

Dog Questions: Choosing Dog Training Classes, "Naughty Dogs" And More

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG You know how sometimes I ask you for training questions. Well today I put out on social media "Would you like me to answer questions about my dogs or about training?" and overwhelmingly people wanted to know questions or answers about my dogs. So here it goes. "*Susan, why is Tater always the fall guy?*" Tater is often the brunt of jokes on social media because I think Tater secretly is an actor.

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Like he loves getting dressed up. He's always got this look on his face that he's a poster child for a humane society. Why is he always a fall guy? Because like that's who he wants to be. He really is a dorky dog. "*Which of your dogs is the smartest?*" This might surprise a lot of you but the smartest dog in this household I would have to say is Tater Salad. He definitely is pretty brilliant.

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"*If you did not do agility, what dog sport would you do?*" Hmm, that's tough. I've done a lot of dog sports and I do like them all. Definitely I love agility most of all, I loved competition obedience, although I think agility is far more fun for my dogs. You know, not that I didn't make competition obedience a lot of fun. It was fun. Probably I love freestyle, but I didn't like the dancing so much for me. So, um, maybe scent, nose work, some sort of nose work. I do like training that.

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"*Where do your dogs sleep at night?*" Wherever they want. Generally, Swagger sleeps beside my bed unless Kim is here and then he sleeps with her. Tater sleeps with Kim or if there's a fire going, he sleeps in front of the fire. And This! sleeps, okay I'll be honest, she sleeps in bed with me. Long story, but that's true. Momentum likes to sleep right by the front door and Feature now sleeps in the spare bedroom or in the spare bedroom bathroom. That's a little bit sad. 2019, my husband passed away. And when they took him out in an ambulance, Feature has never come back in our bedroom. She used to sleep in our bedroom every night, okay that makes me a little bit sad.

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"*How often do you feed your dogs?*" My dogs get fed twice a day, meals. They get snacks. Definitely they get a bedtime snack. "*What is the naughtiest thing your dog has ever done?*" Well, Tater, there's probably a list. Truthfully, I can't, my dogs don't do naughty things. Like This! sleeping on my bed maybe is naughty, but naughty is in the eye of the beholder, right? Like my dogs are raised with rules being enforced in the way of games so they really don't do bad things. Like they don't steal things from the counter. They don't shred things.

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You know, Swagger when he was five months old, shred a roll of toilet paper. I guess that's probably it. "*How many times a day or a week do you train?*" That really is dependent on how often I'm training you guys. So, I would love to train my dogs every day and I guess technically [they do get trained every day](#) because in every part of life there's some criteria for them.



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If I'm not doing like [free masterclasses](#) for people, I would say I would train at least five days a week with the young dogs that are being trained, but truthfully everyone gets trained every day. *"How much have you ever paid for a dog?"* Oh my, well the last three dogs I've bred myself. You don't want to know how much it cost to do the breeding to produce This!. If you want to know truthfully how much I paid that is like way... Okay yeah, it's a lot of money. But the most I've actually paid, I haven't bought a dog in a lot of years, so I think it was like \$1,800.

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"Do any of your dogs hate working?" You might say Tater hates depending on what you're doing, but you could make him like pretty much anything but no, none of my dogs hate to work. They love to work because work is play around here. Right. *"What is each of your dog's favorite activity?"* Well Tater's is sunbathing for sure or lying by the fire. He loves a car. If somebody pulls up in a car and he is loose, he will go all through a door first of all, or he'll jump in the trunk or if the doors and the trunk are closed, he will go through an open window. Crazy about cars.

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Swagger is anything to do with work. He's always got a toy in his mouth because he is always ready for work. Feature I would say probably swimming. And Momentum I don't know maybe running in the fields or swimming. I would say all of my dogs other than Tater their number one favorite thing is working with me. But other than working with me, it would be Swagger would be working with anybody. Somebody drives up, a complete stranger drives up and pulls out. Working trumps anything. And then for the rest of them, This! definitely herding the other dogs is her favorite.

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"What is the best number of dogs to own?" I think that's a personal thing. For me I think the ideal number is three, but I don't know that I'll ever have only three again. *"Why was your first dog a Terrier?"* I rode horses, and I rode dressage and around the barn everybody who was an English style rider they had Terriers. This was back in the eighties. Funny enough anybody who rode Western had an Australian Shepherd. I don't know if that's still the same way. But that's how I started with Terriers, and I still love Terriers. And someday I'll have another one.

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"What has been your biggest challenge training each of your dogs?" Hmm. Geez. You forget them. Well for me, I just you know, probably behavior problems are the ones that I spend the most time on because I want the dogs to be happy and the ones that are the most prevalent to me are the ones that I've most recently worked on. So, for This! it would be [overcoming her confidence](#) around people like men, people she doesn't know, children. *"Do your dogs have dewclaws?"* Yes. All of my dogs have dewclaws.

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"What are three words you would never say about dogs?" I don't know. I would never say anything about dominance or spite or resentment, a phrase "he knows better" I would never say that. Okay. That was a fun question. *"What do you look for when you go to a training class?"* Okay. That's a good question. You're listening to this podcast you know [the way we train](#). If there was a training class that trained with kindness first and they were into shaping behaviors and they had an understanding of behavior modification, that would be ideal.



