

How To Teach A Dog Stay WITHOUT Luring, Collar Pops Or Using The Word "Stay"

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG Do you ever wish your dog could just sit still for just a little longer, like when you're eating dinner and you ask them to go on their mat and they keep jumping back and forth from the table to their mat, or maybe you put them in their bed so you can answer the door and then within two seconds they're jumping all over the guests.

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Well, if that's you then today is your day because that is the topic of today's podcast. Or rather I'm calling this a Masterclass because this is a full on spread of information. I'm packing it in in today's podcast. Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. Today I'm going to talk about the two main ways people teach a stay behavior to their dog.

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I would guess like 99% of the world teach it one of two ways. And how what I do is a hundred percent different. The two ways are generally focused either on luring a behavior or some form of intimidation: mild, moderate, or severe intimidation. We're going to get into that but first I want to share with you some of our podcasts' reviews.

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I haven't done this for a little while. These came in in December and some in January and I just want to give a shout out to the people who are taking the time to write these reviews because I really appreciate them. I read each and every one of them. All of you left five stars and I so appreciate that. By the way, if you're listening to this now on Spotify, I think you can start leaving ratings and reviews on [Spotify](#).

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This first one is from *pjs and 3 dogs*. I love your names. They're such creative names. And *pjs and 3 dogs* writes "This! (Yeah. It's the name of my puppy. That's not what she meant, or he meant.) Every episode is jam packed with quality information on teaching you to be the person your dog thinks you are. Episode number 122 is a personal favorite. Thank you, Susan for sharing your wealth of experience for the humans that love their dogs." Hey, this one is going to be somebody's favorite. I promise you that. This one is going to be more jam packed than any jam packed.

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Next, we got from *Squirrelrabbits*. I bet your dog loves that name. *Squirrelrabbits* writes "Susan Garrett is both a great dog trainer and a great teacher. Also, she's kind of hilarious." Aw, thank you. Closet, want to be comedian. Also, "I have listened to every episode several times. Highly recommend." Thank you *Squirrelrabbits*. And I think your name might be one of my favorites.

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And finally, from *Callie and Savannah*. "Fantastic, insightful, humorous. I'm a small animal veterinarian and just recently stumbled across this podcast through YouTube. Hands down my favorite podcast now!" Thank you, *Callie and Savannah*.



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“Susan has a gift for teaching and explaining the science of positive reinforcement in ways I've never heard before. I signed up for her Home School the Dog program as we now have a new puppy. Her program is blending beautifully with our local training and is giving me such a deeper understanding of my relationship with my puppy. I feel inspired and energized after each podcast. Thank you, Susan! I'll be recommending your podcast to new puppy clients and my vet students.”

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Thank you. Thank you. And thank you guys. I love reading your reviews, please take a moment if you will and leave a review for us on your favorite podcast platform. Today is all about what people might call 'control behaviors' or stay or wait or getting duration of our dog holding still. I've got so many references for you. I actually, for the first time ever had to make myself a list. A list, that's how many I've got for you. First, I want to talk about the way I was taught to teach stays and I bet it's not unlike the way you guys were taught.

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So, the first way was you know, we got the dog to sit, and this was with a wee puppy. The first few lessons of puppy class. We get the dog to sit and then you get your leash, and you hold your leash in the crook of your thumb and your hand. And you try to pivot out in front of your dog sitting there and you put this hand in front of them and you keep saying the word “stay, stay, stay”. Which means nothing to the dog, right?

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And what's this dog or puppy eventually going to do? They might back up like “Woah, you're in my invisible bubble of pressure.” And then you're going to say “Ah-ah” maybe very lightly and give them little mild correction “Ah-ah. No”. Give them a little pop, “Ah-ah” that's not what you're supposed to be doing. Now with most dogs it won't take long before even mild intimidation takes them out of their thinking brain, which is the forebrain, and puts them into their lizard brain which is flight, fight, or freeze. They can't fight. They can't fly. Let's face it not many dogs can fly. They can't run away. And so, what they do is they freeze.

