

Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:10

SG As somebody who's been educating dog owners on how to have not only a well-behaved dog but an amazing relationship with that dog, I think it's really important that I share my failures and today is such an episode. Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog, and welcome to our second installment of learn, walk, and train.

00:00:30

This is the episode of interaction where I encourage you to take the info from your head, have it go through your heart down your hands and through the leash into your dog. It could be a podcast episode that you're taking your dog for a walk, or if you're watching this on YouTube prop up the computer, crank it up and start doing some housework, as long as your dog is nearby to play.

00:00:52

And today, the game that I want you to play on your walk or in your interaction is the game of ItsYerChoice. Now, for those of you who have never played ItsYerChoice, you can pause this video, go to the show notes, click on the link that takes you to the game of [ItsYerChoice](#), and then come on and circle back here once you've got a really good grasp of it.

00:01:17

Or, when I ask people to play ItsYerChoice, you can take a break and play a game of interaction and engagement with your dog. Something like chase me and get a cookie. You might be walking your dog, you might just be listening to this in your car, and you're going to circle back to it when your dog is around.

00:01:35

Here we go, we're going to jump right in. Back to my big blunder, it happened last week. It's something I'm really not proud of at all. I'm going to share with you exactly what happened. You can stop and think of what you would have done. I'm going to share with you what I did immediately, what I did a couple of minutes later and what I did 24 hours later, and what I'm going to be doing next.

00:02:02

Here's the story. I was at the grocery store on Sunday, and the girl behind the checkout read my jacket and noticed it said dog training. And she said, "Are you a dog trainer?" And I said, "Yes." She said, "I'm so excited. I'm getting my puppies today." Instantly I made a judgement because I have seen the challenges people have when they adopt two puppies at the same time.

00:02:29

And I said, "Two puppies? That's a really big challenge for you to undertake." And she said, "Yes, I want them to keep each other company." Again, a red flag for me because I know the difficulty it will be to have a relationship with a dog when you have another dog that you wanted to have a relationship with first. She said, "I want my puppy to have company because they're going to be outside puppies." Again, another judgement. And I know a lot of my online students have dogs that live outside for various reasons.



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

00:03:06

I have seen this work really well, but for the most part, I have seen it not work so well. And so, I've said this before. It's a great quote from my friend Ellyn Bader who says, "When you feel furious, it's time to get curious."

00:03:22

I'm not saying that I was furious at this woman, but you could replace this with, "when you feel like you're making a judgement of somebody else, get curious about them first." I just think that's such an important lesson for all of us to adopt. But alas, that's not what I did last Sunday. I did get curious. I kind of heard that little voice in my head, and I said, "Wow, what breed of dog will you be getting?" And she said, "Oh, they're Golden Retriever puppies."

00:03:56

Again, it made my heart hurt a little bit. My judgement, I believe, as I said to her, I said, "You know, all dogs really like to bond with their people, and they like to be where their people are. And in particular breeds like Golden Retrievers who have really been bred to work with man." Not to say that there aren't all kinds of field-bred dogs that live outside. It's just my vision, my perception. And I put this on this poor girl.

00:04:28

I could tell she was clamming up a little bit, and I was making her feel; I don't know if the word shame or guilt about what she was doing, but you could tell her bright, bubbly outside exterior had now gone. So, then I try to build that relationship again, and I asked her why outside. And before I tell you her answer, let's do a moment to interact with your dogs.

00:04:55

So, I want you to ask your dog to sit. I want you to pivot in front of them and open up your palm with good, tasty treats in that palm. We're doing a round of ItsYerChoice. Put that palm pretty close to your dog's face. And I want you to now just move it away about one foot. I want to see if your dog moves their paws. If they do, you're going to close your palm and put it back at your side, stand up and then go back and try it again.

