

# How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

00:00:00

SG Did you catch [podcast episode number 171](#)? The one we just did, super important. There I shared exactly what I want when I'm putting together a training plan for my dog. The goals that I have. And guess what, it's exactly the same when I'm putting together training plans for my own students. Today we're gonna do a deep dive into what that looks like.

00:00:31

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. Now you may be saying, "Hey Susan, didn't you just do something on training plans on [podcast number 131](#)?" I did but there I helped you write a training plan or protocol for your dog. When I'm doing it for my own dogs or in our online classes, they're a little bit more involved.

00:00:51

And so today I just wanted to let you know what that looked like. I hope I'm not going to scare you. I don't want to put you off. I just want to give you some more options that you can include or share the reasons why it may be worth investing in yourself, investing in your dog in just joining one of our online programs instead of trying to figure all of this out for yourself.

But by the end of this program, you're gonna have a good understanding of 10 elements that are super important. So, let's get started. Number one is that of criteria. And what we want to begin with is what is the final product. So, if you're an agility student you're gonna want to teach - how to get my dog to maybe do a set of weave poles.

00:01:34

Now we're going to start and break that down into many different stages. So, what are all those different stages? What does that look like? What is the criteria? Well, obviously agility dictates there are criteria how a dog has to complete the weaves, but you're gonna include your own like the speed that your dog goes or the focus that the dog has.

00:01:54

If you were teaching like a sit stay, it would be the duration or the distance away from you. So, within that criteria there are a lot of different elements. It could be - do you care where your dog is looking when we're doing agility? I do care where my dog is looking. When I'm doing loose leash walking, I really don't care where my dog is looking.

00:02:12

When I'm doing competition Obedience, you betcha, I do care where my dog is looking. So that criteria is unique to each individual exercise that you're teaching your dog. And the more details, the longer it's going to take to train it, but also the harder it's gonna take to maintain it. So, you have to be really, really particular about how much detail you put into your criteria.

How much are you willing to continue to build and support as you go forward. Within that criteria, I like to include something called what are the [cheap behaviors](#) that might crop up or I sometimes call these toxic behaviors.



# Episode: #172

## How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

00:02:46

For example, if I was teaching a dog how to back up, one of the toxic behaviors or when I see my students mark and reinforce when the dog backed up and is starting to move forward again. Because you know, the dog can't back up if they're coming forward for the food.

00:03:01

The other thing is when they're first beginning that backup and the dog is kind of hanging out and they see that the back end moves and they go, "Yes, we're finally getting a backup." and they go and mark that, but the back end moves so the dog could sit down. If you do that once, you want to make sure that you know there are a lot of steps that we will include, and make sure that it doesn't happen more than once.

00:03:21

Okay. So cheap or toxic behaviors that might include barking that I don't like or if your dog has these [superstitious](#) behaviors like spinning, you don't want to include those. So, I include that in my criteria of what I don't want because it's super important that I keep that in my forefront so I'll know not to mark and reward near one of those behaviors or that they could be a sign of frustration. So, I will alter my protocol.

00:03:46

So, criteria of what the finished product looks like, but hey we're not gonna train the whole finished product in one setting. So, the next part, number two is what is the criteria of the slice that you're training today. So, if we were, say, want to train loose leash walking, we might just be creating value for a place at your side. We call it [Reinforcement Zone](#) on the left and Reinforcement Zone on the right.

00:04:11

So, there's a whole list of criteria for that. We might be just taking one slice of it and reinforce and create a training plan for today for just what is one step. And when I'm teaching [loose leash walking](#) there's actually several different steps that I will put in. You can train them as just one little layer. We do all our training in layers. One little training layer.

00:04:33

Remember, as I mentioned in podcast [episode number 171](#), we start with conditioning, creating an emotional state, a positive CER. Because our four goals - we want to create confidence, we want to build trust and relationship number one; we want to minimize the conflicts that our dog has with us or that we have with our dog because of the way they go about their life. We want to maximize the reinforcement that comes through us. Minimize the reinforcement they get through their environment.

