

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:00

SG As a professional dog trainer, I can assure you there are six words that your dog training coach never wants to hear. And I'm not talking about, "but he does it at home." Those are close.

Those six words I'm talking about are, I "**tried that and it didn't work.**" So today I thought I'd do a deep dive into what goes on in a relationship when a student says that to a coach. And I'm going to share what might be a better tack to take with your coach. And I'm going to share some insight for coaches as well.

00:00:40

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And if you are thinking, "Well, I've tried that and it just doesn't work," first thing I'd like you to consider is, did you pick the right mentor to follow? Are you getting coaching advice from the right dog training coach? Because, I've reminded you of this on the podcast channel before, dog training is an unregulated profession.

Anyone can say, 'I am a professional dog trainer,' and you know what? They'd be right, because the industry is not regulated. So anybody can tell you they are a dog trainer. And you can believe them. All of a sudden they have authority.

00:01:20

And maybe to you they are, but really, trust me on this one. Not all dog trainers are alike. Actually, there probably isn't an industry with a wider range of thinking, of beliefs, of actions, that any professionals could take. So did you pick the right mentor? Do they have success with their own dogs? When you watch their own dogs, do you go, "Wow, I would love my dogs to have that kind of relationship with me. I'd love my dogs to work like that." What about their students' dogs? Do their students' dogs have amazing results?

00:01:57

And I'm not just talking about, you know, them teaching one or two other professionals. I mean, do they have a wide range of different breeds that have had results? And do their students come from all kinds of walks of life and circumstances and ages? Then you can say, 'Yes, Susan, yes, yes, yes. Check, check, check.' There's a lot of great dog trainers out there. I don't want to scare you. However, once you've decided you have picked the right mentor, they do have the results you want.

00:02:24

The next question you need to ask is, "Is the system right for you?" And by that, I mean for me, it's got to be effective, efficient, and compassionate. And so if what I'm being told to do to my dog doesn't check those boxes, then that isn't right for me. My mentor, Bob Bailey, says that any dog trainer, given any amount of time, can train any animal to do anything with the right motivation.

So saying, "I tried that and it doesn't work." Is probably not true. It's probably more on you than it is on the dog training coach, but let's assume that yes, they're compassionate, they're effective, they're efficient, they get amazing results. I love the way their dogs work. I've seen like hundreds of case studies and their students are amazing. Yes, yes, yes, yes. All right. Now let's take a look at you.



00:03:20

Because at the end of the day, the challenge you're having isn't a challenge to anybody but you. Your dog's a hundred percent okay with it. They've lived their life perfectly fine the way things are.

The challenge is with you, so you need to take responsibility for taking action. And so, what do you suppose your dog training coach is going to say when you come up to them and say, "Yeah, I tried that. It doesn't work." Because quite often that comes with a little bit of body language associated with it, and it's not often kind. Because here's the thing, and I've mentioned this on the podcast before, you can shape people and I hope you intentionally do.

00:04:00

You use kindness, you use gratitude to have the kind of relationships you'd love to have with people. There have been a lot of people that I've observed shaping their dog training coaches to not coach them.

So maybe your coach has got great information for you, but when they've tried [to give you feedback](#), you tell them things like, "I've tried that it doesn't work." Or, "Yeah, but you don't know my dog." Or "That won't work with a breed of mine." Or, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no. I know that I wouldn't be able to do that." Whatever.

So you can shape your coach to tell you just what they know you want to hear, "Oh, you're doing great. It looks awesome. Oh, your dog's having so much fun. Look at that little tail tucked up under his butt. I, I think I saw a little wiggle there."

00:04:40

You can shape your coach. What do you expect the coach to be thinking when they know their methodology works for all kinds of dogs and all kinds of people, yet you say, "Yeah, I tried that, but it didn't work." What's the best outcome from that kind of a dialogue? Your coach might be thinking, "Yeah, what you probably mean is 'I tried that once or twice, but it didn't work. Or, I tried it when my dog was the most distracted ever, but it didn't work. Or I tried it after walking for hours and hours and letting my dog fence run with the neighbor's dog, but it didn't work.'"

00:05:20

Or I tried it my way, but it didn't work. So all of these things could be going through your coach's mind, but what can they do when you say, "I tried that it didn't work." They could smile and go, "Yeah, that's too bad. Yeah, let's think about what that might want to look like in the future," or whatever else they tell you to make you feel good so that you're being heard. But you're shutting the door for them helping you.

They might say to you, "Let me see your dog training records for your last five sessions, and what criteria did you get [80% success](#) with, and what do the dog's other 23 hours of the day look like before you take them out to train?"

00:06:00

So there's a lot of questions that could be running through your head. I want to give you a better, more effective strategy for you to approach your coach if you truly believe that you tried it and it didn't work. Because guess what? I'm not saying that's not possible; it is possible. What I'm saying is it might not be the best tack to take with somebody that you're looking to get feedback from. So what you want to do is open a dialogue with your coach.



00:06:40

Open a dialogue that looks something like this. "Hey, I've been trying that process and before I go any further, can I just run a few things by you to make sure I've got it clear?" Who's going to say no to that? They might say, "Why don't we talk about it after class?" Or, you know, "We'll have a phone consult" or something, but they're not going to say no. If they do, then you know you've got the wrong coach. First, let me walk you through all of the steps of the process as I understand them. And you might go through step one, step two, step three. Okay, my dog and I currently are at step two. And here's the criteria I'm looking for.