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And you think you've done a great job because “Oh, look my dog is staying.” but really, they're paralyzed. Are they learning a behavior or are they just learning to not be wrong? Because if you're wrong you won't like what happens to me as your owner. “Can we just go back to the TV and the couch where you share your popcorn with me? Cause I kind of like you better there.” So that was the first way I was taught.

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Now, this next way is using a lot more food and you can use a clicker with this method, and you give your dogs a cookie. And I used to teach this, years ago as well. Where you would give the dog a cookie, maybe lure them into a sit and then say good or click and give them a cookie and then keep giving them cookies until you want them to leave. And then you give them a word that means now you can leave, and you back up and lure them out of that sit.

Now from my point of view, if you lure a vegan chocolate chip cookie above my head and then you just keep feeding me little vegan chocolate chip cookies, then I'm going to just stay there “Yeah, yeah, yeah. Aaahhh, cookie, cookie, cookie.”



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And then all of a sudden you back up and you got another one and you lure me forward. “Oh yeah, I'm coming. I'm coming. I'm coming.” But it's going to take a while for that learning to really sink in for many dogs. There'll be some brilliant dogs. My dogs, the first dogs that I tried this with my Jack Russell Terrier, she picked it up pretty quick. But there's better ways.

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And so, I want to share with you the way I teach a duration behavior, it basically comes down to two things. I'm teaching two things that I want my dog to have complete clarity and understanding of. And that is, I want my dogs to understand what to do and when it's over.

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So those are two cues, two behaviors. **What to do:** it might be a sit. “I want you to sit.” And **when it's over:** is the release. And the release, I use a word and I strongly encourage you to use a word that you don't use in your everyday language. Even if you've been using a word for forever. If it's a word you use in your everyday language, please I would strongly encourage you to make it something more salient to the dogs. Something they don't really hear that often.

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What to do. When it's over. The gap in between what you do and when it's over, that's called duration. That is how long we want our dog to stay there. Well, people try to build duration. Duration is a gap. It's nothing. You don't focus on duration. That gap grows as a byproduct of understanding what to do and when it's over. And if you don't have a dog who understands what to do and when it's over, all the focus on duration can do is confuse the dog or put them into fight, flight, or freeze.

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So, they just go, “Eh, I don't know what you want. I am a little confused here.” Duration is just a byproduct of a dog really, really understanding what it is you want them to do. So, our focus isn't on duration. Let me share with you what that looks like for me when I'm training my dogs. So, I start this as a puppy.

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And you've got to recognize first of all, there's levels of the dog holding a position for a duration. So, the levels might be, I'm just introducing. I'm introducing and then it goes ‘now my dog, I've got the introduction, now my dog is in kindergarten.’ So, we do kindergarten then we go to grade school, that's quite a few grades. Then we go through high school, several more grades. Ooh, now we're going off to university or what my American friends might call college. And after that we might go to a PhD. You see we keep adding levels. So, I've got my PhD.

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Woo, now I've got a professional dog who understands what to do and when it's over. And after a professional I'm going up to an elite expert. So, there's a lot of professional dog trainers, but there's a very small percentage who I would consider elite experts. And those are the levels that we have to teach our dog these control behaviors.

Now what are control behaviors? A sit, a down, maybe a stand. For most of my students it's either sit or down and eventually they'll add a stand. And the behavior of staying on a mat or what we call the Hot Zone. I like that to be a raised dog bed.



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So those are really what we're talking about, it's like we're talking about having an amazing family pet. That's what we're talking about. So, I have four games that I use as part of this training. Four games that I use to convey all of this training to my dog.

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So, it starts first of all, with something that I call the **Collar Grab**. This is your first reference, podcast [episode number 18](#), it's all about four games that you can play with bitey puppies. And in there, I talk about the Collar Grab. Now, I love the Collar Grab because I just put tons and tons of value or conditioning into 'you see a hand reaching for you, you extend your neck and give the collar'.

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So, you do this tons and tons, you can't do it too much because the Collar Grab is a game you might need in an emergency for your dog. So please put in tons and tons into the Collar Grab. So that would be the base level.

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So, the first thing I do with a puppy, I might start this when I have a litter of puppies here, they all go home with this game. And I get them playing tug and I get them really loving the game of tug. And then I just pause for a moment. And that moment allows a choice, and the puppy will bite at the toy, and I might pick the toy up and put it against my hand and cover it with my hands.