00:05:00

So, with those things in mind, our criteria is easy. So, you might be saying I'm just going to be working on a Recaller game. And when you look at your training protocol that we've provided in [Recallers](#), it will be just working on one slice of one game to help build confidence or create a positive CER. And then a game maybe 10 weeks from now, it will be something that is maximizing reinforcement from you.

00:05:27

So, we're working on different parts of those goals with each game that we're doing in the training. That you're doing between you and your dog. Okay, so that is criteria.



# Episode: #172

## How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

00:05:37

Number three, this is a biggie. I'm gonna do a bit of a deep dive into number three because it's environmental manipulation. How do you create the ideal environment for your dog to have success in the training?

And the reason I wanted to go a little deeper on this, yes, I know we've already done [podcast episode number 6](#) was all about how to manipulate the environment, but it was kind of like a 30-thousand-foot view. And I'm constantly saying, make sure you don't take your puppy to a bunny farm when you're first training and people write and go "Well Susan, where should I take my dog?"

00:06:05

So, let's talk about how to manipulate that environment so you could have the absolute most [successful training session](#). So, number one you're gonna know where you're planning on training, and you want to do an inventory of what distractions are naturally there. So, number one what's the size of the training area.

00:06:21

So, if I was going to be training my puppy who is now 17 weeks, I can take her to our big training building which is 11,000 square feet on the training floor. But I couldn't maybe three weeks ago, because there was just so many distractions. I had to manipulate that environment by maybe putting up baby gates so she would stay in one area.

00:06:42

So that whenever you're considering any part of this, it's the age and the stage that your dog is at. So, another 17-week-old puppy might not be able to work in that building. Age and stage of your dog or your puppy is super important through all of this. So, the size of the area that you're going to be working in. What about the surface that you're gonna be working in?

00:07:02

So, you might be doing - a lot of agility training is done like in horse barns where there might be horse poop in the arena floor or sheep poop or whatever. What is the surface and what kind of distraction value does that create for you? It's got to be in your training protocol guys. It's got to be part of your plan. It's really, really important that that gets in there.

00:07:21

Next thing to consider about the environment you know you're gonna be training in, are there other living beings that are gonna be there? Will there be other dogs? Will there be other people? Will there be wildlife? Is there potential for other critters to be around? There'll be scents - as in smells. If you're dealing with a dog who is naturally driven by odors, if you're training a dog who's naturally driven and reinforced by really good smells, that needs to be considered one of your big distractions.

00:07:47

So, it's the sights, the sounds, the smells, all that are going to be potentially distracting to your dog as well as the texture of the footing that you will be training on that day. All of that lays out the distraction value. If you go to [podcast episode number 24](#) where I talked about the distraction index, you will be able to know how distracting is that naturally to your dog to begin with. And you're going to change some of the things down the road. There's an order to how I do this protocol.



# How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

00:08:20

I have to set up my criteria first and then I go to the environment that I'm going to be training in. Because that's going to affect how successful I will be in achieving that criteria. Number two, you've got to ask yourself at this stage of training with this age of dog you're working on, do I want to decrease the distraction value for my dog?

00:08:40

So how am I gonna do that? If the answer is yes, it could be I'm just training on [Crate Games](#). I'm not letting the dog out of the crate because I know it's just gonna be a disaster. If you're working at home, I'm just training in the bathroom. I've talked about crapper training on this podcast a lot, haven't I?

00:08:53

Of course, if you're training in a new environment, you're gonna be training your dog on leash. Maybe it's gonna be a leash and harness or a leash and collar. What does that look like for you and your dog? What about an ex-pen or baby gates to manipulate the environment to create a smaller environment?

