



Episode: #144

Teach Your Dog To Listen No Matter What...Even If You Think They Are Stubborn

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG If you've ever said, "Why won't my dog just listen?" or "He does this at home." or "He's [being stubborn](#)." or "He's just blowing me off." well, my friend if you've said this with a puppy, a rescue dog, an older dog, or yes all of you people listening to this podcast who do a sport with your dog, whether it be obedience or agility or fly ball or protection or any kind of sport, if you have ever wondered "why can't he just listen", this podcast episode is for you.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And if you are excited by what I'm about to deliver and trust me when I say you should be, please go ahead and give me a thumbs up if you're watching this on YouTube. But if you're not a subscriber, why not? This is going to be epic and many, many more episodes of epicness. So go ahead and hit the subscribe button and let me send you a notification every time a new podcast gets released by hitting the notification bell.

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Okay. Let's talk about why dogs may or may not listen. First of all, let's dial this back. Let's talk about cues. So, sit, down, stand, jump, whatever the cues are. Those are words we give to prompt a behavior in our dog. Some people call them commands. I don't like the sound of that, but to each your own, whatever they are, what these are, are really just little evaluations. You're testing your dog's understanding of the education you've given them because the mantra that goes along with this podcast is: Our dogs are always doing the best they can, with the education we've given them in the environment that we're asking them to perform in.

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So, when you give them a cue you are testing two things, the education you've given them and the environment that you've asking them to perform in. I look at - you can look at it another way, you can look at it as - it's like a bank statement. When you give a cue, your dog shows you your bank statement. Because your dog's behavior in any kind of environment under any kind of condition, when you prompt them with a cue, your dog's response is a bank statement. It is a reflection of the [reinforcement history](#) that dog has for performing what you ask them to do in the environment that you ask them to perform in.

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And I like to think as behaviors as like a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors, maybe thousand-dollar behaviors, hundred-dollar behaviors or loonie behaviors. If you're a Canadian or you know that our Loonie is our one-dollar coin here in Canada. So, what I mean by that is I have behaviors I'd be willing to bet a hundred thousand dollars that my dog will do if I ask them 10 times to do it, that I know I will be up money.

So, given that they're dogs, maybe they're not going to get it 10 times out of 10 times. But I'm pretty sure they'll get it 9 times out of 10 times. So sure, I'll take that bet of a hundred thousand dollars 10 times. Because I know 9 times out of 10, they're going to get it right. And I'd like to believe my dogs are going to get it right 10 times out of 10.



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So do you have any a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors or does your dog have any a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors that ask the same cue 10 different times you're going to get responses enough that you say, "Yeah, those are a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors. Or are you just willing to take the loonie bet? "Okay. I bet you a buck that when I say this cue my dog's going to get it because I really don't know if they're going to do it or not. And I don't mind losing a dollar." Okay.

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So, think of your cues as just a reflection of the training that you've gone put into that dog. And you can say, "No Susan, you don't get it. All of my dogs understand, but this one he's different. He's stubborn. He's stupid. He's whatever you want to fill in the blank." Your dog, no matter if he's a different breed than all your other dogs, or you got them as an older dog, or he had the chance to learn not to listen. That dog is a reflection of your ability to train dogs like that.

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Okay. So, the mantra fits for everybody. Your dog's ability to perform a cue in the face of competing reinforcement value. So sure, maybe you can bet a hundred thousand dollars on a, your dog will sit when the fridge door is open and you're holding out a cheese slice or cheese stick. Maybe you can bet a hundred thousand dollars there because the competing values for your dog's attention are pretty low.

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But what about when your dog is chasing a deer out in the woods? Is that a hundred thousand dollar recall that you'd be willing to bet a hundred thousand dollars? I tell you I'd still bet a hundred thousand dollars of that, 9 times out of 10 at a minimum. And I'd like to think 10 times my dogs coming, my dogs are coming.

So how do we get your dogs to have those a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors? Well, let's peel it back and think about how those behaviors were trained. First of all, was there some consistency? I got to tell you, I was watching a YouTube video and I probably shouldn't, I only spend a couple of minutes there and I saw the youtuber say, "We're going to teach your dog to stay, sit stay."