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If I couldn't find that, then it would be what's closest and wouldn't mind if I did my own thing. And then I would be very protective of my dog. So, if they trained with harsh correction, I wouldn't go there because I just don't want my dogs to be around that kind of energy. And if they had like a free for all that the dogs were loose, and I wouldn't go for that.

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So, if somebody asked me what would be the best class to train I would say you know, one of our online classes and then whatever's cheapest in your neighborhood to just get your dog exposed provided there isn't heavy corrections. Right. Just go and do your own thing and as long as it's a happy atmosphere that's the most important thing. *"What is your favorite quality about each of your dogs?"* Okay. Probably Swagger it's his devotion to me. Feature, she was just an easy dog to travel with. You could take her anywhere. She, although she didn't like other male dogs. You could leave her in a hotel, and she wouldn't bark. She was settled anywhere and super easy dog to travel with.

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It's funny enough all the things that I love about my dogs are kind of similar. Like they all make me laugh and that's a quality I love about all of them, but they all make me laugh for different reasons. This! definitely because she loves hard. Like she loves you, but she's very passionate about she's in your face and licky-licky. Momentum is like a snuggle bug. And I love how she plays with other dogs. And Tater, it's impossible not to love Tater. He is such a dork and such a comedic and just, you could take a hundred pictures of Tater a day and you would find something to laugh about in each one. Swagger thinks so too. Okay.

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"Do you do jump grids to perfect jump skills?" I definitely believe in doing jump grids, but I think it's more than to perfect jump skill. They just teach so much about your dog reading distances and reading height and yeah, there's so much. So yes, I love jump grids. *"What challenge do you add first when building a skill, handler speed or dog speed?"* So, D.A.S.H. right. We've talked about [D.A.S.H.](#) on the podcast. D.A.S.H., so I want the dog's drive Desire first. Then I add the Accuracy, then add their Speed. So, I would always get the dog's speed and then the handler speed could be a distraction. So, I would add that after the dog had their speed.

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"How do you choose the breeder and puppy? Do you research the diseases of the line?" Yes, I did a podcast about This!. I think it's [number 36](#) is how I selected This! and I talked a little bit about how I select the breeder when I'm selecting a breeder and yes, health is my number one concern. *"What do you do when your dog is in heat?"* Dog periods need to be talked about more as they should. So, when my dogs are in heat, when I have an intact male, obviously I have to separate them and I try to get the intact male, like during the five or seven days that they're intently in heat, I'll get the intact male you know, out of the house so that they don't go crazy.

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And generally, like maybe we have an apartment on site. Sometimes I've gone over there. I've stayed in my motor home with the male or the female, or maybe just slept in the spare room. And the female has got, obviously they have their pants on that day, I think I don't do anything typical, but I don't spay my females until they're like nine years old.



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And the only reason I neutered Swagger is because he had a heart problem. And so, I didn't want him to be around the females in season and getting too excited. *"Is it true that agility dogs are fasted prior to competing? Is this something you do?"* That is not something I've ever heard of. And no, I have never fasted my dogs before competing.

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I wouldn't give them a full stomach of food if I knew I was up early I would maybe give them a smaller meal or get up super early to feed them two hours earlier if I was like up early in the morning. But no, I don't fast my dogs. *"Who was the loudest?"* That is no competition. That is Tater. Tater has got the loudest bark and he uses it most often, especially if people are coming in the house because he needs to announce to everybody that he should have his butt scratched first absolutely.

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And I think there's two people asked me who, which dog is the loudest. Isn't that funny? So those are all of your questions. Thank you for asking them. I think I've copied them all. Oh, wait. Here's the one I didn't get to. *"Do you know if social learning/copying works? And how did Tater get to you?"* Uh, I believe that social learning does work. I haven't used it as a form of training, but I definitely have seen my dogs learn from each other. And I've talked about [borrowing dog's confidence](#) and like if I'm training This!, teaching her something new and she's a little worried, I might have her hop it in a Hot Zone and get Swagger to do it and then, and just for her to see that it's fun.

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And I don't think she copies him, but just to put her at ease and get her away from the pressure of, if she feels any pressure of doing something. How did we get Tater? We did [a podcast](#) about that. So, I'll put a link in the show notes about how Tater happened to be. He was a family pet who ate a few couches and ate a few personal items and at 15 months it wasn't slowing down and they couldn't walk him because he was too strong, and he was a bit of a menace. And so, he ended up here as Kim's dog. And then Kim had a dog who really didn't get along with Tater. So, he's Kim's dog four days a week and he's my dog well seven days a week. So, Kim and I it's like I have four and a half dogs and she has half a dog. Thank you for your questions. That's it for this time and I'll see you next time here on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Join in our Free Online Dog Agility Masterclass](#)

[Blog Post: All About Dogs Sleeping in the Bedroom](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 83: The Dog Training You Do When You're Not Dog Training](#)

[YouTube Video: Normalizing Imperfection in Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 57: Why Balance Breaks Fast Track Your Dog Training \(D.A.S.H.\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 36: Puppy Selection: How I Do It and Why I Didn't This! Time](#)

[Podcast Episode 111: How An Anchor Dog Can Help Overcome Your Dog's Anxiety Or Reactivity](#)

[Podcast Episode 78: How to Train a Rescue Dog with Behavior Problems](#)



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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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