00:09:09

If I was going to somebody's training facility that was like mine, I would just grab maybe an agility tunnel to make a physical barrier in a corner that I could train in, which would decrease the environmental distraction for my dog. It's no longer a bunny farm. Even if there are other dogs in the environment, my dog can't see them. She can hear them, but it reduces the distraction value immediately when she can't see motion.

00:09:36

At home of course you can go to a living room, a kitchen if the bathroom is being occupied, but you want to, in that dog's case, the same thing is it sights, smells, the texture. What is most distracting to the dog? Then you want to minimize all of that by using what is at your disposal.

00:09:53

Now you might be saying "No Susan, I want to manipulate my dog's environment so I can add a little bit of distraction value." Because remember when I talked about the 5Cs, once we have connection and clarity and confidence, we want to introduce a little bit of distraction. So that it's got to be a consideration and it's got to be intentional on your part. So, with my 17-week-old puppy, what that looks like is just having another dog just laying in the Hot Zone while she's working. And eventually that goes to the other dog is walking around.

00:10:25

She actually can work with another dog working nearby, provided we're not doing super high energy reinforcement with that other dog. So, you're going to be intentional: Am I ready for this? And should my puppy be off leash? Or can my puppy work inside a barrier with that other dog nearby? You might be moving to a city street.

00:10:47

You might go to a [Sniff Spot](#), something I've talked about here on the podcast where you have a bigger environment. It's just different than working in your own backyard.

You are growing the distractions because new always trumps the norm for any dog when you're talking distraction. And of course, yes, we can always go to the bunny farm.



# How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

00:11:05

Alright. So, what if you don't want to go to the bunny farm? You want to get your dog away from home, what can you do? You can take an ex-pen to a park and just put a blanket over the ex-pen. So now we can create a barrier right there at any park. You can work inside that ex-pen, or you can open up one side so it's a barrier on three sides as you're gradually increasing a higher-level distraction, but only working on behaviors that your dog is very, very confident with.

00:11:33

Element number four. What is the type of reinforcement that you are going to be taking to your training? You need to know, of course, based on the distractions and the criteria, do you need super high value food? Will you be using toys? What behaviors are very reinforcing to your dog that you can use as a reinforcement in today's training.

00:11:53

Number five, this is a biggie, not gonna cover it all today, but it's the props. Things like, are you using a crate? Are you going to be using a Hot Zone, like a bed for your dog to jump up on? What targets are you going to be doing? Now there's gonna be props and targets for my pet dog training. There'll be props and targets for agility training or any other sport dog training.

00:12:14

There'll be props and targets for fitness if I'm working on fitness. So that's going to be in your training protocol, so you know "Oh yeah, that's I'm gonna be working on behavior X, then I'll need this as my warmup. So, this is going to be the prop that I'm gonna be using to warm my dog up prior to jumping in and working on that."

00:12:33

Number six, where will you be placing your [video camera](#) for this training? Where is the best location for your video camera, the best location for your crate, your best location for your Hot Zone if you're using Hot Zone for your dog and also where will your reinforcement be? So, I will use cookies in a bowl, and I'll just keep them on the floor when I'm training my dogs.

00:12:54

I'll have toys and I may have them one around my neck or one in my back pocket. And I'll also have others in the environment that I can grab and just go into a game so that I will strategically plan those reinforcements based on what I have planned for today's slice. Number seven, what will I be doing for my [balance breaks](#)?

00:13:14

Now this is closely related to my reinforcement. So, I want to be very intentional about the arousal state that my dog has. And so, I want to be playing games that create a change in my dog's physiology, both before I train, in between my training, when I'm doing my balance breaks and after my training. Super important that that's planned, it's not like, "Okay, you've trained long enough."

Because what's gonna happen guys is you might be working on "Let's play little game of retrieve." and then suddenly you see that your dog's getting slower and you go, "Oh yeah, I should do one of those balance breaks." And that is not the time to do a balance break. You want to do it when your dog's still enjoying it.





