

Making Your Mind Your Most Powerful Dog Training Tool

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG Last week I got tagged into a conversation on the Facebook page of a balance trainer, which is not a place I find myself very often, but I thought, "Let's go and approach from a place of curiosity." I learned a lot, that might be the topic of another podcast, but one of the comments was from a former student who said that our program didn't work for them.

And it got me thinking about why our program or anyone's program might not work for some people. And that's a topic of today's podcast. Plus, we're gonna share a few books and how you could become one of our students. I'll share all that by the end of this podcast.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And you know, it's not like an ego takes a hit when somebody said, "I tried your program, and it just didn't work." Because really, I know that there are students who are definitely going to get results from our program, and they fall into one of two, pretty much guaranteed going to see results.

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And that is, number one would be they're already successful dog trainers and they come to us to learn a different approach, a different methodology. Now they're already successful dog trainers, it tells me something about their mindset. Now, the other group of students that almost invariably will get results from the program, and those are people who have never trained a dog before. And you're gonna say, "Well, that's weird. Why would they have results more than people who have trained dogs?"

Because they come in like sponges. They just want to learn. They're in awe of watching their dogs get things. They're in awe of seeing their dogs perform behaviors. They get results because they follow the program as it's laid out.

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Now, the group in the middle, some of them get outrageous results and some of them you know, less than perfect. What's the difference that I see between all of these people? [It's mindset](#). It's that simple. It is the mindset that each of us have. Now, I'm not going to label you and put you in a corner and say, "Guess what, you're never gonna have success dog training if you have mindset B."

No, I'm gonna share with you how you can. So, two different mindsets as described by the first book I'm gonna talk about. [Mindset by Carol Dweck](#). It's a phenomenal book. I really encourage you to read that book. And she talks about mindset as something that we are given, or we adopt, and we're given it by maybe people who we really value their opinion at really formable times in our lives.

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It could be parents, it could be siblings, it could be coaches, it could be teachers. If they'll say things to you that plant seeds in your brain that that is who you are. Could be things like, "You're so smart. You're so smart." And you can say, "Well, Susan, what's wrong with that?" Telling a child they're smart is very different than, "I love how persistent you are." Because one day that child may find somebody who is smarter and then does that make them not so smart?



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Or one day they might fail a math test and now, "Were you lying to me? I'm really not smart, am I?" So, we adopt that mindset based on things that people tell us, or they're giving us, or we adopt it based on modeling because it may be who a parent is that they will say things in absolutes like, "Well, this is just who I am. Like it or lump it. This is who I am."

And they'll say things about, "I'm just not patient." Which really means, "Up to this point in my life, I get frustrated easy but I'm keen to learn how that can change for me." So, one is a fixed mindset, "I'm just not patient." The other is a growth mindset.

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A growth mindset, people think, well that's, you're born with that. No, you're not. And that's one of the things that Carol Dweck describes in the book. That it's definitely not a nature, it's a nurture thing, which means no matter how old you are now, it can change for you. It really, really can. Because if you define yourself as being talented or smart or fast, what's going to happen when you fail?

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What's gonna happen when you don't run as fast or when you aren't as talented at something? You're more likely to give it up because in your mindset you are talented. If you are struggling with something, that must mean, "I shouldn't do that because I'm a talented person. I do the things that I'm talented at."

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A fixed mindset seeps into your relationships, including the relationship you have with your dog. Because if you can't change, then the other person can't change. And if you know, this is as good as it gets because no one's changing, like let's just call it quits right now. A growth mindset understands that a great relationship is built on effort and communication. And so, in order to improve it, let's just improve those two things.

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Growth mindset sees possibilities. A fixed mindset sees a puppy as, "Oh, that's fearful. That puppy's aggressive." Or, "That puppy's fearful. That puppy's clumsy or stupid." Or, "That puppy is - boom. Therefore, don't keep that puppy. Take it back to the breeder." The fixed mindset is one that lacks curiosity because a growth mindset would say, "Oh, that puppy doesn't look comfortable in this environment. I'm going to get it out of that environment and do X, Y, and Z."

Alright. So fixed mindset definitely impacts your ability to look at subject matter because the moment that you get frustrated by something, "Pfft, this is BS. This isn't going to work for me. This isn't going to work for me because I've got titanium knees."

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"This isn't going to work for me..." Because there is a litany of reasons you could come up with if you have a fixed mindset why this isn't going to work for you. But if you have a growth mindset, you are going to get curious. You might go in your student forum and say, "Hey, anybody ever done this from a scooter, from a wheelchair with two titanium knees?" Or whatever it is you feel potentially is the source of your frustration.

Or you could even ask yourself a better question. Right? "If I'm not frustrated because of my knees, why am I frustrated?" I ask myself questions all the time because I know that's going to take me to a better place.