00:07:20

Now, what I want to hear from you as my student, I want you to talk about the 'what' you're seeing, the 'how' you're approaching your training.

What I don't ever want to hear is the 'what' you think your dog is thinking. Never, never tell me that. Never tell anyone that.

Because unless you have a download from the Big Guy himself or the Big Gal herself. None of us really knows what our dogs are thinking. We can have some inkling based on [their body language](#). So that would be a 'what.' "What I'm seeing is my dog does this, should I be concerned?"

00:08:00

"So, I'm on step two of the process and I'm training at this time of day because, I'm using these three reinforcers because, I decide to change [reinforcement](#) when I see this." Because a lot of times people reinforce a dog for leaving work by changing reinforcement, or they reinforce a dog for something they don't ever want to see again.

When they change reinforcement, "Oh, my dog's not interested in the ball. Look, mommy's got a squeaky!" So. "I use these reinforcements. I connected with my dog before I started training, so they were in the right excitement stage.

00:08:40

And as you can see from my notes from my last five training sessions here in my journal, I did get success up to this point. When I reviewed my video, because [I always video every session](#). When I reviewed my video, I noticed my mechanics were doing this, so I corrected it to look more like what you were doing.

But I'm still getting this, and what I'm thinking is that I'd like to try either this or possibly that. Do either one of those sound like a good option to you?" Now you've got a coach that goes, "Bless you, my child you were listening!"

00:09:20

Now you've got a coach who's engaged in troubleshooting with you. "Hey, yeah, well we had another Saluki, and when they did that, this is what happened. So, try that reinforcement after that behavior, and I think that's going to solve the problem." It's a conversation, it's a dialogue based on intentionally clear statements and questions. Right?

Do you see how that's different than saying, "Yeah, I tried that, but it didn't work"? Now, for those of you who are coaching people in dog training, I'd like you to consider what really is your role and what really is your goal?



00:10:00

Like, what is the ultimate outcome? And it might be easy to say, "Well, I'm getting paid to teach them how to train their dog." But really you can do better than that.

What I like to think is I'm training dog owners to be really critical thinkers, and the way that we get critical thinkers is by asking questions rather than giving answers. So when somebody comes to you and says, "I don't think that will work for my dog," or "That doesn't work for my dog." It's easy to say, "Well, did you try step one and step two and step three and step four?"

Because they can sit there and just nod. "Yep, mmhmm, yep, uhuh mmhmm." Ask questions. "Well explain to me what the process is up to this point for you? Let me see your records. Have you been videoing because your mechanics might, you know, this is a tricky thing. You really need to see your mechanics. Can I see a video of your last session?"

00:10:40

You see what happens is a lot of times dog training coaches, actually coaches in any walk of life, like to tell their students where they're wrong and what they're doing wrong. Because it pads the ego to say, "Yeah, I'm the professional and I know the system and I know what's right. And I am really good, and you're clearly not and that's why you're failing."

But if you ask questions and just say, "So what step are you at in the process? Oh, you're at step two, and what was the results from the last repetition that you did? Oh, you haven't attempted step two, so you really are at step one. How many different locations have you been training that in?"

00:11:20

And really probe to find out what they know about what you're trying to teach. Find out if they've been picking up what you've been putting down. Find out if they really understand what's going on. I believe our role as coaches is to create that critical thinking within every dog owner. So we help guide them through a series of questions so that they uncover the gap.

00:12:00

Because ultimately, just like when we're training dogs, when we're training humans, our role is to fill them with confidence. You've got this. Any trainer, given any amount of time, can train any animal. But they're not just training in any system. T

hey're training in your system, and you know it works. So guide them through your questions to help them see the gaps that they've had in their training, so that they can become number one, critical thinkers. But number two, better dog trainers.

So those of us with a dog, remember, it's all up to us. The dog doesn't care if we have a challenge. The challenge is on us, it's not on our coach to fix it. It's on us to peel back the layers and figure out what's going on.

00:12:42

So we either need to find a better coach with a better system, or we need to be more intentional about the action we're taking. Are we doing something daily at least four or five times a week, ideally two or three times a day? Are we having short training sessions? Are we doing all the things that I've mentioned in this podcast that will bring out the best in your dog? Daily intentional actions. And what about [the other 23 hours of the day?](#)





Episode: #185

I Tried That, It Didn't Work

00:13:07

And remember, we can set our goals, but we have to be patient and allow our dogs to set the pace of the training. Because ultimately, we have to meet our dogs where they're at and help raise their confidence so that they want to take action with you every single day.

Follow the plan, ask your coach better questions, and trust the process. That way you'll never find yourself even thinking, "That didn't work for my dog." Does this make sense to you?

00:13:34

And before I go, I would love it if you're listening to this podcast in iTunes or anywhere you can leave a review of the podcast. You know, this is how the world gets to know more about Shaped by Dog. So if you resonate with the messages that we're sending out to you every week, if you resonate with the methodology and the coaching that we're giving to you, please take some time and go to wherever you're listening to this podcast and leave a review.

00:14:03

Tell the world what you think about the knowledge that we're sharing here with dog owners all over the world. Until next time, I thank you and I'll see you next time right here, on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 142: Giving And Receiving Constructive Feedback About Your Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 184: Proofing Vs Generalizing In Dog Training To Grow Skills And Confidence](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 182: The Game Within The Game: How To Multiply Your Dog's Reinforcements](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 83: The Dog Training You Do When You're Not Dog Training](#)



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>

