

Rescue Dog Behavior: Training Rehomed Dogs Chat With Nadine Hehli And Simone Fasel

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

NH Nadine Hehli

SF Simone Fasel

Transcript

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SG So you first met Simone and Nadine on the podcast, but you didn't actually technically meet them. But I [spoke about Simone and Nadine](#), I bragged about them. They're amazing. Let me just read so I don't just tell you, you know, gush about them.

Nadine Hehli and Simone Fasel are pioneers of reward-based training in Europe and among the avid students of Susan Garrett. Nadine was personally mentored by Susan and traveled throughout Europe and Canada to learn from a variety of workshops and conferences. She did, she was like a little bit of a stalker, I wasn't too concerned because she seemed kind of nice, in order to continuously improve her knowledge and skills in animal training.

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Simone and Nadine offer a two-year training program online memberships and courses for pet owners and dog lovers in hoopers and other programs. Several thousand students participating in their online [programs](#) that has been translated into five languages. Mine haven't. Nadine studied geography and biology while Simone studied psychology and pedagogy. You'll have to Google that one, I did.

They trained their dogs in various disciplines and take in fosters with difficult histories. So, I'm going to bring on Nadine and Simone, welcome ladies.

NH: Hello.

SF: Hi.

SG: Hi. How are you?

SF: Fine.

NH: Very good.

SG: The world got to meet Frida today on the podcast. And why don't you paint a picture of just like the first moments when you picked her up, did you intend on keeping her, like what happened there?

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NH: Yes, yes. So first of all, congratulations to the 200th episode, very exciting. And thank you so much for that awesome [Frida podcast](#) today.

SG: Oh, I'm so, so proud of what you guys have been able to do. It's been amazing.

NH: Thank you. So, yes, Frida, we actually, we intended to keep her. So, she was never supposed to be just a foster dog. Like we take in foster dogs from time to time. But with her we actually, we wanted to keep her. Well, I wanted to.

SF: You're more decided than I was, but yeah Frida just somehow stole my heart so.



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SG: Wait a minute. You wanted to, Simone, you must have been crushed when she attached herself to Nadine.

SF: So, in the beginning it was kind of okay for me because I thought, yeah, it'll be more Nadine's dog so it was kind of okay.

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SG: So, when you first got her, what were your first impressions? Because first impressions are so important.

SF: Yeah, she was certainly very impressive. That's certainly the perfect word to describe her behavior.

NH: Yes, and she's what you would say, an intense dog. Like when you meet her, she's like a lot of dog because she's not big, but she's just, yeah, like a lot of dog.

SF: That's true. We already knew she had a lot of behavioral issues, so we got a really long list. But we didn't know that she has also really [severe separation anxiety](#). And we noticed of course immediately that this was.

SG: So, what did they tell you was her— how did they describe her? That might be better.

SF: She was, she had too much energy for everybody to handle her and she had a very strong hunting instinct. And actually, she was described as “that bad puller” on leash that nobody would take her for walks anymore, and yeah.

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NH: Yeah, and she was afraid of people, afraid of other dogs. Like there was a lot of excitement for her, but at the same time she was scared of stuff. So, it's just, it was just difficult to handle her. But we were kind of prepared for all of this, but not actually for the separation anxiety. So that was just like on top of it.

SG: It was the cherry on top of your gift. So now, in a situation like that it's so easy for people, and I've heard it when people rescue dogs that they label those dogs by their past faults or their past mistakes. And so, was that something that ever happened to the two of you?

NH: Well, we try not to do it because I think especially with rescue dogs, it's so important to not be intimidated by a label because it doesn't really matter, right? Like it's just, you just want to get the first training steps in. Like it's not about what people describe the dog to be, but it's just about how can you take the first steps and then just go from there.

SF: But it's certainly an area where there will be a lot of labels. So normally the whole description of a rescue dog when you read it online, it's normally a lot of labels. So yeah, we really feel you shouldn't be intimidated by [labels that others have put on that dog](#).

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NH: We had another case the year before which was quite an extreme [aggression](#) case, a foster dog that we took in. But it didn't matter to us like we, like the first step this dog took into our house we just, we never really talked about his aggression anymore.

We just started his training and we just like, we were very careful with him obviously when we like handled him and everything, but it was just about starting the training just about, yeah.

SF: We always change [the name of the dog](#) and then a new chapter starts.



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SG: Exactly, I try to get people to do that. For sure, for sure. So, during the training, you know all about the hunting instinct that's so strong and her [wanting to pull](#), the surprise of the separation anxiety. Was there any time during the process where you just went like, what have we gotten ourselves into? This is crazy.

SF: Actually no, because we so much trust the process. And actually really of course thanks to you, we now feel so secure.

