ask my dogs to sit. If I know the person or the dog looks friendly, I may just put my dog on the other side. This is the most recent video I put up on YouTube. [Perch work, pivots and spins](#). If my dog's walking on left and that person's coming towards me and they've got their dog on left, I'll just ask my dog to change sides so now my body gets between their dog and my dog. All right. So, I am cautious when I'm walking in the city. And I'm always vigilant, but I'm not paranoid.



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I'm not going "Is that a dog?! Oh my gosh. Is that a dog?!" Because it's a relaxing walk with my dog, right? So, where I'm walking my dog and if they are on leash makes a big, big difference. Now, if they are on leash, chances are they'll be on a flat collar. If it's a young puppy, I will put them on a [head halter](#) because I don't know if they're going to be surprised or afraid, and I want to be able to get to them and help them much quicker and which I can on a head halter.

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If we're walking Tater Salad in the city, he will always be on a head halter right now because he is crazy, crazy, crazy in love with other dogs, people and in particular children. So, we need to be able to help control his exuberance when we're in the city walking with him. Okay. I will use a harness. So, a lot of the times when I'm walking my dogs in Europe, when I'm at an event like that, they'll be walking on a harness.

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Right. But my dogs don't pull and that's why I have no problem walking them on a flat collar as well. Okay. So, the criteria may be the age of the dog, the stage of the dog, the stage and learning and where we are. Now, when I'm walking here at home, they're almost always off leash. And so, what does that look like? What it is that I'm doing?

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My walks always start the same, no matter where I am. And that is, I want my dogs to rehearse that really good behavior of when we go outside, we quickly do our business. We relieve ourselves. So, I know if my dogs have eaten their breakfast, they will need to go number two. And so, I'll give them the cue for both. They'll have a pee first and then I'll give them a cue for get busy.

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And then once everybody has relieved themselves, then we'll start out on their walk. Now, do I care if they go to the bathroom in the field? No, actually I probably prefer it because then I don't have to pick it up. However, I just, I like to create that good behavior that they know the first thing we do is we relieve ourselves then we go out on our walk. Right. Because then if I'm going for a 45-minute walk or an hour long walk, then I don't have to carry bags of poop around with me. If I can get them to go at home, all the much better.

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So, eliminate number one. Relationship. What does that look like? Let's start with the puppy. I'll do games with her. Number one that I love is hide and seek. So, if she gets off ahead of me, I'll hide behind a tree and I'll wait for her to notice me. And then she has to come and find me. If she runs by me a couple of times and really can't scent where I am, I might make a noise. "Woohoo!" And then she finds me. When she finds me, the first find I may have a big party with her and have a game of tug.

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But after that, if you remember [episode 16](#), the thing before the thing, I don't want to reinforce her for 'you ignore me, I hide and then we have a big game'. And so, after that first celebration, then I'll come out and I'll ask her to do a couple more games. Maybe weave between my legs or we'll walk a little bit and then I'll play a big game with her. All right. So, relationship is the entire walk with, I shouldn't say the entire walk, with my puppy and I.



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She loves, loves, loves to scan, to cast. So, she's out there and our field has got deer that go through it and coyotes and rabbits and foxes and skunks. There's all kinds of critters. She loves to cast. So, what she's doing is she's crossing the field, crisscrossing the field, scenting. She's running so fast, but she's got her nose down and she loves to scent.

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All right. Scenting or what I affectionately refer to as reading the pee mail at that speed. That's not what she's doing. But scenting is really good for our dogs. And so, I make a point of letting my dogs do it. So, the puppy, what we have come to now, because I've shaped her behavior out on these walks is, she's out walking and she might just, you know, do a little bit of scenting and then she looks back at me.

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When she looks back at me, I always mark it, "good". And then I might say, "go play", which means you can go and do whatever you want. You can go do more scenting or I'll give her a cue, which means come chase me. And then I don't have to hide. She comes and chases me. I reward her right away. That's great relationship building.

