

What Your Destructive, Lunging, Nipping Or Hyper Dog Or Puppy Is Trying To Teach You

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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Life with dogs is about knowing the many sides of dogs. And there may have been a dog, or more than one, that you've described with words like hyper or aggressive or over the top or he blows me off, he's stubborn, he's got a will of his own, he's got a mind of his own, he's on his own agenda, he gives me the doggy digit or anything similar.

You see, I think that we get the dogs we get for a reason and that's what today's podcast episode is about. It's about why we get the dogs that we do and what can we do once we get them.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And today I'm going to do things a little bit differently. I'm going to share this episode in the form of a story. And like all great stories, there's going to be a hero, there's going to be a villain, there's going to be a guide. Possibly a sage or a muse. As you follow along, see if you can pick up which character is which.

I mean, all great stories have them, right? Think of Raiders of the Lost Ark, right, there was Harrison Ford was there to save the day. Think of the Matrix with Neo, n-e-o. He's the one, o-n-e. Ah, did you pick that up? Think of, wait a minute. Both those movies are with dudes as heroes. What are some movies with women as heroes?

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Wizard of Oz, Dorothy. Okay, Susan, you had to go back a hundred years to find a movie with a female heroin. Um, Silence of the Lambs. Okay, you get my point. Today's episode is a story and I'm going to talk about a fictional character. We'll call him Bob. And Bob has a dog, big old Lab cross Shepherd pity sort of thing. We're going to call him Buddy.

So, Bob and Buddy are going to be the characters in our story and throughout the story I'm going to break away from the story and give a little narrative on what's going on. So, I've got all the stage set for you. So, let's jump into the story.

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So, Bob has always loved dogs, so he obviously wanted a dog of his own. When he got Buddy [from the rescue](#) everything seemed like love at first sight for both of them, but it didn't take long before they had struggles in the relationship and Bob was using words like "stubborn" and "sneaky". And Buddy was doing things like shredding, knocking over, oh, he knocked over Bob's grandmother that one time when she came through the door.

Bob was a big guy, but he still had a hard time walking Buddy on leash and Buddy was lunging at everybody. And he was pretty sure it was friendly at first, but it became a little [bit more reactive](#). Bob did what he thought the best thing he could do. He googled, "How can I get my dog to stop knocking people over? How can I get my dog to stop being so stubborn? How can I get my dog to come every time I call him? What he got was a bunch of quick fix solutions like 'get your dog to come when called in three easy lessons' or 'teach your dog to always obey in one week's time'. And what Bob realized is none of this was really getting him to where he wanted to be.



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Now let's just take a step back and think of all of those things, the behavior of a dog. If relationship with a dog is about the dog doing what they're told, us being in control, them learning to be calm, to obey, to do as they're told.

Because if they didn't, if they were a Beagle that wanted to sniff, or they were a Husky that wanted to run, or they were a Terrier that wanted to dig holes in your backyard, or they were a Cattle Dog that wanted to nip your kids, then they'd be a bad dog. It would be their responsibility.

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That's a very shallow view of dog ownership. That it's about you, owning a dog and them obeying. About them being in our control and doing as we say. That's a shallow relationship that has disregard for who that dog is, what they need, what kind of emotions that they have. But that's exactly where Bob found himself.

And after he kept googling the quick fixes, he decided to go all in and go to a local dog school. And now remember, Buddy was a bit of a handful. Bob was earnest. He tried to do the homework that they gave him, but it just didn't sit right to do some of the things that they wanted him to do. So, he tried another local school.

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And before long now Buddy is over a year old, and he really is out of control. Bob sat down one night and decided maybe I got the wrong dog. Maybe Buddy isn't really for me. Maybe Buddy would be happier on a farm. Side note, how many farms do you think there are out there that everybody think their dog will be happier on a farm? Newsflash, they won't be.

But that's what Bob was feeling. And so that night he decided he was going to google rescue agencies that would maybe take Buddy in. And as he set to the keyboard, he just froze. He couldn't do it. And he sat back, and he thought about why he wanted to get a dog in the first place.

