

## Project Calm Dog: Prevent Over Enthusiastic Greetings

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

00:00:10

SG Oh my gosh, you're here! I can't believe you're here! You know, I thought I saw you scrolling over some podcasts, and I was hoping you would stop at mine, and oh my gosh, you did! I am just so excited that you're here and you're just in time! Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. And today, we are talking about calm arrivals for your dog, how your dog can give appropriate greetings. I had a little fun with you there at the beginning.

00:00:32

First, before we dig into how to make sure your dog has a really calm greeting at the front door for anybody that you've included, I want you to think about a part of your daily routine that your dog knows for sure is not dog time. There's no way this is dog time, and you can tell by their reaction.

00:00:54

Now it could be when you're going to the computer or when you're going to shower in the morning, or maybe you're a knitter or somebody who likes to read a book, or when you sit down and watch TV. There's probably a few things that you do that lead up to that.

00:01:09

So maybe you wash up dishes after dinner, and then you go on, you grab your knitting needles and your wool. That's what it's called, right? You can tell I'm a knitter. I'm really technical like that. You grab your wool or yarn; I don't know what it is. It doesn't matter. There are things that your dog knows. There's a pattern. Like I talked about in [episode number 16](#), *the thing before the thing*.

00:01:34

Your dog anticipates patterns of reinforcement and patterns that are not very reinforcing. For example, when I go to have a shower in the morning, I go into my bathroom, and I turn on the shower because it takes a while for the water to heat up. Then I go into the closet, pick out some clothes, and come back into the bathroom. There's no dogs there.

00:01:53

Now, normally when I step into the bathroom, I get at least a couple of dogs going, "Oh, you were in the bathroom. This is going to be fun. I like it when you go to the bathroom. Because you can pat me, you can talk to me. Everything's good." But when I turn on the shower and go into the closet, they know, "This is not dog time." And they're gone. I don't know where they go. They just go out and chillax somewhere because it's not dog time.

00:02:14

It doesn't take many repetitions of me turning on the shower, going into the closet, grabbing some clothes for me to have no dogs in that bathroom. As soon as I turn on the shower, they're gone. It's not dog time.



# Project Calm Dog: Prevent Over Enthusiastic Greetings

00:02:28

So maybe you go to do computer work. You go to maybe sit and learn something from one of my online classes after dinner. So, you have a routine, and your dog will learn this is not dog time. Now think about a part of your daily routine that absolutely is dog time.

00:02:46

Maybe it's when you take them for a walk. Now, there are things that will tip your dog off that this is dog time. Maybe it's a certain time of the day. Part of a routine that happens at the same time of day. And maybe it's you sitting down to lace up your shoes or get your coat. And what happens is, your dog's thing before the thing, they're figuring out 'this is dog time.'

00:03:12

And then they start singing the songs of the people so that everybody knows 'this is dog time.' And then they start maybe spinning and bouncing off you. "It's dog time! It's dog time!" Because they're anticipating this is dog time. And by the time you grab the leash and get to the door, they're super excited because it's dog time.

00:03:34

Now, what has happened when you have a dog that has inappropriate greetings at the front door? They think when a door opens that this is dog time. And it happens innocently enough because when we get a dog, a brand-new dog, it might be when we get a new puppy, it could be when you get a new rescue dog. "Come on! We're excited! We are so excited!"

00:03:58

And so, our first day home, we might rush home and like, "Oh my God! I love you so much!" And then you got to tell your friends, "I got a new dog." "I got a new puppy." "I got a new rescue dog. You got to come see him." "Oh, I'm going to come see him." So, they come through the door. "Where is he? Let me see him! I want to meet him!"

00:04:13

And then you call your family. "I got a new dog. Can you bring the kids? It'd be really good for the dog to meet kids. Can you bring the kids?" So, then the kids come through the door, and then it doesn't take many visits because already we're at three, four times. The dog learns, there's a car door slam, there's footfalls on the sidewalk, the doors open, and then it's dog time!

