

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG May 20th is National Rescue Dog Day. And in honor of that, I thought I would do a podcast sharing how your next rescue dog, when you bring it home, it can be home for life.

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And don't worry if you have a new puppy rather than a rescue dog, or even if you are just challenged with the dog you've got at home.

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There is something for everyone in today's podcast, but it is going to be focusing on rescue dogs. So, if you're watching this on YouTube, go ahead and hit the like button now in appreciation of rescue dogs worldwide and the people who are in any way contributing to helping these dogs get a better home. Well done you. Raising the roof for all of you.

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Personally, I have rescued many dogs over my lifetime. I've rescued several Jack Russells and Border Collies. I had a three-year-old Golden Retriever that was within minutes of being euthanized that I rescued from a Veterinary Clinic, went on to live to be 15 years old and had an amazing life with my niece.

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And you probably are aware of the most recent rescue dog in my life. The one and only Tater Salad, who is a Bulldog x Boston Terrier x Pug rescue dog. And I'm going to tell you all rescue dogs, kind of like all dogs, they come with behavior issues.

And with rescue dogs, it might be one or many behavior issues.

But there is one thing that people do that contributes to this that actually is the biggest mistake you can make if you have a rescue dog.

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And that is this, you get one chance, you know, if you heard that expression 'You get one chance to make a first impression.' Well, with our dogs, we get one chance to establish what's appropriate behavior in this home. It's the one chance to set up clear boundaries.

And honestly, those clear [boundaries or rules](#) are telling this new dog that "You don't need to look after yourself anymore, bud. We've got your back. We've got it."

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So, the one thing that people do, the biggest mistake people do when they get a rescue dog is they give them way [too much freedom](#).

All of this freedom allows them to continue to rehearse these behavior challenges. And the behavior challenges are likely why somebody said, "Ah, you're out of here." in the first place. You want to set that dog up for success by creating a way to stop these patterns.



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And too much freedom will also allow that dog to create new inappropriate patterns. So, we want to eliminate all that. And I want you to be aware that with rescue dogs, there is something called a honeymoon period.

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Now a honeymoon period generally lasts two weeks, but it can last a little bit longer depending on the dog and how much confidence there is deep down. During that honeymoon period, you are not meeting the real dog.

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It's like they are self-protecting until they really figure out how safe this place is. But what happens is people get this rescue dog home who is self-protecting and so trying not to do anything that might tip somebody over the edge, and they think, "Well, why would this dog have been rescued? This is a great dog. This is such a nice dog. Let's just let him have all the freedom."

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"You could have all the house to yourself. You could do anything you want." And it might work out at first for you. But when the honeymoon is over, the dog has already learned how to order its own takeout because you've given him all this freedom.

And now you're going to say, "Oh, but you're ordering for everyone on the block. Oh, but now you're doing things I really don't like. And so, I'd like to reel that in."

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But that is going to be tough because this rescue dog is now established rules in the new home. So, how are we going to change all that? I've said this in so many podcasts, but I can't say it enough.

The reasons dogs misbehave, dogs do what is reinforcing, that's it.

And so, when you get this dog into your home, what you've got to do is you've got to stop or avoid the dog rehearsing any inappropriate behavior because that is adding to the reinforcement bank account, which means they're going to repeat the behavior.

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So, what you want to set up is an environment of zero rehearsals. And I know that might be tough. There might be a lot of behavioral challenges you're dealing with.

Let me just share what Tater Salad was like when he came into this home. Now Tater Salad came here, he was fifteen months old. He's three and a half now so he's been with us a little over two years.

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When he came, he had zero name recognition and zero recall. He just loved what he loved because he was allowed to earn and figure out things were reinforcing a way.

And so, if he got out of his backyard, if he snuck out of the door, it was incredibly difficult for them to get him back. At first, he would come back for the bribe of some food, but it was incredibly like panic stations because he would run, he was gone.

So, zero recall, zero name recognition because he ended up being bound to this house.



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His favorite game was keep away whether it was a pair of socks, whether it was something you didn't want him to have. One time he found a big stick and brought it into the house and then tried to play keep away with that like there was no such thing as a retrieve. It was, 'This is mine. You come and get it.'

He was turfed out of two daycares because he didn't have the social skills to appropriately play with other dogs. He would body slam or bulldoze them for whatever reason. That was just how he had learned to communicate with other dogs.

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He used humans as a chew station. This was one of the things that drove me cray-cray. He would take a toy or chew bone. If you were sitting on the couch, he would walk up to you and press it against your leg. Now, remember Bulldog cross – so he really didn't - his lower jaw came so far out past his top jaw that he couldn't really hang on to those toys very well so he would push them against people and chew on them.

