

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:00

SG Over the course of the past week, I've been doing a lot of live streams as we celebrate our big cyber event. Now, I've met a lot of people at the crossroads in their dog training when they're looking to go to in a direction of more reinforcement based. But they're worried, they're concerned. And if that's you, then this podcast is for you.

00:00:30

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And guess what, pretty well everybody out there at some point has got to the place that you are unless you were blessed by the opportunity to learn nothing but reinforcement-based dog training. But those people are few and far between. The vast majority of us got to the exact same crossroads that you are at right now and you're leaving what is known to you.

You are at a place of change and change always produces feelings of fear but also vulnerability because the 'what if's' are now creeping up in your brain. Like if you are leaving what you've done, then what happens when you have a challenge? What happens if you have a problem?

00:01:20

And by leaving what is known, you are so vulnerable to those so-called experts who are going to tell you why you made this massive, big mistake. And so, I'm going to give you three things to keep in mind.

Always, number one, keep the dogs around your [dogs safe](#), keep [your kids safe](#), keep [you safe](#), keep [everyone safe](#). Safety is always priority number one. Now, if you are changing because you have a [reactive dog](#) or a dog who has issues with other dogs or people, then this is super important.

00:01:53

But if you are somebody who is trusting another professional, keeping your dog safe is also very important because you don't know what another so-called professional is going to do in the name of training. Because unfortunately, there is more than one case of a dog being killed in the name of training, at the hands of somebody that that dog owners trusted.

So, priority number one, always, always, always keep your dog safe. Priority number two, love the dog. And let the dog know you love them by your actions. So those are three simple things. Keep your dog safe, love the dog, continue to learn.

00:02:37

Three simple things that no matter what's going on in your life, you can go back to those three simple things. Now, keeping your dog safe could be management. That's all it is. It could be having a very secure leash and collar or head halter or a harness.

That can keep your dog safe. It could be training in an environment where your dog is safe. It could be managing your home environment for your dog so that your dog and everybody in that environment is always safe.



Episode: #187

When To Listen To Your Heart In Dog Training

00:03:05

Now, allowing the dog to know you love them by the decisions you make. Now, that sometimes is pretty gray. But I know if you are at this crossroads or even if you're nearing this crossroads or even if you're listening to this podcast because you think this lady is crazy, deep down inside of you somewhere is a love for your dog that put you on this path. That wanted you to look in a [different direction for your dog's training](#). And there's just too many of us out there proving that reinforcement-based dog training works on a broad and wide and massive scale.

00:03:43

And so, you have got to at the very least have to have a curiosity about it. Now, there will be people out there that will say, like they did to me back in the early Nineties when I decided to walk this path, get to that crossroad.

They said, "This kind of training is okay for tricks, but for serious dog training, to teach a dog to come when they're called no matter what, they have to be punished for that. They have to know because they're not going to choose you or your cookies over a running deer or over a kid on a bicycle." And they're right, they're not.

00:04:20

But does that mean you can't teach a dog to ignore all of those distractions? Anybody who says it's not possible, has not attempted it with a proven process that has worked, not just with one or two dogs, and not just with hundreds, but with thousands and thousands of dogs.

Yes it is possible, but you can't think in a linear fashion. You can't think that, "Oh, deer are exciting. My dog loves deer. Therefore, the meatball can't compete with a deer." That's not what we do when we apply science to dog training. When we work from a place of reinforcement. There is far, far more layers than just that.

00:05:00

Because anytime you turn it into a transactional decision for your dog, they're never choosing you guys. They're never choosing you. But do my dogs choose me? Every single time. And it's not just because of the breed of dog I have, because I have had, I started with Terriers, Jack Russell Terriers. And I remember a story of somebody telling me they'll never own another Jack Russell again, because her Jack Russell kept killing her chickens.

00:05:30

And she said, "You know what one time Susan, I caught that dog red-handed. And I grabbed him, and I flipped him upside down and I shook him, and I pinned him to the ground, and I yelled at him, and I hit him." You know, it sounds horrific. "And I kept telling him how bad he was." That went on. My blood was boiling. That went on for what seemed like forever.

00:05:50

And do you know what that dog did when I let him up from the ground? I said, "He probably went after the closest chicken." She said, "He went after the closest chicken!" And he should have thought his life was going to be over.

