

Adding Mindset To Your Dog Training Tools: Who Do You Become?

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG Welcome to the 150th episode of Shaped by Dog. 99 weeks, we have been bringing you this podcast and if you're good at math you will know 1.5 and change podcast per week. I thank each and every one of you for tuning in. I thank you for the support you've given this podcast. And I'd like to think this is my most important podcast I've ever delivered. Please I ask you in advance you share it with every dog owner and every dog lover you know.

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Hello, I am Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And today I'm going to talk about probably my most favorite thing to talk about and that is mindset. And before you turn away and go "Wait, I want to teach my dog how to sit", "I want to teach my dog to come when it's called", "I want to teach my dog to stop jumping up", mindset to me is everything in life.

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One of my biggest influences in my life is a man by the name of Zig Ziglar and he used to say, "What you get when you achieve a goal is not nearly as important as who you become." And when we train a dog we're achieving goals, we set goals, we want our dogs to behave. Think about Olympic athletes, they work very, very hard to achieve their big goals and then they get their medals. And who have they become to achieve that goal?

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There's this great story of, it was in the late 30s in the Olympics and Jesse Owens, phenomenal gifted American athlete. And he was in the long jump, and you get like three chances, and he had foot faulted twice. There was a German athlete, Luz was his name, was the European gold medal holder. And again, German, it was in Berlin.

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Here's the story. Jesse Owens had foot faulted twice. The German athlete took him aside and told him what he was doing and how he could fix his technique for his third and final attempt. Because if Jesse Owens faulted again, he wouldn't get to the finals. And guess what, his competitor helped him. He got to the finals, the German fellow, he came second, he got the silver and Jesse Owens got the gold. Who did that man become by helping Jesse Owens?

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Why I think this is one of my most important podcast is mindset is nothing to do with dog training, yet it has everything to do with how successful you will be when you're training your dog.

You see dog training is an unregulated industry, which means people can say and do whatever they want. And the amazing thing about dogs is they will learn despite what's being done. I think I've told this story before on this podcast. Years ago at a correction match for obedience - and there was a woman who always smiled when she used harsh corrections with her dog. And she was doing a go-out which if you're not familiar with competition obedience, you want the dog to leave your side and go in a straight line. And then when you ask the dog to sit, they should sit.



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Now this dog was just 12 months old, but it was phenomenal. Obviously, this woman had a lot of great dog training skills because she couldn't get this dog to this level if she didn't. She obviously had a lot of persistence as well. Sent this dog on a go-out and the dog went crooked. And she didn't want her to go crooked obviously. And she kind of smiled and then walked out and took the dog and brought it back.

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And she had a pinch collar on - and little trigger warning for you, this is going to be not a pleasant story. She took the dog's ear. She twisted it up in the pinch collar and she walked it across the room and the dog didn't even make a peep. Amazing. Walked it across the room saying, "Go straight, go straight, go straight" which, what the heck does that mean? Brings the dog back. Everything in my internal voice was trying to give mental telepathy towards this dog, "Whatever you do, please, for the love of all that is holy do not go straight."

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Why would I think that? Because if the dog goes straight, which it did, it reinforces the woman for what she just did. Dogs are such a gift from God. They learn despite the complete and utter nonsense people bestow upon them in the name of training. It's an unregulated industry. And honestly, stories like the one I just told you, I would like to hope are few and far between in the year 2022.

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And I'd like to hope we as a dog loving society, our level of consciousness is rising, and we are recognizing dogs for the amazing creatures that they are. And we are ascending to a higher level where that sort of behavior just doesn't exist. Maybe I live in a little bit of a make-believe land, but that's what I'd like to think.

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But let's just look at all of the ways to train a dog. Now there's this— because it's unregulated there's as many approaches, philosophies to dog training probably as there are dog trainers. But let's group them into two parts. And I'm not going to sit here and judge and say what's right or what's wrong. It's what's right or what's wrong for you. And I'm going to share with you how you get to that point of figuring that out.

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So, the two mindsets of dog training. Now, if you've been following this podcast, you know my belief. My mindset is that dogs are always doing the best they can with the education we've given them in the environment we've put them in.

Now does that mean I believe dogs are like Disney creatures who are always just like wake up every morning, singing songs like Mary Poppins and they can't wait to please us? Oh HE-double hockey sticks no. No. Basically dogs do what's reinforcing. End of story.

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If they're raised in a world where it's reinforcing to steal food off the counter, raid the garbage, chase the cat, fence fight with the dog next door, bust out of any open door and run like their butts on fire in the opposite direction that you and your housecoat and slippers are screaming after them down the street, they're going. They're going. Because dogs do what's reinforcing.