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And if you were sitting on the couch, he would jump on the couch and maybe push against your arm or push against any body part he could find for that to be the human chew station. Now he also was what we would call the [nail trim demon](#).

He was demonic. Like if you even hinted at the possibility of cutting his toenails, he went stark raving—I mean, we just couldn't do it. It was impossible. I mean, we considered, should we, we didn't want to take him to the vet and have him put out so he could cut his nails were quite long, but it was impossible. There was zero way it was happening.

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Okay. When they tried to leash walk, they used a prong collar, just a plastic prong because they didn't really want to hurt him, but they had no control over him, and they thought that might control. So, they stopped walking him when he got bigger, they just— he's 50 pounds now. When he came here, he might've been about 40 something, but they couldn't walk him. So, there was no more leash walking. Right.

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He had this game that we like to call "the boat anchor with teeth". And this is what he would do, whether he was walking on a leash or he was around the house and you wanted to him to go in his kennel for example, or if he was walking and he wanted to sniff someplace you didn't want him to sniff. He would throw himself on his back, become a 50-pound boat anchor, and then bite at your hands as they came in for you.

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Now, this was a really cool gig that he learned people would let go of his collar and give up and let him have his own way. He got really, really good at the boat anchor with teeth. He would rehearse it daily with us. Now, the game of the human chew station, if the human chew station wasn't home that just turned into, 'I would chew the seats off of the kitchen seats, the cushy parts of the seats.' He started by just chewing those off. And then he would chew the bottom, the wooden part. He liked to chew wood and chewed glasses, whatever he found really.



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Eventually he chewed three living room sofas. All sofas like exploded that sort of thing. And he also had this weird habit of jumping into cars, like any door, even a trunk, if it was open, he was jumping in. He was obsessed with, he loved greeting people, but obsessed with getting in cars.

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Okay. So, all of these behavior challenges, I remember when we picked him up, we're getting the car and Kim looked at me and said, "What have I gotten myself into? Because initially Tater Salad was going to be Kim's dog - and he is half Kim's dog - so, Kim works here and lives here Monday to Thursday.

And then Friday to Sunday she goes home and lives with her husband and her other dog who doesn't happen to like Tater Salad. And so, Tater just lives here all the time now. So those were the behaviors that we started with. And now what is the key to make that get better? How do we stop that reinforcement, Susan? How do we make it all go away?

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Well, you have to be patient. You absolutely have to be patient. But I'm going to share with you the five keys that I found to having success when you're rescuing a dog.

Number one, just like when [you get a new puppy](#), you need to ideally if at all possible, **plan to be home**.

Take a week or two weeks off that you can be home and help establish the new schedule for that puppy. And right now, we're all in lockdown here with this pandemic being home for a week or two or a month or a year is not so difficult, but let's not go there.

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So, you want to be home. Number two, you want to plan to [come up with a new name](#).

Tater Salad's name was Samson. The name Samson was associated with when you hear this name run in the opposite direction. When you hear this name, grab what you've got in your mouth and take off. When you hear this name, do not come when you're called. When you hear this name—. So we wanted to leave all the baggage of that name in the previous home. And the new name, Tater Salad is associated just with joy and good things happening.

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Right. So, please, please, please regardless of you know the history, **plan to change the dog's name**. Okay. Now, before you get your dog, you're going to prepare the environment.

You need to **select a Veterinarian**. If you don't have another dog in the house, you might not already have a relationship with a Veterinarian.

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So, look at the Veterinarian Clinics in the neighborhood. And if possible, go and meet them, again if that's possible and select a Veterinarian that is going to be your— and when you get that dog home, one of the first things I'd like to do is get them checked by a Veterinarian. Okay.

Set up your **gated community**. I've [talked about the gated community](#) here on the podcast before.



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An ex-pen, with a rescue dog I would for sure have a lid on that ex-pen and I would have things that they can't chew inside that until they prove that they aren't going to chew.

Now, if they come with a history and you know, like we knew with Tater that things are going to be exploding, then we would put things like that we didn't care that if he chewed them or that couldn't be chewed.

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So, there are beds you can buy that the dogs actually couldn't chew. And Tater actually didn't and if we ever saw him chewing on the bed, we would take it out. And so, he was supervising, he actually learned to never chew on beds. If you chew on the bed, it comes out of that ex-pen. And when he would go into his kennel, his crate, he had just a blanket and they said he never ever chewed on that blanket. Okay.

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So, your gated community, you want to buy a **head halter**, a **leash**, a **harness**.

