

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG Pop quiz. If I was to ask you to pick three words that you and your dog would both say defines or describes your dog training, what three words would they be? I'll give you a second to think about that. Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. I'd like to think that my dogs would pick fun as definitely one of them. Kind and clear. Those would be my three words.

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What were the three words that you would pick that your dogs would agree would be the three words that would describe that the training that you have between them. Now, if you've been watching this podcast or if you're brand new to it I'm going to let you in on what is my mantra to dog training. And it is evolved and been influenced by the people who've influenced my life, and particularly Wayne Dyer has been a huge influence on this mantra that I have.

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And it is this: **Our dogs are doing the absolute best they can with the education we've given them in the environment that we are asking them to perform in.**

If you buy into this, then I believe this becomes a gateway for you to have the most amazing relationship with a dog that you've ever had.

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And it also becomes a gateway to have the best trained dog you've ever had. Because you aren't going to look at the dog as doing something wrong. You're going to look at the dog and go, "Wow. Uh, where did I screw up here? Like, is it the education that I've given you or did I set you up for failure by putting you in the wrong environment?"

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So not only does this become a gateway for you to have a better relationship with your dog and a better-behaved dog? I believe that in turn, if you practice this daily with your dog it can't help but influence the way you look at the people in your life. And so, you're going to show up in a different way for the people in your life. Be it your family, your friends, your coworkers, the people that you lead, any kids that you have in your life. And when it affects the way you show up in this world guess what. It affects the world.

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One person at a time, it affects the world. And that's why I strongly believe that the way that we approach our dog training has a massive impact on the world. And it doesn't matter if you're sitting there going "Oh, Susan like you know, you're a professional, this isn't gonna work for me."

We've had thousands of students go through our online program and it works no matter what breed you have, no matter where you're starting, you just have to buy into the fact that the dog is nothing more than a mirror that reflects back the teaching that we've given to them. We are teaching them. It's not like they magically arrive and have this education instilled robotically into their brain.



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So, if you get a brand-new puppy and you go out shopping and you walk into this house, or it could be a rescue dog, you walk back into your house and you see bits of a dog bed shredded every step as you're walking into your home and you look at this dog bed and then you - do you then say, "Aw man, how could I have been better for this dog?" Or do you say, "What did you do?! Do you know how much that bed cost me?!"

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Because one is saying, "Um, yeah, I believe that the dog is doing the best they can with the education I've given them in the environment I've put them in" and I went out and left them in this big open environment and you know maybe they're a little anxious, maybe they whatever, they weren't confident in this environment, and they just shredded the bed. Or do you say "No! Heck no, Susan. That doesn't apply. That doesn't apply to three toed you know clown chasing dogs."

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I mean, I've trained a lot of different breeds of dogs personally, but I've coached many, many more people. There's probably isn't a breed of dog that I haven't helped somebody coach, and it applies, it applies. You can bring out the best in a dog if you buy into it. So, what I'm really suggesting is that we bring mindfulness, the practice of mindfulness into dog training.

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Which means we are present for the interactions that are going on between the dog and I. That we are present for the interactions that go on between your dog and yourself.

That you are aware of where you fallen down in that equation and that you understand that it's an empowering statement. It means that if you've given that dog the best education you know how you want a better trained dog.

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If you want a better relationship with that dog, you just have got to go out and get a better education. And I'd like to dive into what that looks like in just a minute, but let's get back to mindfulness. Mindfulness is to be present for your impact as a human in the life of that dog.

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So, think about what is the focus your dogs have for you or when do they have that focus? So, was that focus offered like only when you have some food in your hand or is that focus only offered when you go \*sigh\* and make a big sigh? For me and my dogs, I've got their focus any time I want to do something with them.

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And sometimes when they want to do something with me, something that is expected, you know what we always go for a walk before noon and it's getting really close to noon we haven't gone for a walk. Yes, in fact dogs can predict regular occurring behaviors. And when you decide to not do one and don't fill it in with another exciting one, they're going to remind you of it.

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And so that's the impact that I have in my dog's life. That their focus comes from the relationship we have, the relationship we have comes from the training that we've done.