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And then I might, when she's out there scenting, especially if she gets on a good scent, I might test my recall by calling her. Now I would never test my recall out there if I thought she wasn't going to come to me. And if she didn't, well, then I'm going to have to go over there and put her on leash and bring her back to me and then test her in an easier environment, get her to listen to me and then I'll release her. Now, if my dog doesn't come twice, then I know, you know what, why am I keep putting her on leash? Because she's just a function of my education. So, I better go back and put a better recall on her.

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I'm happy to say that virtually never happens to me because I would never give my dogs freedom unless I knew they had a busting recall. Right. Hello, we have our program recallers.com. I just follow the games and my dogs get great recalls. Okay. So, the relationship could be hide and seek. It could be recalls. It could be I'll call her in and have her work in reinforcement zone.

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So, I've talked about that in [episode number 53](#). About having your dog walk beside you in reinforcement zone. So, there are games that I will play to keep her wanting to stay in reinforcement zone, but then I say, go play. Cause I really want to see her run, get some good exercise and read the pee mail. So, relationship building games, and this is when we're walking at home. Of course, in the city, it will be more socializing. Okay.

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If we're walking on leash, like for example, if Tater Salad is walking on leash around the field, which he rarely does, but let's say for the example here in the podcast, I have him on leash. He loves to sniff. So, Tater, Momentum, and This! love to use their nose. My other dogs use it, but not like these three. These three are crazy about it. And so, allowing your dog to sniff is such a release for them. You may find your leash reactivity goes down if you really intentionally give them more time to sniff. You may find that they just are a little more relaxed.



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I mean, they get so much from their environment when they use their nose. They know, they, what different dogs have been here? What kind of health challenges does that dog have? Is it a male, is it a female? Like they're learning all kinds of things. Their nose is just so much better than ours. And there are definitely some dogs who really love to sniff more than others.

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I let everybody do it. I put it on cue, "go sniff". I think I say "sniffers" with my puppy though most of the time. Occasionally it's "go sniff" but it's "sniffers". Okay. So, here's what it looks like. I know Tater Salad is going to sniff. He's got certain places he loved to sniff. So, I'll say, "go sniff" and he's sniffing. All right. So, his sniffing behavior is cued. You can go do it and he can stay there as long as he wants. And I'll do that once or twice around the field. And then his sniffing behavior could also be a demand.

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So, he's, we're walking along, and he goes, "Whoa!". And when he does that, he is saying 'there is something I need to sniff immediately'. And here's what I do. I recall him. That's a great distraction. If you come to me, when you wanted to sniff, I will take off that leash and you can have at it. All right. If you don't come to me, then what I'll do is I will keep walking. I will let him sniff a less exciting environment, ask him to recall, then reward them and then we'll go back to the first one.

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All right. So, reading the pee mail so important, but I like to do it a little bit more intentionally than just letting my dogs drag me around the field. Now regardless if you are, you know, just out on a big pee mail walk or not, don't let your dogs drag you. Well, they still have to keep a loose leash. They don't have to stay in reinforcement zone when they are sniffing, because I'd given them the freedom to roam about to the end of the leash, but they still aren't allowed to pull on that leash.

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Okay. I hope that gave you a glimpse into what it's like to be one of Susan's Garrett's dog walking either in the city or in the country, on leash, off leash, puppy, older dog, rescue dog, whatever it is. All I ask is that you be intentional and recognize where the reinforcement is coming from your dog. And is it something that you wanted to see happen? I'll see you next time here on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

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

[YouTube Video: Susan Garrett's Perch Work Dog Tricks \(Pivots and Spins\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 40: Using a Head Halter on a Dog, Why My Approach is so Different](#)

[Podcast Episode 16: The Thing Before Your Dog's Thing](#)

[Podcast Episode 11: The Power of Permission in Dog Training](#)

[Recallers](#)

[Podcast Episode 73: Why Your Dog Is Still Pulling on Leash and How To Fix It](#)

[Podcast Episode 53: Stop Your Dog Pulling on Leash and Start Walking Together](#)

[Podcast Episode 29: Understanding and Preventing Reactivity and Aggression in 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.



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