00:04:33

"It's dog time! Oh my gosh! It's dog time! I'm going to sing this song to my people! I'm going to jump up and down! I'm going to bounce off of you! It's dog time!" And so that gets reinforced over and over and over again when our dogs are new, or we have our new puppy, and then we don't like it. Now, some of you may say, "Oh Susan, it's okay. This is all fine. I love listening to this. But I like when my dog greets me at the door, you know, I love my dog, and I want him to know I love him."

00:05:01

But here's the thing, here's what happens during dog time. It's part of our routine that the dog can predict. And so, if you always take your dog walking within a few minutes of the same time of day, every day, which by the way I don't think is a great idea.



00:05:21

But if you do, your dog's going to start, you know, nosing you, "It's almost dog time. Excuse me. Why are you still sleeping? It's almost dog time! It's almost dog time!" And so, what happens is if that schedule gets bumped off, then [the dog gets more and more anxious](#). "It's dog time! It's dog time! They should be here right now!" And so, the dog might then start extrapolating. That "I hear a car going down the road," or if you live in a condo, somebody's walking by the condo door. "It could be dog time! They might be stopping at us. It could be dog time!"

00:05:53

And so, what you're doing by creating or allowing this kind of front door greeting to carry on is you are actually contributing to the anxiety of your dog. And none of us want our dogs to live with anxiety, none of us. We want our dogs to be calm, right? We love our dogs, and we want them to live their best life ever. And so, we want it to be really clear that it is us intentionally triggering dog time.

00:06:27

My dogs know, when it's dog time. I mean, Tater Salad is just a crack-up; I've mentioned this on podcasts before. He knows in the morning if I'm going in a car or if I'm going to the building versus if I'm going to walk around the field. Walking around the field is not high on his fun to-do list. Going to the building or going in the car any time of day, he could be sound asleep in the middle of the night. And if you pick up a set of keys, "Oh, it's dog time? You're going to the car? It's dog time!" He just loves dog time.

00:06:56

He loves going in the car. He loves those things. So, we want to be the ones that trigger our dogs 'this is dog time.' And by picking up the leash, or if you take your dogs in the car, we may pick up the set of keys and go in the car routinely during the day. But if we pick up a dog bag, that's a signal that we're going somewhere with the dog.

00:07:19

The dog training bag. That's got leashes and dog treats and dog toys in it. We pick that up and put it over our shoulder, and then go to grab the car keys, "Oh, game on. It is dog time." And they know it. So, the goal is that we trigger dog time, which falls on the sidewalk leading up to the front door can't be what triggers dog time. And so, if that's what you've got, then you've got to change it.

00:07:44

Now when John and I, before we moved to this property, we really didn't have many people visit us. And so, we were in control of our comings and goings and the routine that we led; we never had any kind of barking or chaos at the door for anybody. Even if somebody did knock on the door, they would be like, "Hey, someone's at the door." And then they were quiet because that was never dog time.

00:08:07

And how do we get there is, you've heard this before; you've heard this on this podcast. I bet you you've heard this from other trainers. What you may not have registered is the true meaning of what it means when somebody says you should always have [calm arrivals and departures with your puppy](#) or dog. What does that exactly mean? I just want to share the details of it. It means back when I used to leave the house to go to work when I would come back home, I would love to say, "Oh my gosh, I missed you too!" but I didn't.



# Project Calm Dog: Prevent Over Enthusiastic Greetings

00:08:42

I would come home. The first thing I would do is go to the bathroom, because you know I had to do that. And then I would come out, and my dog would always come to the bathroom with me, and I would then come out, and I'd let the dog out to go to the bathroom. Then they come in; the dog or dogs would come in if I had more than one. And then I'd pick up the mail and just quickly sort through. Is anything exciting? Nothing exciting. At this point, now I would go and get changed. So maybe five minutes has gone by. Once I got changed, then I would get their leashes and gather them, and we'd be going for a walk.

00:09:15

And so, it was dog time, and that was okay because it was triggered by my activities. "You know Susan; you didn't say hello. You did nothing. That was kind of rude." No, it wasn't. I just walked in, and I just went about my business. It wasn't dog time. It was just like, "Oh, she's having a shower." "Oh, she's going to work on the computer." "Oh, she's going to read a book." "Those aren't dog times."

