

## Is It Ever Too Late To Train Your Dog?

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG When I was in university, I had a poster on my dorm wall, and it had a mountain goat standing on the top of a mountain and a beautiful blue sky behind him. And the caption read "I'm so far behind, I think I'm first." And it always made me laugh when I walked into the room because I was always behind in all of my classes, and yeah, it just didn't matter to me.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to the Shaped by Dog. And if you have a dog or a puppy that you're trying to train I'd be willing to bet there are times you feel exactly like that. You're so far behind. "How will I ever catch up? How will I ever help this dog or puppy become the dog or puppy they're meant to be?"

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And that's the topic of today's podcast episode. It came in the form of a listener who left a comment on our [YouTube video of podcast episode number 141](#).

ID name of BASH wrote *"I wish I could go back in time when my puppy was eight weeks old and start over. This is what I think every time I listen or watch your podcast, because I'm not sure if I can fix all his behaviors and make him a well-trained dog by starting at eight months."*

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*"Can I? I'm sure many people watching your videos may have the same doubt. I would love for you to give us hope that your way of training will benefit any dog of any age. When followed correctly of course."* Thank you for that comment. And you know what I've, I sometimes forget because every dog you get there's going to be challenge.

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So, your eight-month-old puppy, you're going to be in a place where "Gee, this is all going to work out." And I've owned and loved in my lifetime 11 dogs of my very own. Now I've trained other people's dogs, but 11 dogs of my very own that I've loved and owned and trained. And what I noticed is with each dog, the confidence of knowing it'll all work out in the end grows bigger and bigger and bigger. It doesn't matter what the challenge is. There's going to be a way through it. I just have to patiently work through it.

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And I'm going to share with you today what that looks like so that you will have the confidence to know and the 'know-how how to' work through whatever training challenges that you are facing right now. But I'm going to start with this quote and this quote has been accredited to Maya Angelou who's got like thousands of amazing quotes and maybe she did say it. It's also been accredited to C.S. Lewis. I know for sure it is in the book *Rejection* by James Sherman. And the quote goes like this. *"None of us can go back and change our beginning, but we can all start right now and create a new ending."* So, it doesn't matter if you've created the most unbelievable hot mess of an eight-month-old puppy anyone could imagine. It doesn't matter.



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Now, I didn't get my very first dog of my very own until I was 28 years old. Now I had trained lots of other people's dogs before that, but I didn't get my very first dog of my own till I was 28. But today I'm recognized as one of the most influential dog trainers in the reinforcement-based space. And so, it happens. You can start with a dog that's older. Think about how many people are now working on a computer and 40 years ago they were around, and it didn't even exist. 35 years old when I got my first computer. I know there are people who were raised with computers.

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But you can all learn, and dogs are the same way. You could have a 16-year-old dog and you can change their life for the better using reinforcement in games. Absolutely you can. And so, here's the strategy that I use and it's a simple one. All that I did was take daily measured action towards a goal. Consistently taking action, evaluating and measuring. And it led me to overcoming one dog training problem, to training one new behavior. It was fixing one little puppy problem. Learning one new skill, adding in a couple of tricks, having fun with my dog as we were growing and learning together.

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28 years old, back in 1998 when I got my first dog. And in 1992, I'd help set a world record in the first dog sport that I competed in. And it just snowballed from there. And now lo and behold, here we are many years later, with many, many world championship medals to my credit. And so, it's daily measured action. It's taking action consistently and evaluating where you are and where you want to be.

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And so, there was a lot of things, especially with an eight-month-old puppy, a lot of things you could be doing. And what that does, it creates a lot of gaps for you. And this is what I mean. You might have emotional issues that you're working on with your dog. It could be fear related. It could be anxiety or arousal related or stress-related, reactivity related. So, category of emotional challenges that you're overcoming.