# Episode: #172

## How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

00:13:55

So, if you have those planned, what does it look like, what are you gonna use and how does that mesh with what you have planned for your reinforcement in today's training? Now that goes right into point number eight, which is your transitions.

00:14:09

Remember in podcast [episode number 167](#), I talked about the fact that I train in stations. So, I'll set up a few stations. My warmup is always something to do with fitness and that will transition into whatever it is I'm gonna work on. I can be splitting it into at least two different stations. How am I gonna transition between those stations?

00:14:27

That should be part of my training protocol. Sometimes it's just telling my dog to "hop it up" because I want her to go in the Hot Zone so that I can go to my notes and take some notes about what just happened. Or I might give her a longer break, pull down that camera and look at the training that we just did.

So that could be one transition, but quite often I do Recaller games or tug games to go from one station to another. I'm not a big fan of just shoving a tug toy in a dog's mouth and dragging them around the room while you move from one behavior to the next. Alright. So be intentional. How are you going to transition between those stations?

00:15:05

Point number nine. And this is things that you want to always have in the back of your mind. For me it's number one, [ItsYerChoice](#). ItsYerChoice with food, ItsYerChoice with toys, ItsYerChoice with people that may come in and out of the room. That is always in play. Number two, as my mentor Bob Bailey says, "Pavlov is always on your shoulder" which means be aware of what you are conditioning inadvertently when you are using your reinforcement.

00:15:33

It could be emotional states that you're conditioning a dog who's a little bit worried about this piece of equipment. So, I want to be very intentional about getting the dog into a higher state so that I don't lower her threshold.

You want to be very intentional about [your dog's body language, their emotional state](#), so that they are compliant with what it is that you are attempting to train. Right. They're the ones who drive the training for you.

00:15:58

Finally, a little reminder about those cheap behaviors or possibly toxic behaviors that you do not want to include. Alright. That leads us to point number ten and that is you get your dog. But there's two other big things that I would put on my training plan is - you get your dog - your execution, there's a lot of things involved with that - and finally, your review of what you just did. What you do when you're looking at your video and your training notes.

00:16:23

Okay. So today it was about how we take the program that I isolated for you on podcast episode number 171 and how we get it into a protocol. Every single thing is planned.



# Episode: #172

## How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

00:16:37

Whether we're just teaching the students hand targets. We want to be intentional about what state of arousal do we want our dog in when we're first learning, and what state of arousal when we're growing the game. Super intentional about everything that we're doing. And that makes for seamless training makes for happy dogs. And it makes for just a fun training environment.

00:16:58

Okay. In an upcoming podcast, I'm going to be doing a deep dive into the science of what happens when we train our dogs the way we train our dogs. And then finally, I am gonna get around and talk about why I choose not to use food lures and the contrast between what I do and what food luring does in the name of dog training.

00:17:23

If you've been following along on this series where I talk about how we train our dogs and how we train our students' dogs, and you have any questions, jump over to YouTube. Leave me a question in the comment section and while you're there hey, why not just subscribe to the YouTube channel? Because my team is the most amazing people at putting together amazing dog training videos. You're not gonna want to miss a single one. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 171: Dog Training With Layered Shaping: Why Classical Conditioning Must Come First](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 149: Superstitious Behavior In Dog Training: Beware The Killer Bees!](#)

[YouTube Video: Understanding Your Dog's Reinforcement Zone \(RZ\) with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Loose Leash Walking with Susan Garret](#)

[Recallers](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 167: Reduce Your Dog's Stress And Anxiety In Training](#)

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

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Sniff Spot](#)

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

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

[Learn to Play ItsYerChoice](#)

[Podcast Episode 157: Dog Body Language: Understanding Canine Communication Signals And Emotions](#)



# How To Teach Your Dog Anything With My Training Plan

### 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

- Website <https://dogsthat.com>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/>
- TikTok <https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat>
- Pinterest <https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/susangarrett>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs>