00:09:42

No need to start singing the songs of your people. It's not dog time. Now, it's easy for me to say, "Yeah, you can control your comings and goings, but what about the other people?" And this is where we have a problem living in this house because there's a lot of people who come to visit here. And there's a lot of people who particularly are crazy about Tater Salad. And Tater Salad is a rescue dog, and he learned that anytime somebody came through our front door, "It was dog time!"

00:10:13

And so, he came with this built-in wiggle and jump and making this bizarre bull doggy terrier kind of screaming noises when anybody came to the door. And so recently what I did is I said, I can't have this because Swagger was starting to join in on Tater Salad's singing the songs of the people. And the girls knew that it wasn't dog time, but the boys seemed to, you know, think it was dog time. And so, here's what I did. And now I'm going to make it super easy for you to do this too, is I made up signs that look like lost dog signs.

00:10:53

So, when I was making them, I was debating, would somebody think that I'd lost my dog? And I thought, well maybe I should just put a sign, but here's the thing. If I put a sign on my door that looks like a lost dog sign, the people are going to read it. When I just put a sign on my door, the first three people that came to the house, only two of them read it. But when I put up a sign that looked like a lost dog sign, they'll read it. And here's what it says. It says, 'Project calm dog.' on the top. And then it says, 'Please ignore all of the dogs. Don't look at them or talk to them.'

00:11:26

And I had to add that piece because people would come into my house, and they're going, "Okay, got to ignore the dog." And they'd be staring at them and "Oh, I got to..." eye contact. Dogs love eye contact. So please ignore the dog wasn't good enough, I had to explain. Please ignore the dog. In brackets or commas, don't look at them or talk to them when you come into the house. And then I had to remind them at the bottom, you know, that's all of them and maybe give them a time limit. Ten minutes, that's it.



00:11:53

And then you can talk to them, and then you can greet them. And so, the dogs after five or 10 minutes, I make it ten because to be on the safe side, there is no pattern that every single person coming into my house is going to do the same that will trigger when dog time is. And so, that took like a week to change the chaos that happened at our front door when people came to the front door.

00:12:19

Now, if I don't happen to be out in the house and like a delivery truck comes, guess what, those boys still come and bark at the front door. But as soon as I show up, it's over. Now, what used to happen before I put up the signs is people would come into the house, even people they knew, and they'd still be wiggling and jumping and singing the songs of the people, and it just went on and on and on. It didn't stop. Just by posting those signs, it kind of went away. Not kind of, it did, it went away.

00:12:51

Calm arrivals and departures. Everybody that comes in the house just come in and start talking to me; the dogs know that's not dog time. That's not dog time. So that's what we're looking for is to be intentional with the triggers, the thing before the thing, episode number 16, to be intentional with the triggers that you set up to indicate to your dog 'that is dog time.' And that includes [dogs that wake you up in the morning](#).

00:13:20

It shouldn't happen. I've mentioned this before on our podcast, I get up, and I have two and a half to three hours. My dogs just sleep in bed, and I go through my routine, and they learn it's not dog time. If you would like a copy of the sign that I've got posted on the front door, I actually made an extra, well let me tell the truth.

00:13:39

Sharon on the team made an extra copy of the sign. I originally made it. So that it's appropriate for those of you who have a single dog or those of you who live in a multi-dog household, if you'd like to download a copy of that, I'll put the link in the show notes. So that's it for today's Shaped by Dog. Please, for your dog's sake, make an effort to just hold off telling them how much you love them for at least five to 10 minutes when you get home every day. I'll see you next time here on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

[Download Your Door Sign: PDF Poster for Project Calm Dog](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 103: Excited Or Suspicious Dog? Dealing With Your Dog's Emotions](#)

[Podcast Episode 98: Puppy Home Alone: Are You Creating Chaos or Calm?](#)

[Podcast Episode 26: Pro Dog Training Tips to Get Your Puppy to Sleep All Night](#)



## Project Calm Dog: Prevent Over Enthusiastic Greetings

### 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>

