

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG Today's podcast was inspired by a student of mine, John who said, "You talk about walking your dog and training them. I would love to know what that looks like." And so, today's podcast is meant to be one that you do with your dog. So, take your phone, plug in your earphones, grab some cookies and a bait bag, and a leash if appropriate. And you're going to go outside and train your dog while you're listening to this podcast.

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You see, this is a great quote, 'The goal of education is not knowledge. The goal of education is action.' So, this could be a regular segment here on Shaped by Dog, and we're calling it "**learn, walk, and train.**"

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You're going to leave me a comment, if you're watching this on YouTube or at the end you can drop us a note out at wag@dogsthat.com to let us know what you think about *learn, walk, and train*. Here's how it's going to work. I'm going to interrupt the podcast throughout to instruct you on what I would like you to train.

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Michael Jordan, he once said you need to become a master of the basics and then the level of everything you do from there is going to rise. Another great quote I've heard is that mastery is just mastering the fundamentals. So, on *learn, walk, and train* what I want to do is we're going to focus on those fundamentals.

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So, what I want you to do, grab your treats, make sure you have various values, some super high value and some moderate value, some regular low value treats. Have a treat pouch. We're going to change that up every time you walk, not every time, but mix it up so the treats aren't always in the same place. And if you're walking your dog off-leash, just carry that leash with you. Today what I want you to focus on is the behavior of sit.

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So, in fairness to the dog, we're going to set a base level. Before you go out the door, I want you to ask your dog to sit. Everybody, grab your dog. You might want to pause the podcast so that you're ready. Before you get anywhere near the dogs, I do this one in the living room, you're going to ask your dog to sit, and I want you to evaluate what that criteria is right now.

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So, can you now walk out in front and look at your dog. And I want you to praise the dog without going back. Does the dog start moving their paws? Because that's not a sit, they've broken the sit. So, if your dog doesn't wiggle their paws, then you can go back in and give them a treat. Now, if your dog does wiggle their paws, just go back in and move them in a circle and ask for another sit.



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If you're doing this with a wee puppy, you're going to alter everything I say. If you're doing this with an extremely experienced dog, I'm going to challenge you a little bit on this. Okay. So, you alter the criteria, or the difficulty of the criteria based on your puppy or dog. So, if you're doing this with a puppy, you might ask the puppy to sit and not move, just continue to reward them and then give them the release cue.

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All right. So, ask your dog to sit, go out in front. Now I want you to twirl around. You're going to have to change hands with your leash. So out in front, twirl around, come back, feed your dog. Now you're going to, from the sit position you're going to back up, go behind your dog. Do they move their front feet to see where you are? Ta-dah!

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All we're doing right now is looking at what your dog understands for the criteria of sit. Is it a specific position? Is there a duration? Now, many of you are going to say, "Oh Susan, but I didn't get to say 'stay'." Well, you might want to go back and revisit [episode number 19](#), where I talked about one of my pet peeves in dog training. And well, I really don't think you need to say 'stay'.

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Okay. So, we've evaluated what that sit looks like in the living room. Let's go out and take a walk. Criteria has many components to it. So, there's something called latency, which is when you ask your dog to sit in the living room, he might have initiated the behavior of sit right away. So, there's two different parts about the sit. We get the dog to sit, how long does it take him to start to sit? And how long does it take them to complete that sit?

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So, one is the speed of the behavior and the other is the latency between you saying the cue and them starting the action. Now for something like, you know, asking your dog to sit, I'll give you an example. My puppy, she'll sit like lightning bolts in the living room or in the dog training arena. But when we go for a walk, latency is much, much higher. So, it goes from maybe a 10th of a second to probably three seconds.

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So, what I want you to do now is I want you guys to be cognizant of that fact, and you're going to ask your dog to sit and while you're waiting, you're going to start in your head say, "one and two and three and four—" You don't say it out loud. Just say it in your head so you know how long did it take my dog to sit? You're going to go back and compare to what it was in the house. Now, if I didn't ask you to record keep that in the house because I wanted you to get out and walk your dog.

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So how long, what is that latency? If you've got a wee puppy, there might be a ton of distractions and this is really tough stuff. And maybe they haven't had this leash on a lot. And so, there's so much going on in their environment. You're going to be kind, help them to be successful by maybe kneeling down and asking for that sit.



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Okay. So, what is the latency? Now give your dog a release and you're going to keep walking. When we talk about the speed of the behavior, that's how fast once the dog starts to do it, how fast does it take that dog to do it? And your goal is that they're doing it within a half a second to one second.