00:05:27

If your dog fails twice, then I don't want you to play ItsYerChoice on this round of learn, walk and train. I want you to go back and play an interactive game of chase me or get a cookie. But if your dog doesn't move any of their paws when you move that palm a foot away, I want you to pick up a cookie, pause, and hold it there for a couple of seconds and see if any paws move and, if not feed them right away.

00:05:51

So, when I asked this woman, "Why do you want the puppies to live outside?" she said, "I just don't like dogs in the house." So, then I might've spoken without a filter. And I said, "You know, it sounds like maybe a couple of garden gnomes might've been a better choice."



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

00:06:04

Yes, indeed, that is what I said. Hurtful, a judgement, my opinion. Here I am, a professional in a position to really help this girl, to really make an impact on those puppies' lives, but my quick judgement and lack of filter put a wedge between us. And there is no way she was ever going to take any input from me.

00:06:29

And so, I gathered up my groceries; obviously, she said nothing else to me. I went to the car, and here's what I thought a few seconds later. I thought, well, as much as it hurts my heart to think of these puppies living alone outside in Canada in the winter, I'm hoping she'll have a shelter for them. I'm sure she will. She seems like a nice enough girl.

00:06:53

I quickly changed my demeanor and started laughing as I thought about all the damage those puppies are going to do to her backyard. So, it gave me a little smile, and then I went about my day. But here's how our subconscious works. That behavior that I showed is not congruent with the person I believe I am. It's not congruent with the person I would like to show up to for the world, always.

00:07:21

And so, I didn't think about it again. I went to bed, and when I woke up, it's the first thing that I thought of. I thought, 'Wow, Susan, there was so much more you could do. You could have actually said some kind words to that girl. You could have said, "Wow, two puppies. That's going to be a challenge. Listen, I have a lot of free information on [raising puppies](#) on my YouTube channel. I'm going to write down my website here. If you have any questions, you just drop my team a line because we're very responsive to anybody who needs help"'.

00:07:58

What a different interaction. One far more congruent with the person I want the world to know. One far more congruent with the person I'd like to show to not just my dogs, but for everybody in my life. I thought it was super important for me to talk to you about this. Let's just go to behavior number two, shall we?

00:08:21

If you had success with your ItsYerChoice, sit number one. We're moving on to number two, everybody ask your dog to sit, and you're going to pivot in front, put your palm of your hand with all those tasty treats super close to your puppy's or your dog's nose and then move it away one foot.

00:08:41

And now you're going to pick up that cookie, and you're going to pause. Now, you're going to praise your dog in a way that might get them to move. I mean, you're not going to go, "Oh, good girl. Yeah, that was good." I want you to go. "Oh! Good baby!" Something really exciting. And if the puppy or the dog that you're playing ItsYerChoice with, if you get that paw movement, put the cookie back in your hand, close the hand, and put it back at your side.



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

00:09:08

Stand up, wait a second, go back and try it again. We want to make sure there's no paw movement; I mean, of course, they're allowed to wiggle their bum. They're allowed to wag their tail because you're talking to them in a really encouraging way. If you have success this time, pick, pause, praise, and quickly feed before they have any second thoughts about moving.

00:09:30

Success number two, let's go on. Judgement. Last week, I posted a video on my YouTube page, and there was confusion. And looking back, it was my bad.

00:09:45

In the video, I was walking behind my puppy, and she moved her front paw. And I was talking to the camera. It's very difficult to teach and train at the same time, but I've been doing it for many, many years, so I think I've got it pretty much down. What I did was I offered my puppy a [nose bridge](#).

00:10:06

So, with a nose bridge, I dropped my hand, and then she pushes her nose up into the crook of my hand that allows me to help guide her feet into one position or another so she can be successful. And if you're interested in having me teach a nose bridge, come to my YouTube page, find this learn, walk, and train episode and just leave me a comment.

00:10:32

Anyways, that's what I did, and somebody who was watching thought I grabbed her muzzle to discipline her. And as a matter of fact, two people thought that. One person was very kind and said, you know, why I might have done that. The other person was very judgemental. Called me some bad names and said I was being mean to my puppy and that my videos were garbage.