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However, if we [arrange coincidences](#) such that what we want our dogs to do is clearly laid out in the way we train them, they will choose to do what we want. And that's why dogs are always doing the best they can with the education we've given them. And if they're making poor choices by our standards, we got to look at ourselves, turn the magnifying glass on us.

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How could we have been a better educator? Have we trained the dog in all these environments? What can we do to help that dog be better? That's one mindset. Now there's another mindset. And that is that dogs need to be told there are consequences to poor choices. That you know what, we can help them to do their best but at the end of the day dogs sometimes can be jerks. Dogs just blow us off. And they need to be told that's not going to work. Two different mindsets.

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And I apologize if you are on opposite mindset to me and I didn't describe the opposite mindset to mine as objectively as I could have, but it's hard for me to live in that mindset. So, I am giving you guys an apology. A mindset that it's up to us to help dogs to achieve everything we want. And the other mindset is we will do a lot to give the dogs the reinforcement to do what we want but at the end of the day those guys need to be told there's no choice and they better do what we want.

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Okay. So, it comes down to trade-offs. Negotiations. What are you willing to trade-off? I said I've been training dogs professionally since 1988. Now I had a full-time job back then. I probably didn't leave my full-time job until I want to say the late 90s, but by 1996 I was leaving almost every other weekend and flying off somewhere to teach a group of people what I knew about dog training.

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So, by the mid-90s I was respected at least throughout North America. And by the late 90s, I was traveling outside of North America to teach in other countries what I knew about dog training. And so, my experiences, my viewpoint about dog training is a combination of a number of things. And I'll get to that a little bit later. But I want to get to the trade-offs.

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1988 I was being paid to train local classes. What I know now compared to what I know then I've forgotten more about dog training than I knew in 1988. And probably most of what I practice and knew in 1988, I would be embarrassed to share with you today. And so, there's an evolution. You have to be patient.

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When you first get your first dog, you're going to make mistakes. However, you've got to give yourself grace and you've got to allow and have that mindset that [accepts that dog is just a reflection of the education](#) that we've given them. And so, when things don't go the way we want, we've got to look at ourselves.

So, what's the trade-off? The trade-off is your time versus your relationship. So, if you believe—like there's a lot of trainers that say, “Hey, if your dog is being a jerk, bring it to our board and train and in one month time you will get back a dog who really listens to you.” There's a lot of people that will give you that opportunity to go and bring the—.



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And I promise you, I promise you that kind of establishment is going to use some 'do it, damn it' to that dog. There is going to be "You are a jerk, and you need to stop that." And I personally think that's unfair because that dog is just a combination, an accumulation of experiences that we've given them to this point. And sure, maybe you didn't know exactly what you're doing.

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But remember there's the destination: a well-trained dog and there's the journey. Who you become when you take that journey when you say, "Listen, I'm going to look for opportunities to tell you your bad. I'm going to look for opportunities to say, "ah-ah, no wrong". I'm going to look for opportunities to say, "you have really annoyed me"."

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Who do you become on that journey of dog training? Because don't think that that person only shows up that way for the dog. That person, those standards of 'you were wrong', 'I need to tell you, you were wrong', 'you need to be blamed', 'you need to show remorse and there will be a consequence for your ill behavior', that kind of judgment infiltrates other relationships in your life.

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So how you train a dog has an unbelievably profound effect on how you show up to other people in your life. I promise me, I know this because I've lived this. Because I know that for myself, because I saw that back in the late eighties, early nineties, that's who I was. And I've seen it in the way that my relationships with people have changed over the years.

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What you get when you achieve a goal is not nearly as important as who you become. And there's a question between ethical and effective dog training. Well, you could have— I mean you're ethical.

Now, what does ethical mean? It means exactly what you want it to mean. It's your standards as to what is ethical. I grew up in a family where "shut up" was a swear word.

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So, anything north of shut up, yeah, that wasn't really cool. Nope. Yeah. You just didn't, you didn't say that in our house. So, what are your ethics when it comes to dogs? And like, what do you think of dogs in general? "Oh, Susan, I love dogs." What do you think about your dogs? "Oh, I'd take a bullet for my dogs, man. I just, yeah, I would, I would give anything for my dogs."

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Now let's go a little bit deeper. Your relationship with your dogs is defined in the moments when you are the most frustrated by your dog's behavior. It's defined by those moments when you're facing a challenge, maybe it's a challenge you faced over and over again. Maybe it's you in your slippers and housecoats screaming after your dog, running down that street.

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The moments of your greatest frustration when your teeth are grit "You! Come over here right now!". That tells you, nobody else, that tells you what your relationship with your dog is.

That defines your relationship with your dog.



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So effective training without being ethical in my opinion is not good dog training. But the flip is also true. Ethical training without being effective is not good dog training. And it's a waste of resources. If you are a professional and you are taking people's money to train their dog, you need to be a hundred percent upfront with the methodology you would be using.