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You might not have that, but you can improve it by looking at what's the average of how long it takes my dog to do it and giving them those super high value rewards when they sit faster than what that average is. I call this phenomenon using the average or better rule. All right. So, you're going to give them super high value food.

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If it happens, let's say it takes your dog three seconds to sit. And if they go on average, it's three seconds and they suddenly they sit in two seconds, you're going to give them a much higher value reward. You know, you might give them their outrageously high value reward when they sit in one second.

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Okay, so average or better in speed and with that latency, you want to get them away from what's distracting them so you can give them the high value rewards by getting them in an area where that latency will go down. Remember latency is the time between when you say the cue sit and when the dog actually does it.

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All right, so we're going to get ready. And we're going to ask your dog to sit now. And what I want you to do is back up behind your dog. What does that behavior look like compared to what it was like in the house? Remember, we don't want your dog to be failing on this all the time. If they fail once in a while, no big deal. Remember the dog is just reflecting to you what you've trained them.

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So, maybe you thought you train them to do a really good sit, but they need your help of saying, "sit, sit, sit" or saying, "stay, stay, stay." What that is, you go back to [episode number 12](#) and you're helping is not helping. You might think that it's helping but it's not. You want to stay closer if your dog can't tolerate you going all the way behind to the end of the leash. Just ask the dog to sit and step sideways. What's that look like? Come back in and reward. Remember we're always building our dog's confidence. That's what we're looking for. Building confidence.

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All right. So come back, give your dog a cookie, release them, we're walking on. Here's what I'd like you to do now, just for fun change sides. Your dog is now on your right side. If that is something that is not super comfortable for you, then you're going to make a mental note and think about when you get back home doing more work on Reinforcement Zone on your opposite side.

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Now I mentioned those great quotes about mastery, the Michael Jordan one and the one that I believe came from Bruce Lee although Dr. Google wouldn't support that. 'Mastery is just mastering the fundamentals.'



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Love that line. It's been really something that stuck with my entire career as a dog trainer. But what are the fundamentals? So, I'm going to give you a list of what I would consider my 12 fundamentals when I get a new puppy or if I've brought a rescue dog into the house, what I would like to train. And this list might be tweaked. I think it's pretty much in the order that I would train it.

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All right. So, if you have been in any of our programs you probably can guess what the first five or six are. You probably could guess them all if you've been around for a long time. All right. Number one, I would teach that puppy or dog what the word "search" means. It means I'm about to throw cookies on the floor and you can now pick them up off the floor.

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I want my puppy to know that so that they know to look for food or look for a toy and also that if they find food on the floor, they don't think about picking it up and eating it because nobody said the word 'search'. It's not the only thing that will teach them that behavior, but it certainly a part of the puzzle that the dog will need to learn so that they don't start eating things off the floor. Okay. So, number one, I would like to teach *Search*. Number two, I would teach *ItsYerChoice*. Number three, *Crate Games*.

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Now all of these games' kind of build on themselves. So, Search helps the dog to know how ItsYerChoice works. ItsYerChoice makes it easy for them to understand how to learn Crate Games. And Crate Games, I would put Hot Zone in there too. Meaning stay on a targeted area, stay on a raised dog bed. So, knowing Crate Games helps them to understand that behavior much easier, but I kind of put those as the same behavior.

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And then number four would be *Recall*. There's things in there Recall would help teach the dog their name, you know name recognition although it's a critical fundamental, I didn't put it in as a part of my top 10 or 12 fundamentals because it is really part of the Recall itself.

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Okay. Stop what you're doing. Ask your dog to sit. Now I want you to just step away, don't say anything and see if your dog tries to come with you when you step away. Again, if you have a puppy make this super easy for your puppy. Don't try and step away. Just see if they can hold that position for one second before you release them.

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If you've got an advanced dog, I want you to go to the end of your leash and then I want you to bend down and pat the ground. What does your advanced dog do? Do they keep holding that position? Do they drop to a down? Now go on back. I want you to circle around your dog one 360-degree circle, and then go back to the position with your dog on your whatever side you want. Give them a cookie, release them, let's move forward.



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So, Search, ItsYerChoice, Crate Games, the Recall, *value for Reinforcement Zone* would make walking on both sides super easy so that the dog understands that all good things in life happen on your seam, your out seam of your pants. Remember from [episode number 53](#), be seen on my seam. Super important.

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From that Reinforcement Zone comes loose leash walking. Now that could be— see how I'm squeezing a lot more skills into my top 12. I didn't give name recognition its own bill, and I'm not giving loose leash walking its own bill, because I'm saying if the dog's got brilliant value for Reinforcement Zone, loose leash walking is a given.