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## Being Present With Empathy In Dog Training

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And all I ask is that you be present for that impact, the impact that you have in your dog's life. Are you someone that your dogs revere, that they adore and respect, or are you someone they fear?

That they spend their life trying to figure out what's not going to make you unhappy. They don't want you to be unhappy so they will do what they can do to make sure that happens. And I think that's a pretty horrible way for a dog to live.

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Our goal is to shape the dogs in our lives so that they understand what makes me happy is exactly what's going to make you happy. So, think about why you decided to have a dog in your life anyway. Um, is it just you know 'I love dogs, so I'd like them to learn to just behave so that I can go about lead my life and they are going to behave, they're not going to cause trouble, I'm not going to come into that exploded dog bed', 'They're not going to pee in the house, they're going to behave, that's why I want a dog in my life'?

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Or do you want a dog who has an amazing life that feels that they have an enriched life that they get you know, age or breed appropriate exercise, that they are an integral part of what's going on in your world. And I think the difference between those two is the [training approach](#) that you take.

And the training approach actually I look at traditional training approach, let's say you want to teach a behavior, in the past the behavior could be taught with a tidbit of food to lure the dog to what you want. The - 'take a sit' goes above the head the dog was into sit, or it could be you just maneuver the dog into the position you want.

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Pull up on a collar and push down on the butt. And it's, here's the amazing things about dogs. They learn despite. Because they learn in spite of the methodology. And because they learn, they're actually ending up reinforcing the people for the approach that they took.

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But if you take the right approach, it's like you suddenly realize 'this dog is just freaking brilliant'. So, if you've taking your dog to a dog training class recently, think about the curriculum. First-class curriculum.

You might get this homework sheet to go home, and they'll say, "Um, we're going to practice this sit." depending on how they taught you to do it, hook you over the head or push up pull down. "I want you to practice this X number of times a day and X number of days a week, so that we get a pattern that the dog will learn to understand."

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"And then we want the dog to understand to stay not move but stay. We want the dog to come when we call them, to respond when we say their name. To jump when we say because if they don't, we're going to have to remind them that we need to be listened to. Maybe give them a little collar correction."

All right. All of those behaviors think for example we have a game called [Crate Games](#) and what we've done by teaching things in a crate is we've [manipulated the dog's environment](#). So, there aren't many choices.



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What can a dog do in a crate? They can sit, stand, lie down. So, we're going to [engage](#) them. So, they're not going to want to lay down. So very likely that environment motivates them to do one of two things, sit or stand. And lo and behold, when we're presenting food high in at the back of the crate they go "Well in order to get this food, it would be better if I sat in one place." and then we load up the food.

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So, here's what that looks like, that the crate provides the environment, the correct environment that motivates or inspires responses from the dog. A very limited number of responses.

And then the human, us, we [gain value in the dog's eyes](#) because we select the responses that we love and present a reinforcement to them. Which means we suddenly have impact that that adoration, the respect, because all that we do is let them do their thing and reward what we like.

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Then the food or in this case the food, but whatever reinforcement you're using, that's what motivates or inspires a repeat. Now what most people use food for, is they use food to motivate and inspire the initial response, but then where's the impact? The impact isn't with the human, the impact is with the food.

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The food has the biggest impact on the dog, "Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh." It's all about the food. You fall further and further out of the part, the picture of importance. Okay. So, with Crate Games we get a dog who wants to sit, and they select sit over and over again. And lo and behold, guess what? We start opening the crate door and they learn what a release word is.

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And so, they learn that you sit until you hear this word. We don't have to correct them. We don't have to tell them 'No', we don't have to tell them 'Stay'. They learn 'you sit until you hear this word'. Now this isn't the first time I've ever taught— I don't teach sit normally this way, but you could, and I will teach you how another way that you can shape without using a lure of food, you can shape a sit. But if you want it to teach it within the context of a crate you can, and I have done it in the past.

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So now we have a dog who wants, who is motivated to want to sit and wait until they hear a release word. And we can now use that crate to introduce different distractions. So, they understand what a stay means. Stay means yes you need to stay when I present a ball bouncing ball, you have to stay when the kids run by, you have to stay when there's another dog out there. And what happens if they don't? Do we say "Ah-ah! No! Wrong!?" No. All that we do is we close the crate door. And what do they do when we close a crate door? They offer the sit again which causes us to open the door.