NH: Yeah, we feel secure with just taking this training steps and like if there is a point where you might say, well, it's not like going fast enough or it's not like the exactly correct direction or something, then you can always change something, right? You can always think about what else can we do? What other approaches might there be.

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SG: I think that a lot of times, especially with rescues, and I know a lot of people reading or listening to this have had rescues or maybe are thinking of [getting a rescue](#), but we have this vision in our mind of really this is what it's supposed to be like with a dog. And then we have the reality of this is what it's like.

And that big gap is what causes so much second doubt, so many people feeling anxious and really anxiety and stress comes in and we see it even in our online students. And probably you guys see it in your students where people go, "This isn't working." Or, "I don't know what else to do." Or, "I'm so frustrated." And when I see people writing things like that, I know that you have a vision of where you should be instead of looking at where you are and saying, "What can I do? What one thing can I do today to make this dog's life more joyful?"

And when we focus just on that joy, then things just keep getting better. But it's hard, it's difficult for many people. But like you said, if you can just trust the process and it's not about the dog you think you want or you think you should have. It's about [the dog in front of you](#). And you know, back to "Do you love her?" And I know you two loved her right from the moment you got her.

SF: True.

NH: Definitely yes.

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SG: That makes a big difference. So, is there something you say to your students when they get stuck in that gap and then they start blaming the dog and saying, "This dog isn't teachable." Or, "This dog can't learn whatever."

SF: Yeah, we always try to, it's always important not to focus too much on the problem behaviors. Actually, you don't have to get rid of problem behaviors first. You can just start building new desired behaviors. And this will also help keep you motivated because you will see a success in every training step.

And every living being has just 24 hours, except maybe Susan Garrett seems to have more, some more hours. But I mean if the dog has less time to practice the unwanted behavior and uses up more time to exercise the desired behavior, you will be easily motivated to keep up.

NH: Yeah, like for example with the leash walking, like it's not even necessary to think about the pulling and think about how can we stop the pulling. You just start to teach like healing.

SF: Like, it's fun walking by my side.



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- SG:** Yeah. It's not, the focus shouldn't be on the stopping of something, right? Because I think when you're doing that again, you're just creating more anxiety for yourself. "She's still pulling, she's not stopping." No. Well, how's her healing? How's her reinforcing going?
- SF:** It's hard to fight against reinforcers that have been built up for years in Frida's case, just for one year. But yeah.
- SG:** This is a great quote from Tristan, "It's so hard to check our expectations and egos at the door, but so important." Our dogs need that from us. They absolutely, they need it, and it's super tough. And so now you've added a new puppy, and how's that dynamics in your house?
- NH:** Oh, actually we took it very slow at the beginning, so we always like just [introduce a new dog](#), like one at a time to the other ones. And then we would first just bring them together on walks and then we use like gates in the house to just take it slow. And now we are on a really good track and like there is more excitement again of course, because everything changes a little bit, but it's yeah.
- SF:** Frida is actually pretty fantastic. And it's so worth the time because we really want them to be really great friends for many, many years. So, we like to take it slow and really build a good relationship.
- NH:** A good relationship for all of them.
- SF:** A good relationship.

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- SG:** It's worth the investment for sure. If there's one thing you wish that pet owners understood that if they understood this one thing that their life with their dog would be so much easier, their life with their dog, they'd be more harmonious. What would you say that one thing would be?
- SF:** I will go first. And I will just say, really see the front, [the dog in front of you](#) as you already said, Susan. So, it's so important to not think in labels but just watch the behavior and then go one step from there. So, you just see what the dog is doing, and then you decide what will be the next step you need. And then there will always be success.
- SG:** Yeah. That's a good one.
- NH:** For me I think it's about layers like, because all of the [training is done in layers](#), right? And the magical thing about layers is that at some point there will be this magical moment where you will have a situation that you maybe did not prepare for, but it still works out completely great because everything like comes together. Like all of the training that you have done, like all the layers like come together and then you just realize like, wow.
- Like with Frida, I had several of these moments like, wow now she's able to do this. But I haven't really prepared, well I have prepared her with the layers, but not like this specific situation. Right. So, then it like the efficiency of the training just excels.

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- SG:** Yeah. And I think those are two really good ones that if people understood that behavior is more consistent, it's easier for you, it's easier for the dog to have consistency if there are [tiny layers versus trying to get something in a big step](#). Like you're trying to get your dog to jump up on something and you use a cookie right.



SG: You're trying to get them onto the top of something and you know what I might do is take the mat that's on the top of it and put it on the ground and shape them to jump on there and have joy for that. And then we might take that big high thing and lower it half that distance and then put that mat on there. They'll jump up easy, boom, boom, boom, boom.

You know, you could get them with a cookie lure, but you're building in that hesitancy, that unsure, and you're probably going to have to go back to it many, many times. But what we're talking about is empowering the dog. And I think, remember last week when we were on a Zoom?