But you are asking the dog to make a transactional decision. You are saying, "Are you more afraid of me or do you love chasing chickens more?" Terriers love to hunt and kill, so it doesn't matter what might happen after, it's that instinct to hunt and kill.



00:06:21

“So, Susan what you're saying is this reinforcement stuff isn't going to work?” No. What I'm saying is that punishment stuff is highly unlikely to work. But the reinforcement is the only thing that's going to work with a dog that is that driven to do something in opposition to what makes sense for you to want that dog to do.

00:06:43

But when you're at that crossroads, you are going to have people that are going to say, “Oh, that cookie, that clicker stuff, that's only going to work for, you know, dogs that are born to follow humans. That's not going to work for hunting dogs. That's not going to work for protection dogs, like the big tough German Shepherds, the Malinois, you know those big tough dogs. They need a firm hand because [they're going to try and dominate you](#). And what are you going to do in that instance?”

00:07:12

And so, when you're at that crossroads and you're stepping into something brand new, you are more vulnerable. You're more likely to be prey to somebody who is in judgment of what you're attempting to do. And the worst thing happens is if you're attempting to train this way and things aren't going well, then of course your fear escalates and the value of the opinions of others is going to grow in your brain. But when that happens, remember, keep the dog safe, love the dog, and keep growing your knowledge.

00:07:46

Now, where do you grow that knowledge? You grow that knowledge in two different areas. And there are the science-based learners, those that have great credentials after their name, the PhDs of behavior, those that really have studied the experimental behavior.

They understand how to apply the laws of learning. And there's also the science-based learners that are in the field training the dogs. Now, you would think that those paths would be the same, but it's interpretation of the science.

00:08:19

What you want to make sure that you are doing is following a dog trainer who is taking on board the science, applying it to their training, but being reflective of the training that they're doing. That's so important because so often people fall in love with immediate results and think, “Yeah, I've got it.” A self-reflective dog trainer is the one that you want to be following.

00:08:45

Sure, you want to follow somebody who's got great results with all kinds of different dogs, and all kinds of different people. But you want to follow those trainers that are constantly analyzing their processes, constantly tweaking what they've done in hopes of getting it better. Because guess what, Science is theory and it's always evolving. What you don't want to do is follow people who say, “Science is garbage. That dog training doesn't happen in a laboratory. It has nothing to do with that.”

00:09:18

Really? Be wary. Be very wary. I would say runaway. It doesn't matter that they've got results because as my mentor Bob Bailey says, “Anybody using any method, as long as they work at it long enough, will be able to train a dog.” That's just the beauty of dogs.



Episode: #187

When To Listen To Your Heart In Dog Training

00:09:38

But we're in 2022 now. We are at a place where we know you don't have to muscle dogs. You don't have to be more dominant. You don't have to think of overpowering. And it should break your heart when you see those images on social media of people that are harshly correcting a dog, of people who are saying, "This dog is being dominant."

00:10:02

I've mentioned in my podcast many, many times the [Belief Loop](#). And the Belief Loop describes how confirmation bias creates monsters in the dog training world. So quickly, let's go through this again.

Let's say your Belief Loop is that all dogs will try to dominate you at some point. And then you see your dog or your puppy, maybe it's a seven-month-old puppy, that growls at a child. You're out walking and the puppy just growls at the child. What is that thought? That thought was, "Did you just growl at that child?" Your thought is, "That puppy, I got a bad puppy. There's something wrong with that puppy."

00:10:43

Because dogs are always trying to dominate you— "Oh, this is your first sign of being dominant, isn't it?" And so, your core belief affects your initial thoughts, and your thoughts fire your emotions. What is your emotion now? It's going to be anger. It's going to be one of 'this can't happen under my watch.' And that emotion now is what fuels your action.

What will your next action be? It will be, "Hey, I'm going to correct that puppy. I've got to tell that puppy on no certain, certain terms do you ever, ever growl at a child! Never acceptable in my books!"

00:11:25

So, your emotions cause you to take that puppy in hand and let them know, "You better not ever do that again." What is the outcome now? The outcome is, depending on how firmly you corrected, you may cause that puppy to be more afraid of you than they are of that child, and they won't ever growl at a child again. And you may go, "Well, that's great, Susan. That's great." But is it? Because a growl is really a communication tool that a dog has with us.

00:11:59

A growl says, "There's something wrong with this situation." And it's our job to be curious about it, not to assume we know what's going on.