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And he had this puppy, he didn't know anything. And he told the dog to sit, stay and put his big hand in front of his face. He gave him a couple of cookies for that. He said, "okay", the dog didn't release. So, he said, "come on, buddy", he got him out of the sit. Told him again, "sit, stay". And the dog lie down. And he said, "that's okay". Gave him a cookie for that.

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And I'm like, how's the dog going to learn what is a down and what is a sit if you're rewarding both? So, a couple of things to be learned from this. Number one yes you have to [be consistent with what the cues mean](#). Number two don't waste your time watching dog trainers on social media just because they have a lot of followers. That doesn't mean they really understand how to train dogs, please. Okay. I digress.

So how consistent are you with how you train it and how you reinforce it. So, if you [ask a dog to sit](#) and they lie down, is that okay? If it is, then you've got to understand you're teaching your dog that things that you've put value in don't matter all the time. Just write down, like you've got a pen and paper handy.



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If you're driving that's okay. Do this when you get home. Make a list of all the cues you use regularly with your dog. If you're a sports person listening to this, write down all the cues that you use that you expect your dog to understand. When I say seesaw, I expect you to run up the seesaw, get into position, hold position, wait for release.

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What does it mean? Write that down. And then you can write another column, what does your dog think it means? And be honest. And if those two things aren't the same, let's take a little deeper and find out how you trained it. So, the first thing that is a big bugaboo with training is something called overshadowing and it's when a lot of people believe they've trained something, but they don't recognize the influence of their body or maybe training props on the behavior.

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So, take this, I'll call it a 5P test. Take any one of your cues and you're going to try five positions. Does your dog respond the first time? Are they a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors or are they loonie behaviors? So, it could be you standing up, you're going to stand perfectly still. Pretend there's a bolt going from the top of your head through your feet. You're not going to lean. You're going to stand still. You're going to have your head in line with your spine, hands at your sides. And you're going to give your dogs the cue to sit and then the cue to down.

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All right. Now, you really want to get funky with this. Close your eyes. You can put the video camera on, but make sure your eyes aren't telling them anything either. Okay. A lot of people won't do these simple behaviors unless the owners are flipping up their hands or putting their hands down or leaning into them or you know getting gruffer with their voice.

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Is there been any overshadowing. 5Ps. Standing still is one. Next one, jumping jacks. Asked for the simple behaviors. Next one, lying down. Will your dog do those behaviors while you're lying down? Next one, try it with you in another room. And you're going to say, "Well, I don't care if my dog does a down when I asked him to from the living room and there in my bedroom."

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But what about when your dog's running across the park? Do you care then? Because it's just a distance work. It's just, they can't see you. So just give that one a try. That's position number four. And finally, you're going to get your dog in a place where you can run away and you're going to run away from them and ask them to do that cue.

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So, has there been overshadowing of your body position? That's just one simple thing. Those of you who are doing a sport, there are other things to consider. And that is the closest to you, the further, how far away you are. Are you still using props at home like gates or wires to get behaviors? Okay.

The next thing I want you to consider is the rhythm of the behaviors. So, most people ask the dog to sit when they're already standing. Now, your dog is demonstrating I can go from a standing position to a sit. And then you might ask the dog to down and they'll demonstrate I can go from a down; I can go from a sit to a down. But let's try it in reverse.



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I want you to ask your dogs to down and then sit from those that 5P test. If you do this, you're really creating a greater layer of understanding of those two cues. Sit means sit from any position. Down means down from any position. You've heard me— if you've been listening to this podcast, you've heard me talk about DASH.

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Teaching anything to a dog, [we want DASH](#). So, the first thing is we want the dog desire to work, and that is your relationship, your connection to that dog. Are they focused on you? Are they willing to do the work you want to do? If not, don't try to train them anything. All right. So, it's relationship comes before trying to train any tricks or behaviors.

So yes, my acronym could have been got RASH. I just didn't think the t-shirts would've sold as well. So, we went with DASH - desire. The dog's focus for you. Okay. The A, now we can train the accuracy of the behavior of the sit, of the down, of the stand. I'd love for you to have three behaviors that we're testing here to see if they're a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors.