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Then there's behavioral challenges. Things that I'll put in this group would be like being destructive or unruly or having poor socialization skills. So, there's a lot of different behavioral issues. And then there'll be some functional training that you really want to get down. You really want your dog to want to walk beside you on a leash instead of pull you down the street. And you want to train it in a way that the dog loves doing it so that it's not like 'you have to'. You want a dog who loves to just hang out and chill and will lay on their bed as long as you ask them to.

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Or a dog of course that comes when called. Those are all functional behaviors. And I know there's a long list of functional behaviors, but then you might have a list of just fun things. Like "I'd really like to teach my dog to weave between my legs". "I'd really like to, you know, teach my dog things that I could go to my family and friends. Hey, watch this. My dog gives high fives." Whatever. So those would be the four categories that I would put this, the grouping of skills that you may go. Like the goat on the rock. I'm so far behind, I think I'm first. And so, I encourage you to go and visit podcast [episode number 93](#) because there not only do I lay out a structure on how to overcome your dog training challenges, I actually give you a template and a downloadable eBook.



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So that's episode number 93, please visit that one. But for now, let's just talk about what I defined as the gap in any of these four categories. There's where you are right now.

So behaviorally my own puppy This!, I had resource guarding and I had fear aggression with her and I had all these behavior problems that I had to work on as she was growing up. Just work through them, [taking daily measurable action](#), evaluating what we had and moving forward.

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So, you might have emotional issues, you might have behavioral issues, you might have functional things. And of course, we all have a list of fun things that we would like to teach our dogs to do. Where you are today, where you'd love to see your dog. So don't just like, "Okay, where I'd really like to get it." Like it's, "Here's where it is and okay, I could tolerate it here." Heck no.

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Where you are today and where you would go "Oh my gosh. It would be so cool if my dog could do this." If my dog could be here.

And don't put limits on your dog and please don't let anybody else limit your dog by saying, "Oh, that dog is reactive. It's always going to be reactive." Or "That dog is clumsy. It's never going to be able to catch a flying disk or whatever it is."

Where you are, where you would love to be with your dog. That creates a gap and it's easy to fall into that gap and be lost in despair because "I'm so far behind, I think I'm first and I'm never going to get it and my dogs never going to get it."

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What you need to do is start with a plan. Now, let me just share a bad plan will widen that gap. A bad plan will take you further away from where you really want to be. A bad plan will make you feel bad about yourself or frustrated with your dog and probably give up on these goals and dreams.

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Second to a bad plan is no plan. Because no plan is having your dog training mentor be called hope. Hoping that the dog will get better, hoping that the dog will outgrow things. So, wait and see or hope, they're really, really bad dog training mentors. And they are just a second cousin to a bad dog training plan. So, hope is just like having a bad plan.

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You run the risk, the very good risk that you're going to get further and further, and that gap is going to become a chasm. And so, what you need is [a proven, strategic plan](#), and one that aligns with the kind of relationship you want with your dog. One that aligns with the core values that you have for training your dog.

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So only you know what those are. And because you're listening to this podcast, I'm guessing you want to be a trainer who puts kindness first and having an amazing relationship with your dog. Ahead of anything else that creates an 'end justifies the means' kind of thought process. So how do we do it? It's a plan. Now, if you [go to my YouTube channel](#), there's all kinds of great dog training plans. Try one. It will create a difference for you and your dog in one area.



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I'll put a link in the show notes. I'll put a link here on YouTube for the [ItsYerChoice Summit](#). It will give you the opportunity to take action in the direction of your dreams.

So, what does this look like? Number one, you've listed out those four areas and you've written down everything that you would like to accomplish in those areas. And then you're going to A - take daily action. Daily measured action, which means [you're videoing](#) and you're writing a journal. Because behaviors that are measured improve. Behaviors that are not measured just go habitually in the direction of innate behavior.

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So, if it's a dog who wants to pull on leash, if you're not record keeping that you'll get more of what is innate to a dog which is pulling on leash. So, you need to take daily measured action. So, take action. And it needs to be from a proven plan. And that's what we've got for you here on our YouTube channel.