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So, it's the dog creating responses that makes changes to the environment which results in inspiring the responses we want again and again and again. Now, what does that give us? When you live this, you have a dog that when the driver comes and you open your door the dog knows, "Oh yeah, doors. I don't go running out those doors." But when you teach these behaviors in a vacuum and in isolation, "You must not move." They don't understand what it means. They don't understand what stay means.



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And they certainly aren't going to understand not to go bolting out a door because you've done these moves in isolation in the context of a classroom where you actually shut them down a little bit. When you gave them the first "ah-ah" wrong collar correction, now they get more self-protected. They get more worried about making the mistake rather than "what can I offer?". And so that's where the environment, the way that the approach we make the environment is always telling the dog what you should offer.

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Versus the dog and the other suggested way that you could go dog training. The dog is worried more about pleasing you. "I just want to do what you want, and I don't know what this means or what this is. I just want to do what you want." That's not what I want.

Dog training is magical. It works amazing when we inspire the dog to want what we want. They offer it, we reinforce it.

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They go, "You like that? I like that. We both like it." That's when you have impact. That's when you become revered in your dogs' life. So, I encourage you to examine that the training that you're doing. I understand that if you're listening to this podcast maybe you don't have all the answers to every scenario. "Susan now, okay. Now I get it. I know how to teach a sit. How do I then teach it down? Or how do I teach my dog to jump over my legs or do a trick or anything else using this methodology?"

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I promise you, if you [start at the beginning of these podcasts](#), there's lots of videos that will give you those insights for you. But the question that I'd like you to just think about, what were those three words that described the training you currently are doing with your dog? And would your dogs pick those same three words? What's— is there congruency in your life in the way you train your dog and in the way you want to show up for people?

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Is there a gateway [that becomes a domino](#) that allows you to show up in a different way, just because of the way you choose to train your dog? And you might be thinking, "Oh Susan, I just can't buy in that this is possible, but I've been doing it this way for more than 20 years." Sure, I started my dog training journey 30 years ago doing exactly what many of you are currently doing today, but I realized how much work it was to get my dog to understand what I wanted to get them to buy in. And the relationship it created was one of intimidation. I wasn't heavy handed.

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I wasn't really correcting the dog. But my dogs learned to become more afraid of what I might do if they made a mistake versus becoming the dog who freely chose to offer me behaviors so I could select the ones that I wanted. So, I could grow that trust and that bond. How do you want to show up to your dog? Because that has the potential to [define how you show up in this world](#). It starts with dog training. It allows you to be congruent.

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And when you're congruent, you're just rehearsing the behaviors you want for yourself from yourself to everyone that you meet. I hope this makes sense. I would love to get your feedback on this episode.



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I hope it expresses what I want, and I would love to have your questions because I want to see the world training this way.

I want everyone to embrace the belief that it is possible to have amazing behaviors from your dog. That people who say, "Ah Susan, I just want my dog to behave." Then it's a relationship.

Having a dog is creating a relationship. How many relationships do you have that "Oh, I really don't want to put anything into this, I just want you to do what I want and then I can go about my life, and we can connect once in a while."? What kind of relationship is that?

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"I want to raise a kid but can I 80/20 this so I can just do 20% of the work and really have, you know, a kid that turns out great." What kind of a relationship would you have with that child and how great would that child really be compared to how great they could be if you really bought into—?

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This could change your life by showing up in the way you want to show up for everyone in your life. By raising a child this way or by training a dog this way. I just like you to think about it and share your feedback with me. Come on over to YouTube and leave a channel or drop us a line.

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I promise you I will read each and every comment you leave. I'll see you next time here on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

[Crate Games Online](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 57: Why Balance Breaks Fast Track Your Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 90: Premack, Dog Training and Transfer of Value](#)

[Podcast Episode 5: What is Shaping And How Can Dogs Shape Us](#)

[Podcast Episode 56: 5 Simple Questions to Guide Your Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 100: Dog Training: The Most Important Lesson I Can Share](#)



### 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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