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"Am I really frustrated?" "No Susan, actually, remember you didn't get much sleep last night." "Oh, that's right." And what happens during a time of frustration? You know, Wayne Dyer has got this great, great analogy. I just love it. He says, "When you put pressure on a lemon what comes out?" Well duh Susan, lemon juice, right? So, when something, an environment, circumstance puts pressure on you, what comes out?

Because that is who's showing up for that puppy or that dog or the people of your life. When you're feeling stressed because, oh, you haven't eaten that well, you're tired, you're whatever, what comes out of you? Is it like tirades and throwing things and you know, *for the!* -- swearing. That can change. If you have a growth mindset that can change because what comes out of you, for example, as a leader of my team I'm very cognizant of this because that's culture.

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That's the culture that I'm setting for the people on my team. If when things don't go well, the leader starts to blame people and point fingers and have a meltdown. It's all about the mindset that you have now knowing that's who you are, it doesn't have to be who you are going to be. So, saying things like, "I'm just not a morning person." Well, you haven't found reason to get up early in the morning up till now and maybe you never will and maybe you're okay with that.

I'm not saying everything has to change. I'm saying things that are affecting your ability to have success within the structure of a classroom, within the structure of an online dog training program, within your own home.

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"Oh, I can never have [success in dog agility](#) because look at Susan Garrett, she's got that big building. She's got, yeah, she's got that fancy equipment. That's why she has success. I can't have success." Whatever you decide is holding you back is exactly what is holding you back. But you can change that by asking yourself a better question.

So, who are the people who thrive in our programs? They're the people who are curious. Those are the people who have adopted a growth mindset, who are patient with themselves. "Oh, this is challenging to me right now. I feel like I'm all thumbs, but look, my dog's having fun. I'm having fun." And when a growth mindset person fails, what happens?

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Well, number one, none of us want to fail. So there probably is some level of frustration depending on the stakes at what you failed. But I always say, where are the lessons in that failure? Because success is buried in that experience of that failure. So, you know that you are going to be in a better place because of that failure. It's going to springboard you into a better place.

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Unlike some people who fail and if it's an agility trial, they might storm off and say, "I've got my five-minute rule. Don't talk to me five minutes after I've come out of the ring." Or, "See, I knew that wouldn't work. I see that crap doesn't work." They just get squeezed. Stuff comes out. Is that who you want to show up for your dog when you get squeezed?

Laugh. Crap happens to all of us. And then look for the lessons in that failure. Because the opportunity to evolve and change who you are today is there for each and every one of us.



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It's there for everybody but looking at failure as an absolute is a dead end. It is a no-growth street. So how can you tell if you are a fixed or a growth mindset? You might already know, but one of my telltale signs that I see in people is if they are afraid to try something or they don't want to try something new with their dog because they might screw it up. "Oh, I don't want to screw that up." That is an aversion to failure, right?

Dogs are amazing. If we're using reinforcement to train something and it doesn't work out, guess what, they got extra cookies, we can start again. It's not a big deal. So that's a big telltale for me, is people that just, they don't want to try something, or they have limiting beliefs about themselves or their dog.

That their dog can't do this, or their dog won't be this. Or they say things like, "Oh, I don't follow through. I could never take an online class. I can't learn online." Or, "I don't follow through with these things. I need somebody to come and train my dog in my house."

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They have all these limiting beliefs for themselves. So, what can you do? Enter book number two, you have a dog training program. If you were in our program, you already have these lesson plans, but you're not executing them. So, here's book number two, [The 4 Disciplines of Execution](#).

Now, this is a pretty heavy book and it's by three different authors. Only one I really know, Sean Covey. But Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, and Jim Huling. *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*. Now the four disciplines, number one is you've got to have a big goal.

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So, let's say your goal is, "I want my dog not to jump on my guests." That's a big goal. So, he says that your goal has got to be, he calls it "WIG," W-I-G.

It's a wildly important goal, so something that is super important. Maybe it's your dog coming when called or not pulling unleash, or I use the example of [not jumping on your guests](#). This is wildly important.

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So that's execution number one is name that wildly important goal. Execution number two is measure the lead behaviors meaning let's say my goal is to—

See what happens is we say, "I want my dog to not jump on people." And you start following through with some protocol, but there's a lag time between the investment of your time and when you see a change in the behavior of the dog.

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And so, if you're always measuring, "Oh, he just jumped on somebody again. Ah, he jumped on somebody again." You're measuring just the outcome, you get frustrated, and you give up. But what they suggest measuring is the lead behaviors.

So, it might be things like how many sessions of Hot Zone, or Collar Grab, or Treat Diving, or ItsYerChoice did you do today? The quickies that I talked about in podcast [episode number 190](#), how many of those have you executed and where did you execute them?