Now we're going to condition the dog to the [head halter](#). That's going to be huge for our rescue dogs, but you're not going to just slap it on them to begin with. You're going to use probably a harness to walk them about at first.

Crates, you know, go on Facebook marketplace or the thrift shop and you can buy used **crates**. You're going to need more than one. You're going to need one in the car and you're going to need one in your kitchen, one in your bedroom. Then you can, you know, move one of them around if you want to but unless you've got a little dog, I wouldn't be dragging crates around.

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Okay. Plan for the best **quality dog food** you can afford and a [variety of different treats](#). Okay. So that will get you going.

The next thing, this is number four, is **plan a daily schedule**. And within that schedule, you want to plan socializing.

So, you want to, you know, even if the rescue has said this dog's good [with cats](#), please don't take anything at face value. You want to do your own investigation and get your own understanding of this dog. And remember I said, we got that honeymoon period for the first two weeks.

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So, what they might appear like don't release some of the boundaries that you've established for this dog until you really are confident that you know what they are brilliant with cats.

So, in your daily schedule, you want to include socializing with [other dogs](#) in the house, with other animals in the house, whatever other pets you might have, [with children](#), if you don't have them, see if you can borrow some or have them come visit, you want to socialize with different adults.

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So just, we want to, right now we're investigating in this period. Right. To socialize. So, if we want to socialize of course we want to train. We want to [exercise](#). We want to create established set feeding times and we want to— and they don't have to be exact mine, my dogs get fed in a ballpark.



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And you really want to establish chill times. So, times when 'we are sleeping or when you're chilling out, you can have a bone, you can— but I'm not here to entertain you'.

Okay. And we want to see if that rescue dog has any anxieties that we need to work on. So that's planning a schedule will help with those anxieties, but don't leave things like this up to chance, right?

You want to treat this rescue dog like it's a brand-new puppy and we have to put the education in them that we really are intentionally want that dog to have.

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All right. Next thing. Number five, this is important is **your journal**. The first four, let's say four to six pages of the journal, you're going to take, put index. And in that index, you'll write the page number and the topic. And then you can go to the end the date. Then you can go in and review what you've done.

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The back of the journal, I want you to leave two or three pages for goals and you can start right now. What are your goals for your life with this dog? What's that going to look like? Don't be in a hurry to jump ahead. And when you get your rescue dog, take him out to the park or take them to the beach right away.

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Leave a few days to get to know each other before you start taking them out in, and then don't take them out into big crowds, but you could write the goals of what that looks like and then work towards getting there. So, the back two or three pages are your goals.

Right after your index you're going to write a topic that going to be what I've got, and this you're probably going to need, I don't know, six or eight pages, and you're just going to write down and [describe some of the challenges](#) that you're getting.

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The rest of the pages are for you to document and write down the training that you're doing. Okay. So, the things that, the list for Tater Salad, I've already read it, right? We needed to work on the recall. We needed to work on retrieve. We needed to work on the not biting. We needed to work on proper social behavior with other dogs.

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So, what you've got is important and we know what we want. Those are our goals. You've got to be, get real, get honest, let the dog show you who they are. And when they tell you believe them.

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Those are the **five keys** that have created the framework for Tater Salad's transitions.

Be home, change that name, create an environment where the dog can be successful, plan for routines throughout the day, and journal what you're doing.

That is the framework that catapulted success for Tater Salad.



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In two years, he has become a model citizen for all rescue dogs to try to aspire to. He does not run off with items that he picks up. If you see he has potentially has something in his mouth he shouldn't have you just say "Tater Salad, 'Bring Me'" and he brings whatever he's got over to you.

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You're out walking, and you call his name he turns, and he runs the vast majority of the time. Is he perfect? Not quite, but he's pretty darn close. He has never chewed any inappropriate human thing in our house. He loves to chew bones, but he does not push his bones up against human beings. He chews bones in his bed where he knows he's supposed to chew his bones. We almost never see the canine biting boat anchor.

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And when we do, it's kind of funny because it brings us back to the day when he arrived, when we used to see it probably 10 or 20 times a day. You know, we might see it once a year now. It's called resurgence, it's kind of funny.

He's a dog who when anybody who visits our house, that's the dog they're like, "I would like to take this dog home with me." He's just a fun engaged dog. And he is the model citizen for getting your nails trimmed. The worst case I've ever seen to now the best dog, he adores having his nails trimmed. He comes running when he hears the Dremel fire up.