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They might bite. And as soon as that puppy bounces off me and gets away that produces the toy. And so, I'm building a relationship between 'you do a behavior, you get a reward.' And when I give the reward, I say the word "get it". So now let's set this up. Puppy does a behavior; I say the word "get it" and I produce what they want.

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What is that reward for? And you can say, "Well, it's for the puppy jumping at it." when I say the word "get it". Really, it's for the pause. **I'm rewarding the pause**. So, at first the pause is the puppy backs away. Eventually I'm going to wait until the puppy might go into a sit or a down, and then I might pull it out and see if they're going to hold that sit or a down.

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And if they don't, I put it back and very quickly they go back into a sit and then I can bring out the toy. I now have established what you should do. And then the sight of the toy isn't releasing you. You have to wait until you hear the word or the phrase that tells you when it's over. 'When what's over?' The behavior you're doing.

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The toy is now a little mini distraction. So, if you go to podcast [episode number 24](#), I talked about the distraction intensity index. This is the first time I introduced a little mini one, just the sight. They might get out of their sit, I hold it back on my belly, they go right back into the sit, I present it and then I give them the word, the phrase "get it" which means they can grab the toy.

So, **I'm rewarding the pause**. So that's the first thing I do when I introduced my puppies.



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And this is just a fun game. There's a very, very low barrier of them being correct on this one. Because anytime we're teaching a dog in particular a puppy, we want the correct to be easy the incorrect to be hard. That is how we grow behaviors. And I talked all about that in podcast [episode number 44](#), all about arranging coincidences. So, it just appeared like a coincidence to that puppy like “Oh, I just did that and then my magic toy appeared? Woo. I like this game!” Arranging coincidences for the puppies, right?

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So, what I've got now is a puppy who understands if they do something they get permission to do something else. So classic Premack principle, right? And so, I spoke about this in podcast [episode number 11](#), the power of permissions. Please review that podcast. It's such an important one. So now I have a puppy who understands the power of permission and a word that means ‘you are done’. The next game I introduce is the game **ItsYerChoice**.

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And if you have not been taught ItsYerChoice by myself, please check out the link in the show notes or check out the link in the description here on YouTube. And I will put a link to the [ItsYerChoice Summit](#), which is another hugely valuable series of videos that will teach you the correct way to play ItsYerChoice.

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So, I have a dog who understands “get it” to get a toy. With ItsYerChoice I'm teaching the word ‘get it’ or ‘search’ for food on the floor. I now have two words that tell my dog or puppy, when it's over, search or get it. And guess what? There was no luring. It was completely, every single time, the dog's choice. All I did was arrange coincidences. And so, they did exactly what they wanted to do and voila, they got rewarded for the gap. They got rewarded for the gap by the permission to do what they want, which is get their cookie or get their tug toy.

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So now I have a dog who has great understanding of the word “search”, a great understanding of the word “get it”. They have a tug; they have a pause in my tug. They have a pause when I'm presenting food, I can pick up food. Now they've been rewarded many, many times for sit. I've not even said the word sit to this puppy. But I could teach the word sit in the game of tug. You may or may not have done that, but we move on to the next game. And this is **Crate Games**.

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And for those of you who have not got Crate Games online listen, this masterclass today in the form of a podcast, it probably could sell for \$50, maybe \$97. I don't know. For the price of \$19.99, you can [get Crate Games online](#) and I promise you it is worth about a hundred times that amount to you and your dog. Because we're teaching the dog the fundamentals of sit and hold position for a longer period of time when there's nothing out there that you want.

So, up ‘til now there's been a toy that the dog wants or there's a cookie that the dog wants. Now we're transitioning to Crate Games where the door is open and nothing out there is what you want but I still want you to hold position. Now, how long are they going to hold position? It depends on the age and stage, right?



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The stage being the experience of that puppy. That experience being, are they an intro, kindergarten, or are they are in the lead expert level? The challenge is, so many people, you go to local dog training classes, and I was there myself, where they want you to start growing a one-minute stay, a three-minute stay.