So, the three of us jump on Zoom and we geek out about science. We were talking about the power of choice. But by empowering a dog that what is more reinforcing than reinforcement? And that is that the dog has agency to be in control of their reinforcement. And I think shaping behaviors is a big part of that.

NH: Definitely. Like there is control all the time, right? Like in shaping, the dog is in control. And then this control is just a huge reinforcer for them itself.

SF: And it's maybe especially, it can be especially seen in dogs who are afraid of different things. So, Frida really panicked in different situations and giving her this training, this choice-based training where she was really in control, actually when we did pick the puppy up, she [traveled with us](#) and was the first time in a hotel and she was just a superstar.

SG: Oh, really?

SF: Really because she felt like, "I am in control here." And she would have been freaked out in the beginning. But now thanks to those layers and thanks to really experiencing that she is in charge of the situations, she was really brilliant.

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SG: Which is funny because when I first started dog training as a balanced dog trainer, back then it was all about being in control of the dog. You need to correct them so that they know you're in control. They need to know that they have to, and the funny thing is that, I mean, my dogs back then were wonderful in spite of how I trained them, but that when we give them that power of that control, that the understanding and the willingness to do as we ask.

So, the irony is what people try to get by making a dog do something comes naturally when you hand over the control and you allow the dog to guide the session. And unless you really understand layers of learning, it may sound like we are letting these dogs run amuck and do anything they want. But it's not, it's just, it's choice-based training where you set up all of the contingencies to get the behavior you want so that you can reinforce the dog. I mean that's all we want.

SF: And it's so important for the mental health of every living being to be in control. So, if we don't have the feeling of control, it's where depression start.

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SG: That's such a great point, yeah. Think of times when you see that you have no power over what people are saying or doing. And yeah, at first you might be frustrated, but what if you're locked into that? That what that would do to your spirit first, then your mind, and then your body.

So, this is a great quote from Kay. "Most people I see want a quick fix because they feel the layers take too long. What they don't realize is management lasts the whole lifetime."



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SG: That is another ironic thing, that you don't want to be bothered putting in the layers. You don't have time to put in the layers for your dog, which honestly, that I kind of have a problem with that mentality because, "I've decided you are not worth the investment of my time therefore that gives me the right to use force to get you to do what I want." And I think maybe a goldfish would've been a better choice of a pet then.

SF: Actually, it really doesn't take long.

SG: No. That's the misunderstanding.

SF: Yeah, completely. I mean, we don't have Frida for a year now. It's not, only for several months and I mean she is, people would think she is from very planned breeding and excellent upbringing and fantastic training from the beginning.

NH: Yeah, it was like super-fast with her.

SG: How old was she when you got her?

NH: She was one year when we got her.

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SG: Okay. So [similar to Tater Salad](#) then.

NH: Oh yes. Oh yes.

SG: He was 15 months I think when we got him. That is the craziness, is that people don't realize how fast this happens.

NH: Yes. Yes. So, with Frida it was super-fast. Like we had some really great successes after ten days. And then of course everything had to be generalized more and of course there was more training happening. And then after two months she was just a pet.

SF: And we always on the first day we start with the first Recallers exercise and then we just progress with the games.

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SG: That's amazing. And that is how it happens if like Simone said at the beginning, trust the process, right? When you just play the games and even if you aren't a hundred percent sure, let the dog tell you if things are going well. And if your only measure is the dog's level of willingness to play with you, their willingness to buy in to that session, [the TEMP that says, "I'm having fun."](#) Right? And that's all you need as your benchmark. It being correct isn't as important as that.

SF: Absolutely.

NH: Very true. Yes. And I also, I think it's like any, like all the training you can do, like as soon as you start there will be an improvement. Like it's, yeah, you can do so much training and then there will be so much improvement. Like it just, yeah, just follows the rules.

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SG: So, what about the people who, they're first-time dog owner and they have a problem, like all of this sounds really good because the three of us are professional dog trainers. How can we instill in that first time dog trainer there is light at the end of the tunnel and it's not a train. Like how do we get them to trust the process?



SF: We certainly would always suggest finding a mentor. So, in every area of life, it's so good to be coached and yeah, to have somebody sharing their knowledge, which you so graciously do. So, we would always suggest joining Recallers of course for first-time dog owners.

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SG: That's a really good point because there's so much content that people put out for free online and not all of it is really worth investing your time in. So, there's something more important than investing your money in a program.

Yes, so Recallers, I think it's probably \$500 and on the website it's seven or \$800, so it. So it is, people say, "Five hundred dollars, that's an investment." But worse than the \$500 is the investment of your time spending a year trying to do something with your dog that isn't the right path. And you're going to end up in a worse place if you invest.