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And he's a model citizen for walking on leash. You could walk him out anywhere and he's happy to ignore any distractions as he walks beside you. So, what a cool turnaround. Did it happen overnight? Absolutely not. But it happened within the framework of those five keys that I shared with you. And while you're journaling, your goal is to create clarity daily for that dog.

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You know, Brené Brown says, "Clarity is kind." And you want to create success for that dog by empowering him with the gift of choice. Now, it all begins for us with a game ItsYerChoice. You've heard me talk about ItsYerChoice here on this podcast over and over and again, but honestly that is the gateway to an amazing life for any dog, but in particular rescue dogs. Because let's face it, they've been making a lot of choices throughout their life.

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They have just been inappropriate choices, running away, not coming when called, playing keep away, you know, biting at their owners, whatever it is, it's been their choice. What we have to do is help them to create clarity to see when you make good choices, amazing things happen. And **ItsYerChoice** is that first step where the dog can go, "Oh, a weight's been lifted. I don't have to fight you. We can work together on this."

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And if you would like to know more about ItsYerChoice, I have an [ItsYerChoice Summit](#), and I would like to gift it to you. If you have a rescue dog, this is the best place to start. If you have a new puppy, this is another amazing place for you to start.



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If you're challenged with your dog, if you may have been playing ItsYerChoice but you're not seeing it transfer into your everyday life then be my guests and join me. Go through the games in the ItsYerChoice Summit. Learn how this starts as just a party game to wow your friends and turns into a way of life for your dog.

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If you're interested in that, just go to the show notes. If you're listening to this, check out the show notes and [click on the link](#), and that will take you to the ItsYerChoice Summit. And you will see light bulbs go on. And I promise you what's happened with us with Tater Salad, it is possible for everybody. You really just have to know what you want and keep cataloging on what you've got. And finally, I'd like to invite you to focus on the awesome. You know, especially when we have a rescue dog, there is the, what we know about that dog's history and what we imagine about that dog's history.

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So, focus on, "Hey, this is my rescue dog. He's got a sort of past, but man, this is why he's awesome." Talk about how awesome he is.

Let yesterday be over with. It's in the past. It's the history. Don't go there. And finally, I'd like to ask you to share this podcast with anybody you know who is struggling with their dog. With anybody you know who's planning on getting a new puppy or a new rescue dog.

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Share this podcast because I want people to know let's believe in what's possible for our dogs, rather than looking at a dog like Samson the Bulldog cross, who came into this home with nine behavior challenges that most people would have said, "Oh, you're going to have to keep that dog on leash for the rest of his life." We all have choices. We can hang out and hope that our dog's going to get better. That was the approach Tater Salad, AKA Samson's owners tried to take, didn't work.

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You could manage that dog for the rest of your life, so they never get the freedom to choose to be wrong. They're always in a crate. They're always tied up. They're always on a leash or a long line. They're never given that freedom. Or you can do what we did with Tater. We managed and trained until we could allow that dog to have more freedoms because he was so well trained.

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Please share this podcast. And if learning more about what we did with Tater is of interest to you, just leave me a comment. And maybe in the future I'll share some of those foundational videos of what life was like when he first came into this home and we were dealing with all of his lunatics. Okay.

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So that's it for today for Shaped by Dog. Remember if you're watching this on YouTube, please like this video, subscribe to our channel and leave me a comment if you'd like to see more talking about turning things around for our rescue dogs. I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.





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ItsYerChoice Summit:

Join in with Susan's free online dog training workshop: [Click here for the ItsYerChoice Summit](#)

Resources:

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

[Podcast Episode 27: Do Dogs Need Rules?](#)

[Video Blog: Help! My Dog Hates His Nails Cut ... What Do I Do?](#)

[Podcast Episode 70: Critical Info for Your Puppy's First Day and Night at Home](#)

[Podcast Episode 13: Naming Your Puppy or Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 30: Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 58: How to Create Kid Friendly Dogs and Dog Friendly Kids](#)

[Podcast Episode 72: Preventing Dog Aggression: Introducing Dogs or Puppies with Project Togetherness](#)

[Podcast Episode 24: Help for the Dog who Chases Chipmunks, Bicycles, and the Neighbor's Cat](#)

[Podcast Episode 32: 20 Easy Ways to Exercise Your Dog at Home](#)

[Podcast Episode 71: Pro Dog Trainer's Secret to Help Your Naughty Dog](#)

[ItsYerChoice Summit](#)

Ex-Pen Information:

[Ex-Pen: Rover Modular Pet Enclosures](#)

[Ex-Pen: Plastic 8-Panel](#)

[Ex-Pen: Folding Metal](#)



How to Train a Rescue Dog with Behavior Problems

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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