00:10:58

Something along that line, I should have got the exact quote. But it made me think of, you know, judgement. What does judgement do to us? Now let me preface this by saying every moment of our lives practically, we are making a judgement. Do I go with a high fat keto diet, or do I eat low fat, or do I go sugar-free, or do I go junk food all the way?

00:11:26

How many chocolate chip cookies would be good for me today? These are judgements. We're constantly making judgements. What kind of car do I buy? How would this outfit make me look when I'm wearing it today? Judgement, judgement, judgement. So, it's how we're programmed. It's different when we're making judgements for ourselves and our best outcomes. But you can see how easy it is to make a judgement of others.

00:11:51

If you took that moment 'when I feel furious time to get curious' and maybe furious isn't the way, 'when I feel irritated it's time to ask questions.' That's really what it's saying. When you think about dog training, the entire gamut of dog training at one end of the spectrum, we have people who many years ago, it wasn't that long ago, 30, 40, 50 years ago, the main way to motivate a dog was through fear and intimidation.



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

00:12:24

There was no food and no toys involved in dog training. It was, “you do it, or I will correct you.” And just like dog training today, if you had really good timing, training a dog like that, the dog could still have the appearance of being happy, but they were working for the absence of punishment. They weren’t working for a reinforcement.

00:12:42

And you know, I’m happy to say I don’t even know if I know of anybody who trains that way today. There are people who mix a lot of reinforcement in with a lot of physical corrections and intimidation, but I’d like to think there’s nobody out there training that way today.

00:13:01

And me just saying that I just made a judgement. It is not my cup of tea. That’s my judgement. And if you’re listening to this podcast, it’s probably not your cup of tea either. At the other end of the spectrum, we have people who believe that dogs should never be told they’ve made a mistake. Even by withholding a cookie.

00:13:22

On our last repetition of ItsYerChoice, if your dog made a mistake and I told you, “Put your cookie back in your hand and bring that hand down.” they would have said, “That’s wrong. That you need to feed the dog even if they make a mistake because we need to not let them know they’ve made a mistake.” That’s another far end of the spectrum.

00:13:41

And somewhere in the middle would be people who use reinforcement as a lure. So, they put it on a cookie on their dog’s nose to get them to come, or to sit beside them, or to go into a down. And its still reinforcement-based training however, I see it as having limitations because the learning is stunted.

00:14:03

I’ll give you an example, if you ever use a GPS to get someplace, and then you try to find that place without a GPS. Well, the GPS lured you. And so, the learning doesn’t happen the same. What I’m teaching is definitely on the far end, closer to all dogs are always right, but it’s game based. It’s fun. I do believe in teaching the dog how to work through frustration.

00:14:27

So, my point is, there’s so many different types of dog trainers. There’s an old joke that goes like this, “The only thing two dog trainers can agree on is what the third dog trainer is doing wrong.” And sadly, it’s true. It’s a judgement. Okay, let’s train our dog. If you had success with the last round of ItsYerChoice, move on to round number three. If you didn’t, I want you to take a break, either go back to the easier round of ItsYerChoice or play chase me, or get a cookie.

00:14:59

Okay, round three. I want you to ask your dog to sit. You’re going to go out in front. You’re going to take a big step forward. You’re going to open that big hand, and you’re going to pick the cookie up, and you’re going to praise, and then you’re going to slowly move it towards the dog, watching for those paws. See if any movement happens. You’re going to go micro slow, micro slow, and then feed the dog. That one’s fun. Pick up another one and then praise, boom, super fast feed your dog.



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

00:15:37

So, there's lots of ways to train a dog, but I want you to think like I have, how sitting in judgement of your dog's behavior, of someone else's behavior affects not only you but if you've got kids in your house, how does it affect the children? If they see you deeming the dog as wrong because they did something they shouldn't have and getting mad at them or scolding them, then what lessons are we teaching the kids is that if somebody is weaker than us, we can overpower them and dominate them. That's how I really came to settle on the way that I like to train dogs is because I believe we can teach anything through games. It's still going to be very educational. As a matter of fact, I challenged that it's maybe the best way to learn because you're in a high state of focus.