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You know what if you focus only on the understanding of the criteria of the behavior: **what you want**, what the dogs should do, the what to do **and when it's over**, if you just focus on the what to do then you could have a one minute and a three minute stay without the dog continually trying to leave. Without the dog being stressed and their ears pinned back and their mouth open and they're getting walleyed, and they're stress panting and staring at the ceiling.

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This isn't something you need to teach as a militant formal behavior guys. It can be taught as a series of games and taught brilliantly well. As I mentioned in podcast [episode number 117](#), what's more important than a training session, where I explained why my dogs after 30 years of agility still don't break a start line. Why? It's important. It's because it's built into the fabric of our relationship together. And that's what I'm asking you to do.

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So, we've got the **Collar Grab** and that's coming up in a second. We've got the **Tug**, we got the **ItsYerChoice**, we've got the **Crate Games**. Now we've got behavior that we can grow. And the thing that people miss out on Crate Games is they don't grow that duration of the dog just chilling in their crate.

Why do I love Crate Games? I mean, there's just so many reasons, but one of the biggies is, if you're teaching a dog a sit beside you, let's say whether you're using cookies and click and released or you're doing it with a leash and a pop, the dog's choice has to be met by your physical manipulation.

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So, either you're going to “come on back here and sit”. So, you recue them to sit, and you need to go and check out podcast [episode number 19](#), my pet peeve and how cues reinforce our dogs. So, if the dog breaks a sit and then you say “sit” and the word sit has been built up with reinforcement then you really are giving them reinforcement for breaking their sit.

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That's why I love Crate Games. You don't have to manipulate them. You don't have to bring them back to position. You just close the door. And you don't slam the door in their face because you're looking for the moment, they go to lower their head that tells you they're about to get up out of their sit and you just close the door.

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No big deal, easy peasy lemon squeezy, the dog gets the understanding just like they did with the tug game. They get the understanding “Oh, if I do this then I can get out and have fun with you.” But then as part of Crate Games they choose to want to be in Crate Games. Dog training is all about the dog making a choice. If the dog chooses to break duration, they're telling you, that's feedback on your training. Absolutely in no way shape or form should that dog be corrected or punished.



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All right, please, please, my favorite podcast episode that I've done is podcast [episode number 100](#), please review that.

Because if you believe like I do that our dogs are doing the best they can with the education we've given in the environment we've asked them to perform, then either we've over faced them because we've given them too big a challenge.

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We thought they were in their PhD program but really, they were [only in grade school](#). We over faced them. Their actions, their choice to leave, their choice to break it off before they heard their release cue, is feedback to you. There's a lack of understanding. Either the lack of understanding of the criteria of the behavior you're asking for or the lack of understanding of when it's over.

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Have you really, really taught when it's over really well? Have you really, really taught the sit really well? If you go to podcast [episode number 85](#), I talked about the criteria of a sit and that one you can do while you're walking your dog. You can just listen along with that one. Because it's a walk, learn, and train.

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So, what is your criteria? Our dogs can only be as consistent as we are. If you are not consistent, it's impossible for our dogs to be consistent. Which is why I love Hot Zone. But people replacing Crate Games with Hot Zone has created a lot of problems because dogs might just hang out in their Hot Zone all day long. And then they get off and then they get on and then they get off and then you tell them to get on.

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But the amount that they've gone on and off on their own would probably outnumber the amount you've cued them and rewarded them and release them. So probably outnumbered it over their you know, six months probably by hundreds. And so, they tend to forget that this is a behavior that you've cued.

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Versus Crate Games where we've given a clear criteria and a release and some dogs will choose to go in their crate and that's okay. Because you release them at the door, you release them in the car, you release them out of their crates in the morning, or when you've gone out for the day. My dogs are older and the only time they're ever in their crate is in the car, but they're still getting released.

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Therefore, as long as you're using Hot Zone you've got to constantly go back and say, “Hey today we're just going to do a rehearsal of you're going to do this and you're going to wait until I give you a release word.”

And you're going to build that duration intentionally. Have a set goal and build it intentionally. Now you've worked all through the stages of Crate Games. Your dog is a star. You've got to at least university level with your dog.