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All right. Next, this one might be a surprise and it might be one that, you know, you're going to say, "Oh Susan, I don't want to do that. My dog just likes cookies." But here's number six to me is *Play with the toy I have*. Super important skill that is just another layer of ItsYerChoice. You may want the happy hippo, but I'm giving you the squeaky monkey. Play with the toy I have.

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Number seven is the ever so important skill of *Retrieve*. If I ask you to bring me no matter what it is, you're going to bring it right to my hand. Okay. Number eight, that's the skill of *Sit*. Right. Yeah. You all got that on some level because you're playing along with my game here.

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Number nine in my top list of all the things important on your level towards mastery is *Down*. You could have guessed that, after sit comes down. Look how far down the list those are. Now my dog already has an understanding of sit because they learned it in Crate Games, I just didn't put a name on it. But at this number eight stage, I'm actually naming it something.

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I'm going to recap for you. I've got Search, ItsYerChoice, Crate games, Recall, Reinforcement Zone, Play with the toy I have, Retrieve, Sit, Down, and I'm going to extend the down to be *Lay on your side for co-operative care*. And that is to allow me to clip your nails and brush your teeth. And I call it the Game on position. And the game today is I want to cut your nails.

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So, it's an extension of down. It's lying on your side. Yeah, I'm stretching it. I'm getting a lot of things into my top 10. Next is going to be *Functional tricks*. And I would say the most important functional tricks is a *Hand Touch*. That is, so functional tricks would be 11 and functional tricks probably has an endless number of tricks that you can add there.

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So, it's open. Weave between your legs is something I like to teach my dogs, but hand touches the number one functional tricks. Okay. Speaking of functional, I'd like everybody to ask your dog to sit and you're going to walk out in front, praise the dog in a really high squeaky voice, "What a good baby! Baby, baby! You're so cute!" If your dog is still holding position and didn't get all wiggly, go back and give them a cookie.



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Come on out in front, do that twirl around your whole, change hands cause you're going to do a 360 spin in front of your dog. And if you guys are advanced, here's what I want you to do. I want you to pat your leg. Pat your leg, which is kind of unfair because it is sort of a formal recall. So, you know, this one is just like, yeah, you're pushing the boundaries. My puppy would fail on that one every time.

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Because I kind of pat my leg to get them into Reinforcement Zone. So, it's like giving them a formal cue. They should really be, but I'm just testing. You know, you might say "Susan, that's unfair. I'm not doing it." But I'm putting another one out there for you. Okay.

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So that pretty much is my list: Search, [ItsYerChoice](#), [Crate Games](#) including Hot Zone, Recall, Reinforcement Zone including loose leash walking, Play with the toy I have, Retrieve, Sit, Down including co-operative care, Functional tricks and the Hand Target.

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All right, I can keep going on and on and on. But remember mastery is mastering the fundamentals. If you master those fundamentals, anything you want to do with your dog for the rest of your life is going to be so much easier, so much easier. All right. So, focus on the fundamentals and what I'd like you to focus on now is did you enjoy this session?

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Did you enjoy learn, walk and train? If you did, go to my YouTube page, leave a comment on that video, which is going to be like a static picture with maybe some lines or you know, where I'm talking. Leave a comment, of course while you're there you might as well like it. And if you're not a subscriber subscribe. If you are listening to this, go to shapedbydog.com/85 and go to the show notes.

00:16:55

There in the show notes will be my list of the top 10 or 11 or 12 fundamentals that I think everybody should focus on. Next, if you're listening to this, I'd love for you to send me an email to wag@dogsthat.com. Let me know what you think of our new segment: Learn, walk, and train. Is it something we should carry on? Did you like it? Did you get benefit from it? There's more upcoming if you think it's worthwhile. I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

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And yes, for those of you who are used to watching this on YouTube, I am making a heart right now. That's me making a heart with my hand. I'll see you next time.





Episode: #85

Understanding Your Dog's Sit: LWT

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 19: One of My Biggest Pet Peeves in Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 12: When Helping Your Dog is an Illusion](#)

[Podcast Episode 59: Why Your Treats Aren't Working for Your Dog](#)

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

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

[Learn the ItsYerChoice Game](#)

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Podcast Episode 68: 3 Easy Tricks Every Dog Should Know](#)

Email wag@dogsthat.com to let us know what you think of the new "Learn, Walk and Train" segment for our ShapedByDog podcast.



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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