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Of course, if you're a member of any of my online programs, I give you strategic training plans that have worked for thousands of dogs. So, if you are in my program, we've got you. If you are not in one of our programs and you would like to be, I'd strongly recommend you start with the ItsYerChoice Summit or you know what, I'm just going to put it out here.

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If you come over to our YouTube page, I'm going to put a link to [Home School the Dog](#). So, if you know "I want that strategic plan, Susan." then I'll give you a link to Home School the Dog and that's where you will be taking daily action. So, it's daily measured action from a proven training plan that is consistently applied. Because a dog or a puppy can only be as consistent as we as their owners are.

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Which means if you're vigilant about wanting your puppy to learn to potty outside in a certain area in your yard. And then you're bringing in the groceries and yell at your puppy out of the crate, but you don't have time to get to the door and you put the groceries away and the puppy goes in your back bedroom and pees on the carpet. Then that's a flaw in taking consistent action.

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So, what you want your puppy to grow up to be, what you want your dog to grow up to be, you've got to create that framework and you've got apply that framework consistently. So, if you'd like as I do when I put my hand on the doorknob, I want my dogs to sit then I am going to always do it. It doesn't matter if "I'm in such a hurry, I'm late for my appointment", I'll suck it up and be late for my appointment before I will allow my dog training criteria just to falter.

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When you're taking daily measurable action, the change may be so incremental that you don't recognize what's happened. But just like 28-year-old Susan who got her first puppy suddenly she's competing at a world stage and then she's developed a process of not just educating dogs but educating people that she's helped thousands and thousands of dog owners all over the world.

You could be next. "Oh no, Susan, I just, I just want my dog to not chew on the carpet." It doesn't matter what your goals are. Daily consistent action.



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You know, you think about Tater Salad. He's a dog who came to us at 15 months old, who was a hot mess. He was turfed out of his former home because [he was the height of unruliness](#). He was the poster child for unruliness. And now he's just like an amazing dog that everybody who visits our home he's the dog they want to go home with.

There's this great quote by Albert Einstein. And it goes like this. *"If I had an hour to solve a problem, I would spend 55 minutes defining the problem. In five minutes, I'm coming up with a solution."* And that's why I encourage you to really do a deep dive on what you have in your columns for your dog of things that the emotional problems you absolutely are going to have to get on top of. But that doesn't mean you don't work on some behavior and some functional and heck some fun things that you just want to do. You can do it all as long as you're taking daily measured action.

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Focus on how you come up with those solutions and if you've got a proven dog training plan then that makes it all the more easy. I hope I've inspired you to know there is no limit. Start where you are today and let's make the ending better than you ever could expect by creating the dog of your dreams and having this amazing relationship.

So, jump over to YouTube. We'll leave you some links in the description here of some [playlists](#) that give you some great training plans. And if you know "heck Susan and I want to be part of your community", then I welcome you with open arms and just click that link. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### Home School the Dog:

[Join Home School the Dog on Susan's special opportunity](#)

### ItsYerChoice Summit:

[Learn one simple game that has changed the lives of dogs and their people the world over](#)

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 93: Fix Dog Training and Behavior Problems Before They Happen](#)

[Podcast Episode 71: Pro Dog Trainer's Secret to Help Your Naughty Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 131: How Would Susan Garrett Plan Your Dog Training Sessions?](#)

[Podcast Episode 133: Become Your Own Dog Training Coach With This Video Strategy](#)

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

### YouTube Playlists:

[See ALL DogsThat YouTube Channel Playlists](#)

[Loose Leash Walking](#)

[The Emotional State of Dogs](#)

[Reactive or Aggressive Dogs](#)

[Over-Aroused, Over Excited, Hyper, Frantic, High Drive or Out of Control Dogs](#)

[Sit, Down, Stand, Stay! Dog Training Duration Behaviors](#)

[Puppy Training](#)





## Is It Ever Too Late To Train Your Dog?

### 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

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