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All right. Once you've trained the accuracy and you split it into layers and really help the dog to understand. Remember when we're training, we're always working from my [5C Pyramid](#). Get that connection then grow clarity and then grow confidence. We never try to challenge them until that dog has that confidence.

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Then we look for the speed of the behavior. How fast will the dog sit? If they really have that confidence, if you split things down and they really understand it without your overshadowing it with your body, speed will happen. And then the final element is the H is the habitat. And that goes back to environments.

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Guess what, you could be in the living room doing jumping jacks and standing still and lying down. You've changed the environment for the dog.

The environment doesn't mean, "Well, my dog can do it in Newfoundland. My dog can do it in British Columbia. My dog can do it in Ontario.

Environment can just be you've changed the environment by making it more exciting by adding another dog to the picture.

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Okay. So how was that dog trained? What is your criteria? Was there any overshadowing? And the next thing is bribes. Were there bribes involved? Does the dog have to know that you've, you're packing lunch before they'll offer behavior? Right. Think about this. Imagine you have a friend, you know, maybe you went to high school together. You see them once in a while, but you really don't see them that often. Out of the blue they call you up. It's probably been a couple of years since you've been together and say, "Hey, I got a piano in my living room. I want to move it down to the rec room. I'm wondering if you're free to help me move my piano this weekend?" And you're going, "Oh, geez. Yeah. I was going to have a root canal. So, nah."



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And they go "By the way, yeah, few of the friends from high school are getting together. We're going to get pizza and beer after once we get the piano moved." "Oh, okay. Pizza, beer, friends, social. Yeah. It sounds like great. I'll be there!" Alright. Month later. "Yeah. Geez. Ah, it's about that piano. Don't like it downstairs so much. The sound isn't quite the same. So, wondering if you're around this weekend and ah maybe we'll move it back upstairs." "Oh, my back. Uh, yeah—" "No, we're gonna have pizza and beer and a couple of people, you know, we're going to—" "Yeah, yeah." Eventually the pizza, the beer, the social, like "How many times can you move a piano? No, I don't, I don't want to do that for you."

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And so, if your behaviors that were trained your dog were dependent on you having a big meatball in your hand or you waving around their favorite toy or you, you know, the dog's in the backyard and you shake a canister of cookies before they decide to come in. That is bribery related rather than relationship related.

Remember - Got DASH? We want the behaviors, the pieces of the behaviors to be parts [that you have shaped](#). And so, in that way the reinforcement comes after the action not before. It's so important.

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So, if you have been in a class where they teach you to lure everything, then I've got to tell you, you've got to have a plan of how to eliminate that lure and get behaviors without the lure. And if the dog doesn't do something, do not resort back to the lure because the dog's choice of not to do the sit when you asked prompts you to bring out something better than guess what, you're the guy that's got the piano that needs to be moved. And your dog's waiting for you to up the ante. Right. How about pizza, beer, some friends over and you throw in a couple bucks for gas, right?

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We don't want that from our dogs. So please, my best suggestion is don't use bribery in your training. And if you have been using bribery, make a conscious effort to get rid of it and don't bring it back.

Reinforcement are things the dog really wants that are given after a behavior has been done. A response has been given not before.

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Okay. And finally, the environment. Right. Dogs are doing the best they can with the education they've got in the environment we've put them in. So that means you've got to be conscious about what is that environment that you've taught the behaviors. Where's your hundred-thousand-dollar behavior happening. So, in your kitchen, fridge close, nobody home, do you have behaviors that you know your dog will give you and whence they give it to you then you can go to the fridge and reinforce them.

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Now, what about in other rooms of your house? Remember, we're changing the environment. So, a quiet house, different rooms, you've got 10 out of 10 great responses. All five position changes. Yeah, I think we got a hundred-thousand-dollar behavior in a quiet house.

Now let's invite a couple of dogs to run around. Do it all over again. "No, my dogs, they're good with that." All right. Now let's invite a guest over, have them ring the doorbell and you go through those things. "Oh, I got loonies. Yeah. I just got loonies."



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Okay. So, all of those are escalating environments that we need to build our dog's confidence and understanding that cues are not optional. I want my dogs to know when I ask you to do something it's immediate as always. It doesn't matter that I'm a kindness-based trainer. My dogs will do it. Why? Because I inspire them to do it.