Now, what's a different way to look at that situation? If your belief is like mine, that dogs aren't trying to dominate us, that dogs do the best they can with the education we've given them in the environment we've put them in. So, has that puppy grown up in your home with children? Has that puppy been around all sorts of different children?

00:12:26

Oh, the answer would be, no? All right then. So now we know that that puppy does the best they can with the education, we haven't given them any education around children, in the environment we put them in. We just took them to the school yard to go pick up our kid and all these children come rushing on them and they growled.

00:12:25

So, if you believe like I do that dogs do the best they can in the situation we've put them in with the education we give them, let's look at that Belief Loop in a different way.



00:12:54

I hear my puppy growl, my thought is, "Wow, that's a seven-month-old puppy that's growling. I wonder what's wrong?" I immediately get curious. Now I know there's something wrong.

So, then my emotion is 'that poor puppy.' For that puppy to feel the need to growl they are feeling a lack of confidence. They are feeling some fear.

I don't know what exactly they're feeling, but I know it is my job to get them out of that environment to a place where they can be confident and my thought is, 'Okay, get the puppy out of there and nothing untoward can happen to the child.'

Remember, keep dog, keep children always safe.

00:13:36

And my other thought is, 'Let's plan for how I can work at counter conditioning this.' So, my emotion towards that puppy is one of compassion and empathy.

My action is to get the puppy out of there, take note, jot everything down I can about that situation to help best prepare that puppy and myself for future training session where I can counter condition exactly what I saw and what is the outcome? Children safe. Puppy safe. I'm well versed at what I need to do.

So you can see how firmly entrenched beliefs can create a [confirmation bias](#) about any situation with your dog.

00:14:18

So, when people hear that you have made a change and you're going in the direction of reinforcement based, you may get naysayers, you may get people whispering in your ear, "Why? This is the worst thing you could have ever done."

Keep your dog safe. Love the dog. Grow your knowledge. Read books. Listen to podcasts of people that have been getting the results in the area that you want to get results.

00:14:43

But guard the knowledge to your brain and that pathway of incoming knowledge.

You put a filter on it and make sure that it isn't just somebody's confirmed bias opinion of how dogs should be trained based on 'this is how we did it in the good old days' and 'this is how I've got results from my students'.

Ask yourself, does it feel right to you?

00:15:08

It isn't necessary to be a dog's dominant leader. It just isn't. It's just so many people that have proved it isn't necessary. So no matter where you are on your path, ideally you've already joined one of our online programs, and if you haven't, there's tons of great learning on my YouTube page.

But the first step I encourage you to do is, number one, make sure that in your quest to show your dog you love that dog is you are growing opportunities for that dog to earn high value reinforcement from you every day.

Because that's how the [transfer of value](#) goes from things the dog loves to you.



Episode: #187

When To Listen To Your Heart In Dog Training

00:15:49

And the more that that transfer of value gets through you, the more [those distractions](#) in your dog's environment turn into white noise. And then it's not a transaction of 'don't chase the deer, I've got a meatball'. It becomes a reinforcement, high value reinforcement, and a history that makes that decision dead easy for your dogs the way it's dead easy for mine.

00:16:12

And if your dog doesn't have high value reinforcements right now, then that's your focus is growing high value reinforcements, because that's the way that we all can ascend and have amazingly happy, well-trained dogs.

And we're living the life we always dreamed of with a dog that we love. Keep everyone safe, love your dog, grow your knowledge.

I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 112: Stressed Dog? How Trigger Stacking Might Be Putting Your Dog Over Threshold](#)

[Podcast Episode 58: How to Create Kid Friendly Dogs and Dog Friendly Kids](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Dog Bite Prevention with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Dog Body Language, Communication Signals, and How to Read Dogs with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Reactive or Aggressive Dogs: Key Insights with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Susan Garrett's Dog Training Philosophy and Training Processes](#)

[Podcast Episode 46: Is Your Dog Trying to Dominate You and What You Can Do About It](#)

[Podcast Episode 8: Get Your Dog in the Belief Loop of Awesome](#)

[Podcast Episode 100: Dog Training: The Most Important Lesson I Can Share](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Reinforcement, Permissions and Transfer of Value in Dog Training with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 24: Help for Dogs who Chase Chipmunks, Bicycles, and Neighbor's Cats \(Distraction Intensity Index\)](#)



When To Listen To Your Heart In 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>