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And he was reminded the big thing of the companionship. How the house used to be just a little bit lonely when he came home from work but how all that changed with a big golden retriever's tail whacking off the walls and his back feet coming off the ground because he wagged his tail so hard when Bob came through the door.

He started thinking that he'd always loved dogs and he always knew he wanted a dog. He just loved the spirit of dogs. And of course, he had this vision that his dog would go hiking and canoeing with him and have like [road trips](#). They'd go on these long road trips together and have any other kind of amazing adventures which of course mostly were unfulfilled at this point in their relationship.

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But it got Bob thinking, "I'm going to give this another try." And cue the dramatic music. Like all heroes in the story, there's a point where they have to break away and find a new path. So, Bob went back to the search engine known as Google and he decided to search for something else. 'What's a different approach to dog training?' 'What's a unique approach to dog training?' 'How can I train my dog happily?' And lo and behold, Bob landed on the [YouTube site of a dog trainer](#) by the name of Susan Garrett.



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["That's a little weird Susan, you're talking about yourself in the third person." I know, but it's the story. Keep going.] And Susan talked about things like 'Your dog is doing the best they can with the education you've given them in the environment that you've put them in.'

She said things like '[behavior is communication](#)'. Behavior isn't who that dog is. And behavior is expressing the emotional state or the anxiety that that dog is feeling at that moment. And as Bob watched, he got more involved. He devoured those YouTube videos, and then he signed up for Susan's online classes.

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And the more he learned the more he could see Buddy changing and he realized that Susan Garrett was right. The dog is doing the best they can with the education I've given him. And what Bob saw was this transformation that he had a dog that was no longer hyper and anxious. He had a dog who was calm, who was confident, who was connected to him.

He realized in time that he had this [cooperative teamwork](#), not the adversarial control-based relationship that he thought he was seeking out. What Bob had was something that could only be described as, 'wow'.

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The "wow" people said when they met his dog on the street, the "wow" they said when they would see him hiking off leash and call Buddy back to wait as cyclists went by. The "wow" was created by Bob not needing to have control, by Bob letting go of that control and giving it to Buddy so that Buddy could make choices on his own. Giving buddy autonomy to show him how brilliant he could be. And then through the games coming together in this magical way.

And you could say, "Susan, what a great story. Is that the end?" No, it's not the end. Think of an iceberg, like a friendly iceberg. Not like a dangerous, we're going to you know, sink all the ships iceberg, but an iceberg where the top level is what people think they want. That's the shallow transactional relationship.

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"I did this, you must do this for me." But below that is where Bob found himself in the 'wow'. That's a transformational relationship. But believe it or not, there's another level below that and that's what Bob was slowly learning. And it started with the gift that Bob almost immediately gave to Buddy, and that was the gift of grace.

Bob was filled with grace for Buddy so that when Buddy barked at another dog instead of scolding him and giving him a pop on the collar, Bob got him out of there and said, "I'm sorry Buddy. I put you in an environment that you weren't ready for." Bob had grace for Buddy. When Buddy was challenged, when Buddy did something unexpected, Bob turned that magnifying glass on himself.

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He said, "How did I let you down, pal? What do we need to work on more? What do I need to make clearer for you?" And that grace that started with Buddy, Bob started to pick up within our online community that he saw not just the dogs that coaches, coaching people, giving them grace, even if they were overwhelmed and frustrated. He saw it between everybody within the community, between the other students.



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If somebody was rude, nobody shot back with them with that rude comment. There was grace, there was compassion, there was conversation. And lo and behold, Bob saw that creeping into his own life. He was so filled with grace for Buddy that when a coworker disappointed him instead of snapping at him and telling him how to do things better, Bob had grace for that coworker.

And he said, "Let's sit down and have a conversation. I don't know that I've been clear with the expectations of what's going on here at work." And that grace extended to Bob's family and friends, and it just became a natural way of being for Bob.