You've transferred to Hot Zone and the first place to start is - go to [Perch Work \(Pivots and Spins\)](#). And I give you the starts on how to teach a Hot Zone there, right in that video.



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So now you've got Hot Zone. You're building it up exactly the same way you did Crate Games except we don't care if the dog is in a sit, down, or stand in Hot Zone, as long as four paws are on the bed. What happens if the dog chooses to come off? That's where Collar Grab comes in. I just take the collar and I will either hold it and see what my dog's choice is, or I'll gently guide them back onto the bed.

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The long history of reinforcement for me taking the collar means it is not in any way shape or form a problem to the dog. It will only become a problem if you aren't present to the fact that your dog just made a mistake. That is feedback on your training. You need to take it on board. Now, what about when do we tell our dogs stay?

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Well, that you'll have to go to [episode number 52](#), five most common words in dog training and the ones that I do not use. And that is one I don't use because if the dog really understands the cue of what to do: sit, stand, hop it up, down, whatever their control behavior, if they really understand that stays implied. There is no need to say a stay, right? Especially - please don't insult your dog by pretending to give them a hand to the face. A lot of times the dogs get on and off and on and off because it's become a behavior chain. They might come off, you put them back on, you give them a cookie.

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Please review podcast [episode number 16](#), the thing before the thing. Because that is going to help you understand why your dog keeps making mistakes because reinforcement does build behavior. And if the dog keeps getting reinforced for getting on and getting off, getting on, getting off, guess what's going to happen?

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I know you're trying to be kind and I so appreciate that you're trying to be kind to your dog and that's awesome, but you need to be strategically kind. Intentionally kind when it's appropriate and understand when it isn't. So, what have we got? ABCD. So, the first thing we need to teach a dog when they are A - allowed to move, that's the A.

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You see what I'm done here? Yeah, you know what? It's a little bit corn bolly, I admit it. But it's going to help you remember. **A - we going to teach the dog the release word.** When are they allowed to move? And then we're **B - we're going to build the behavior** that is telling the dog what they should do. And when we've got that, now we're going to grow that criteria, grow their understanding, right? So that we can add distractions. Then every distraction and every reinforcement that we give them, we're giving them the understanding. Sit doesn't mean paddle your feet. Sit doesn't mean move around in a circle.

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What, in your mind is the picture you're looking for? And that's what you're going to teach your dog. So, we've got allowed, we've got build up behavior, we've got **C - grow the criteria**, and finally we're going to **D - grow the duration.** And the duration is just a natural byproduct of clear understanding of what to do and a hundred percent clear understanding of when it's over. And when you've got that, if you want to leave your dog in a sit or a down for five minutes, have at it. 15 minutes, have at it.



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I have a hundred percent confidence your dog will willingly want to do it because they have such great understanding. What I want you to make sure happens though is you never ask your dog to sit or down or get in their Hot Zone and you walk away and forget about them. Because then you're diluting the understanding of 'here's what you do, and you do it until I tell you when it's over'.

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What to do and when it's over, go together. So, you never give your dog a formal cue of a behavior they know and then walk away and forget them. Okay? Super important. Whew. Lots and lots of references. Please, please go through 14, I gave you 14 resources here. Please go through each and every one of them. Take your time.

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There's a lot of information here, but I promise you, you will have a dog who understands their duration 'stay' behavior better than any dog you will ever have in your lifetime if you follow this procedure. I promise you that. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 18: 4 Puppy and Dog Training Games for Acquired Bite Inhibition](#)

[Podcast Episode 24: Help for the Dog who Chases Chipmunks, Bicycles, and the Neighbor's Cat](#)

[Podcast Episode 44: Using Coincidences and Positive Associations in Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 11: The Power of Permission in Dog Training](#)

[Learn ItsYerChoice in Susan's free IYC Summit](#)

[Get Crate Games Online](#)

[Podcast Episode 117: What's More Important Than Your Dog Training Sessions?](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 85: Understanding Your Dog's Sit: LWT](#)

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

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

[YouTube Video: Perch Work Dog Tricks \(Pivots and Spins\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 52: The Five Most Common Words in Dog Training and Which Ones I Never Use](#)

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



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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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