And that's something I've believed in. It's such an important point, Simone. Everything I've ever done when I wanted to learn about fitness, when I wanted to learn about sprinting, when I wanted to learn about music, or about business, about of course, animal training. It's always, I've always, always had, you know, many more than just one mentor in a year.

SF: That's great.

NH: Yeah. And that's awesome that people can [join Recallers](#) tonight because of course there is so much awesome information now with 200 podcast episodes. But of course, if you just need a step by step and just need the program to like, this is where you start, this is the first game, and then from there you go to the second game and so on. So yeah, definitely.

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SG: I actually started the podcast for our Recaller students because I looked at Recallers as the foundation blocks to have this amazing relationship. But maybe those blocks needed some mortar in between.

And to fill in the gaps so that people had a better understanding of what we were sharing in Recallers. And so that's really why we started the podcast, was to help bring clarity and confidence to that. And so yeah that was the motivation to get the podcast going.

And then of course, we understood that we are helping so many other dog owners that maybe lived in a country where they couldn't afford to join one of our programs. But when it's possible for you, that's exactly what Nadine did. Were you, you were a member of Recallers before you started following me to seminars, right? When I was in Europe.

SF: We actually, it started with the sport of agility. To be able to come to an agility seminar with you.

NH: So yes, we were in Recallers already, and then we saw, oh, she's coming to Europe. But it was for agility. So, then we were like, okay, we have to train a dog so at least some agility, so then we can participate. And we did, that's what we did.

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SG: That is so funny. And then, yeah, and later on she came in and answered a job to come and be here and be mentored. And then it's just, how many times were you over here in, was it two or three times mentoring?

NH: It was four times. One year it was twice, so yes.



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SG: Oh, that's right. So, it's been amazing. So, we're just going to keep talking. Oh, so this morning Lynda and I were talking about how, and this was mentioned in the podcast, and that was the first thing you talked about. Lynda's in a horse group where there, is it rehabilitation fear in horses?

SG: Is that what you're talking about? It was behavior. And they talk about that it's not just training. It's the physiology of the animal. In horses generally we talk about the need for friends and freedom. No, there's another F. Friends, forging, and freedom, right?

So, with dogs like we have to fill their cup, their spiritual cup. We have to fill what they need, and it is nutrition, and it is exercise, and it's whatever that enrichment is for that particular breed. So, a breed like Frida, I bet you scenting is a big part of what fills her cup.

NH: Definitely. And there's social part too. Like she's a very social dog too, so she really also needs the interaction with other dogs.

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SG: And I was saying this, I was out for supper with a couple of friends who had a problem with their dog. And I said there's some things that will take you years to incrementally improve on a [behavior problem](#) that if you change the nutrition, that you will see a change in that dog, like the brain fog gets lifted.

So, you know there's just [so many other things](#) other than just, how can we fix this. We can't fix behavior; we have to look at the whole animal.

SF: Stress is affecting the digestive system, but it's also the other way around. So, the digestion is also affecting how the brain works. So, if we really take care of good nutrition, it'll just help improve behavior. So, we always feel that's a super important part. And also, there we work with our special coach who helps us finding the best solution.

SG: Yeah, we all need a mentor.

NH: Yeah, definitely. Yeah. So, with every dog we take in, also every foster dog, we would also [look at the nutrition](#) on the first day, too, and try to figure it all out and improve. And this is, it is a huge part as you say.

SF: And I mean, when we took Frida and she really, I have never seen such cheap food. We've worked a long time in a rescue, but it was the cheapest food I've ever seen. And of course, her digestive system was just ruined. So of course, you need to take care of the microbiome, and this will yeah help improve the behavior.

NH: And then the other thing you said about exercise, that's I think that's a huge one, too. Like also with the example with Frida, that was like because she's a dog with so much energy, right. And before she came to us, she was living like in a backyard and not getting any exercise anymore.

So, then we started also to build her body up actually. So now I take her with the bike, and she just runs, and she just can get all the energy out of her body. So, this is a huge part of course of everything.

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SG: This is such a, you know, John said, "I need a mentor to bounce ideas off." And this is how it works. You decide where your passion is. And for most people watching this, it is dogs. And then you decide what mentor, what community is your people. And then you join in the community of it. And that's where people will come to Home School the Dog or Recallers or just hang out in Shaped by Dog.



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SG: And then you decide, "Okay, I've got the hang of it. I want to elevate my understanding." And so, you then will go to a higher level. So, in our program we have the Inner Circle, which is a smaller intimate group where we do have more one-on-one discussions.

And then every once in a while, if we put out a mentorship, then you get to pick my brain. Thank you, ladies. I'm going to let you go. Thank you for being here. You're amazing. Swagger, I've got a lot of people talking here tonight, there's going to be a lot of barking. Thank you.

SF: Thanks.

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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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