And keeping track of those behaviors which will bring you to the outcome that you're looking for. You can't just measure the outcome. You'll get frustrated and you're going to give up. Okay.



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Execution number three, have a scoreboard. So, on the scoreboard is listed that WIG, the wildly important goal. It's listed every week you look at this. And your quickies, they're listed right there. And how often you've had success. "Oh look, I did five rounds of ItsYerChoice in three different environments. So that's a win for today." You're keeping track of that, the lead behaviors that you are executing that will take you closer to your big wiggly goal.

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And number four is accountability. And that is telling somebody else about a goal. You could do it like within a classroom. If you're in a classroom, buddy up with somebody. Hi, I've got one. Send this podcast to five dog loving people and ask one of them if they would be your accountability partner. Yeah.

Alright. I'm gonna bring in another book here and this, I'm just gonna steal something from this book. [Measure What Matters by John Doerr](#). Now he's got this really cool way of measuring in a way that's a little bit more intentional and he uses like a stop light system. I honestly can't remember what he calls it.

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And so, the green light, every week when you are on your scoreboard, your green light would be you got 70 to 90% success on the number of times you executed those quickies that you had set out at the beginning of the week. I'm gonna do so many rounds of Collar Grabs, so many rounds of Hot Zones, so many rounds in this number in different environments.

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And so, if you got 70-to-80% of your lead behaviors done, then that's a green light and you carry on. You did seventy to a hundred. The yellow light would be you only got 30-to-70% done. Now there's an adjustment that needs to be done. Let's look at how you laid out your days or your week, and let's come up with a new adjustment.

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Now if you got a red light, less than 30%, you might need to come up with different lead behaviors. Alright. Or different strategy for you to train those lead behaviors. Alright. It's all a little complex but I think what holds people back is not having a strategy. So, I give you a really simple one based on some really good books.

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Now, if you are in one of my dog training programs, execution and mindset are going to be the key for you to thrive, to be not the small percentage of people that go, "This is BS. It's not gonna work for me." But to be in the much larger group, the group that doesn't just come in and say, "I'll cherry pick this one in this game. Yeah, this is all I need, and I should be able to get my results."

No, it's progressive games. And even if you know it, how does it hurt your dog and your relationship by playing some extra games. Now, I did say if you aren't in my program, I'm gonna share how that can happen.

Right now, it's Valentine's week. Now if you are listening to this podcast outside of Valentine's week, stick with me. I've got something for you, too. So, we right now in the name of love and creating better relationship with our dogs, we have bundled two of our programs.





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Home School the Dog with our membership called Wag Nation. Now Wag Nation is every month we post a new trick for you to teach your dog, and every month we post a new dog training game for you to teach your dog.

All of that happens in Wag Nation but it's bundled with Home School the Dog. So, you also get access to Home School the Dog, which should be like a four-month course. But as long as you're a member of Wag Nation you can have Home School the Dog indefinitely. So that is our Valentine bundle.

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And for you to get it, go to [DOGSTHAT.COM/LOVE-WN](https://dogsthat.com/love-wn). WN's for Wag Nation. For those of you listening to this podcast episode outside of our big Valentine week, here's what I'm going to do for you. I would like you to send my team an email. Now, nobody on my team knows I'm doing this, so when they hear this podcast, they're going to find out and go, "Oh, yay. Thanks, Susan."

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Send an email to the fine folk at Customer Happiness. The email address is wag— as in you know, a tail— wag@dogsthat.com. Now this is the important part. The subject line needs to be "I LOVE LEARNING". If you send us that, that subject line, say that you were listening to this podcast, we will honor today's Valentine bundle at any time you send us that note.

You have to listen to this podcast. You have to email my team and I promise you, even though I didn't talk to the team ahead of time, it's all good. You're going to be part of the team. And I just know you're going to be one of the overwhelming successful students we have because you have identified yourself as somebody who either has a growth mindset or has been locked in a fixed mindset your entire life.

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I don't care if you're 90 years old. That is a mindset given to you and that my friend can change just by you saying, "I love learning." Let's go. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Wag Nation and Home School the Dog Valentine's Opportunity

Valentine's Week Bundle

<https://dogsthat.com/love-wn/>

Resources:

[Book - Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol S. Dweck](#)

[Book - The 4 Disciplines of Execution by Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, Jim Huling](#)

[Book - Measure What Matters Paperback by John Doerr](#)

[Podcast Episode 150: Adding Mindset To Your Dog Training Tools: Who Do You Become?](#)

[Podcast Episode 186: 2 Types Of Connection With Dogs: Dog Agility And Daily Life Case Studies](#)

[Podcast Episode 121: How To Stop Dogs Jumping Up On People](#)

[Podcast Episode 190: Using Daily Quickies To Fast Track Your Dog Training And Grow Your Dog's Skills](#)

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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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