00:16:28

You're in the peak arousal state to learn when you're playing a game with both the people and, for sure the dogs. And so, it's important when you're selecting how you train your dog that you consider the effect that that [training methodology](#) has on the psyche of who you are as a human being.

00:16:49

Do you want to look around at all the things that are wrong with what an animal or somebody in your environment is doing? Okay, let's get that dog out again. And if you had success on level three, let's go to level four. If not, take a step back. We're going to ask the dog to sit. You're going to go out in front, just like before. This time, you're going to pick up your hand, and you're going to hold it maybe a foot away from your dog's nose.

00:17:14

And I want you to pick up the cookie and say "good" and feed as fast as you can. I want you to do five cookies. Pick up the cookie, good, feed, good, feed, good, feed, good feed as fast as you can. Now I want you to pick up another cookie, say "good," and hold it and see what the dog does.

00:17:33

We're looking for paw movement, but this time we're also looking to see how much they lean forward to try to facilitate the cookie coming towards them. Just close your hand around the cookie until they sit back, and then you can feed them.

00:17:46

So, getting back to the grocery store, that one little interaction, what it made me do is decide I need to get business cards made. You guys remember those things you give out? I don't have any. I need to get business cards made. And when I see somebody struggling, or somebody asks me a question, I want to make it a possibility that they don't have to remember my website. They don't have to remember my YouTube page, that we've got solutions.

00:18:15

And hey, if you have questions, you leave me a comment on YouTube, and somebody on my team is going to reach out to you. So that's the one big change that I'm going to make. The second thing is, I decided I'm going to go back to that store this week, and I'm going to see if she's working on the same day, and I'm going to do just that.



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

00:18:35

I'm going to apologize for the things I said. I'm going to ask her how her new puppies are, and I'm going to give her access to my website and let her know, "You might not need it right now. You might not think you need it right now, but down the road, I'd like to be there for you if you have some training challenges".

00:18:55

Okay, let's do another round of ItsYerChoice. This one is super easy. Ask the dog to sit, open up the palm, pick up one cookie. You're going to drop your palm lower. I just want you to drop it, almost to the ground. The palm with the cookies is going to go almost to the ground, and you just hold that one in your hand. If the dog stays in position, you're going to feed them. Do one more just like that.

00:19:18

Pick up the cookies, drop the palm to the ground, pick up one cookie, drop your palm to the ground, see what the dog does. If they hold position, just feed them. So, the lesson we're trying to teach our dog here is that I will bring you your reinforcement. You don't have to come to me. You don't have to move your paws. I will take care of that for you.

00:19:38

And you need to think about that, every time you give your dog a treat, if you've asked them to sit or down, what are they doing the moment that the treat enters their mouth—super, super important.

00:19:51

The last thing I'd like to say about judgement, is if you're listening to this podcast or you're watching any of my videos on YouTube, and you do have some critical information for me, please do not be afraid to reach out to me. Go to our website, click on the info, and you can send a message to me through my team.

00:20:11

I would love to have that dialogue because as far apart as dog trainers are right now from one spectrum to the other, I think with more conversations about how similar we are, we can limit those distances and have success in all training on a very, very similar page. We're all going to have our unique differences, it's true, but that those unique differences don't have to make us adversarial. That's it for Shaped by Dog. I'll see you next time.

Resources:

[Learn how to play ItsYerChoice](#)

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

[YouTube Video: Susan Garrett's Tip for Training Frantic Dogs: Stimulus Control](#) (see the nose bridge)

[Podcast Episode 20: Bridging the Gap Between Blame and Kindness in Dog Training](#)



Why Judgement Does Not Help People or Dogs: ItsYerChoice LWT

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>