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I keep my 5C model in mind. I don't move up to challenge until I've got confidence in all these environments. All right. So, we got our empty house challenge and then we've added a guest. All right. We haven't even gone outside. Let's go in the backyard. Let's go in the front yard. Let's invite a dog fence fighting on the other side of the fence.

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Let's plant some nice smells around the backyard and go through the same 5P test to see if your dog will respond. You still have a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors. All right, let's go to the park. Let's go to the beach. Let's go out in the forest with a deer running away from your dog. You have a hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors there.

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You can get them. You can get them. Okay. So, let's start right now. [It starts with a plan](#). Eliminate the bribes, eliminate the props.

So those of you who are doing sports, if you've got like things to create the behavior and then you take them off and the behavior's gone, well guess what, the dog didn't ever understand the behavior. They just understood the behavior with your props.

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So, the plan happens in layers. And if you go through some of my YouTube videos, I've got some great ideas on what you can train your dog to do. I strongly encourage everybody to start with [ItsYerChoice](#). I'll put [a link](#) in the show notes, and I'll put a link in the description here on YouTube on how to start with getting rid of bribes, creating choice.

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So, the dog sees food and says, "I need to engage with you because you are really cool. And if I do cool things with you, I have the potential to earn something." All right. So, we've eliminated bribes. We've eliminated props. Now I'm not saying I would never use a prop, but every time I decide to add a prop to my training, I have a plan on how I'm getting rid of it and keeping the behavior. Super important.

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Okay. So, your plan— and please, I'm just going to give a reminder. Your time is valuable, but far more important than just your time is your dog's experience and your dog's ability to create a relationship with you. Please do not waste your time on social media dog trainers that have these great, massive, big followings.

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I'm not saying people with big followings are automatically bad dog trainers, but big followings don't automatically mean that they're worth your time. Okay. That's out of the way. Now we've got our plan. You're going to [record keep](#).



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You're going to know what are your hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors, and where, what environments? Strategically layering, amping up those environments so that we are bringing out our best. The challenges don't overwhelm the dog and them going, "Yeah. Uh, I'd love to move your piano, but I got to chase this deer. I'll be right back." We want to layer those challenges and so—. Honestly, when my dogs see a deer, a couple of them will head towards them. Most of them just look at me. The ones that say, "I'm going to go.", "I'm just going to have a go, I'll be right back." I just say, "Yeah, we're not doing that. Come on this way." And they're like, "Okay, chill. Right. I forgot."

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All right. You will get there. You will get there. And that's what our [Recallers program](#) is, is strategically layering games. Now working towards the eventuality that your dogs will listen. Now I'm putting all this in a podcast. It's pretty, you know, I can't give you all the absolute every step and every plan to get there, but I'm just sharing with you it's possible. Now what's happening next is you need to take consistent daily action. You need to review your bank statement regularly, right?

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If you never look at your bank statement, guess what happens, you get surprised. So, the bank statement review is, here's a list of the verbal cues I believe my dog knows. Here's the expected response I think we should have. Here are the environments that I believe we've got hundred-thousand-dollar behaviors and here are the ones that I think I got loonie behaviors or a hundred-dollar behaviors that I'm going to continue to grow.

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Record keeping allows you to strategically have the dog of your dreams. Have that amazing relationship. And most of all have DASH in every behavior that you could hope for. I'll see you next time here on Shaped by Dog.

IYC Summit:

Learn how to play ItsYerChoice to get rid of bribes and create choice for your dog:

<https://recallers.com/iycsummit-join/>

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 51: Is Your Stubborn Dog Frustrating You?](#)

[Podcast Episode 2: Reinforcement](#)

[Podcast Episode 134: How To Teach A Dog Stay WITHOUT Luring, Collar Pops Or Using The Word "Stay"](#)

[Podcast Episode 135: Test Your Dog's Sit Stay Training](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 21: The 5 Critical Dog Training Layers for Confidence with Anything](#)

[Blog Post: Got D.A.S.H. \(Desire, Accuracy, Speed and Habitat\)?](#)

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

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

[Recallers](#)



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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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