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And here's the thing that people who have the mindset that dogs need to be told what to do, very few will show every single thing they will do to a dog on social media. If you believe it's necessary, then you should be able to be a hundred percent who you are in every moment on camera. And if you can't, then you must not think it's ethical.

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And if you don't think it's ethical, why are you doing it? And if you do think it's ethical, why aren't you showing it? And for those of you who are using ethical methods but they're not effective, you're wasting people's time and you're wasting people's resources. And most of all, you're probably frustrating that dog.

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And so, you need to stay humble, and you need to stay curious especially if you're professionals who've had success. And so, for somebody like me, my experiences in dog training were number one formed by the time which I consider a great blessing that I got to spend with my mentors, Bob and Marian Bailey.

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So, the late Dr. Marian Bailey was a graduate student of B.F. Skinner and her and her first husband Keller Breland formed an [animal training business](#) back in the fifties and the sixties and the seventies. And Bob Bailey joined that business. And their training of animals and I'm talking all species of animals, that's what put food on their table.

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So, there's a lot of people who are now influential in the world of dog training and their understanding, their application of the science is based on laboratory learning. Bob and Marian, it meant whether they could feed their children or not. So, they really focused on getting training to be effective. It wasn't how you know, let's just get there some point, it's like let's get there as fast as we can.

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It was such a blessing for me to learn from them. My history in animal training also was formulated from being a competitor in the sport of dog agility. That I was driven by wanting to bring out the absolute best in my dogs. But that absolute best had a very clear line in that I wanted to have the absolute best relationship with my dogs.

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And if you are a competitor in dog sports, I want you to look at what is that snapshot that the professional photographer is taking of you and your dog during your [worst moments](#)? During the time maybe you're at the most important competition of your life and your dog made a simple mistake. Because dog sports can be the most amazing place to grow a relationship.



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But it has to be intentionally grown from a place of respect for who the dog is and what they're doing for us when they're out on the field with us as part of our team. Because Lord knows we're not perfect. So please let's not expect that perfection from our dogs. So, I've had my time in dog sports which I'm caring- I still love competing in dog sports.

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My time with Bob and Marian Bailey and I still consider Bob a friend and I'm so blessed to be able to pick up the phone and talk to him. I have my Bachelor of Science degree where I was first exposed to the psychology of dog training.

But mostly I have my time in the trenches, my time teaching classes here in person, and then growing this massive online dog training community over the last 10 years.

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And I'm just going to share with you a couple of comments from some of my online students. I asked them, why are we different? How are we different in what we do? And here's a couple of the things that they said. So, Lisa said *"This program profoundly changed the way I talk to, talk about and think about my dog."*

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Ashley said, *"You gave me the confidence to train anything and through anything, a holistic view of what it means to train a puppy and how to manage my expectations (train the puppy that's in front of me), knowledge of how to teach my puppy to think for herself and make good choices and learn new behaviors."*

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Nuno says *"It's learning communication skills, letting them be as happy as they can. Truly inspiring training! What can I say, I love the woman."* [I think she's talking about me?] *"As a bonus, I'm a better human as well."* Mirth said, *"Training aligned and centered on values, combined with wonderful (and sometimes unexpected in extent) results."*

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So, you can get the results you want, but there's a trade-off. And the point of this podcast is what is that trade-off that you're willing to make in the name of having the dog of your dreams. I personally think with our programs, I've seen it, people who have never owned a dog before who are come in and patiently just play the games, have fun with their dog and get results.

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You'll have some people who say that in order to have this great relationship with your puppy or your rescue dog you've got to tether that dog to your side, and they've got to be, you know, attached to you for the first month or so of their life. What kind of relationship is that? That's kind of like a captive, no choice relationship.

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You can have the dog of your dreams. The late great Dr. Wayne Dyer, he had this great quote which is right behind me here if you're watching this on YouTube and it says, "When you change the way you look at things, the way you look at things change."





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So, I'm challenging you all, no matter where you are in your dog training life to consider the way you look at things and the possibility that they could change for the better. Because it's not what you get, it's who you become.

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I hope this makes sense. I hope this isn't just rambling. I would love to hear from you all. I would love to get feedback on this, and I thank you for being here for the first 150 episodes of Shaped by Dog. And I hope you continue on for the next 150 more. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

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

[Podcast Episode 102: Transitioning Your Dog Training: From All That Is Wrong To That Which Is Right](#)

[IQ Zoo – History of Animal Behavior Enterprises – Bailey's and Breland's](#)

[Podcast Episode 84: Disappointment in Dog Sports: Mindset With Olympian Greg Louganis](#)



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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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