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And eventually Bob got to a place where he could extend this grace, to the person he found the most difficult to give it to, and that was himself. Because Bob, like many of us, hang on to the need to be perfect humans. And with that comes a lot of guilt and regrets and shame. Shame for maybe the things we said or didn't say, the things we did, the way we behaved.

But here's the thing, we can all recognize now that our dog's behavior doesn't define them, it defines what they need but yet we can't give ourselves the grace to recognize the same about us. We understand that our dogs can be overwhelmed or filled with anxiety because of potentially an experience they've had or a place that they find themselves in, and we work to mitigate that situation.

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We work to get them out of that situation or to build confidence for any time they have to go in that situation. We don't blame them, we help them. But why don't we extend that same grace to ourselves? Giving this grace to our dogs is the first step in extending this grace to everyone, including us. It's a shift.

It's a shift to knowing you are enough. As a matter of fact, you are awesome, and I know that because you're listening to a podcast aimed at improving your relationship with your dog, you have to be an awesome person. Let go of the need to be a perfect human and allow yourself the grace to laugh at yourself when you screwed up.

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And yeah, maybe then go and try and fix it or go in a different direction, but let it go. Because that's when we know we've reached the deepest level of connection with our dogs. When we are in a place of curiosity and grace and believe me, it's not easy every single day, but we know we've left the place of blame and judgment.

We know we've worked through to get to that 'wow' place where we can see the transformation in our dogs. When we feel the calm and the connectedness of a trusted companion. And we're now working to get to the greatest depth of connection.

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We've gone from that place of "wow", of calm and connection and having that amazing companion, and we've moved down to the place of "Ah, that's what it's like. I got this."

And then when we sit down to have a cup of coffee in a restaurant and a waitress just seems snarky and short-tempered, we don't get offended. We don't lower ourselves and respond insane. We give her grace. We say, "Wow, I wonder what kind of day she's had."



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And maybe you ask her, "Hey, tough day today? Is it the end of your shift? Create conversation. You get curious. We're now a long way from working at the top of the iceberg, a place of command and control, and it all started by looking at your dog's behavior or misbehavior.

The reacting, the lunging, the digging in the garden, the jumping on people, the knocking over the garbage. We looked at those [through a different lens](#). We looked at those behaviors as nothing more than things that we had to change through our education and knowledge, how we could help our dog get to a better place.

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Does it make sense? Becoming a grace-filled dog lover is the first step to becoming a grace-filled animal lover and that grace is extended to all animals, to everybody that we pass in our day and especially to ourselves. I'm sure you're familiar with the song, Amazing Grace.

You know, growing up I just thought the song was about some chick named Grace and she was lost. And while I was putting this episode together, that song kept playing in my head over and over again, and the words took on new meaning, so much so that I had to google the true meaning of the song. It's kind of a cool story.

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But the song starts "Amazing Grace, How Great Thou Art." There is nothing greater than extending grace to your dog in their actions to yourself. There's nothing greater. The song goes on. "I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind but now can see."

You can't unsee what I've shared with you here today. Once you see it, you can't unsee it. Kind of like knowing Neo was the one. Once you see it, you can't unsee it. And do you see that the hero of the story is Bob. Bob's the hero.

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Bob is the one that went out and got this great life. The villain, okay the villain could have been the quick fixes because we know none of those work. The sage, I believe the sage in our stories is our dogs because they are the ones that are helping us to ascend, to be in that place where we can give grace to everyone, particularly ourselves.

I know this story is a little bit different. It's not the black and white of here's how to teach your dog something. But I think it's just so very important for everyone to hear it. And I think it's so very important for everyone to have the opportunity to live it.

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And so, I have a free six-part video series. We only make it available once a year, but I'm going to make a commitment to anybody who listens to this podcast episode. There'll be a link in the show notes. Click that link and I promise you it will be the fastest way to get to see the [Connected Dog Series](#). That series is a blend of insights and four games that I teach you, and there's a 50-page playbook I give you as well.

It's all free. It's all because my team and I, we want dogs worldwide to be better understood. We want people to be giving themselves grace as they travel along this journey with their dog together. So go ahead and click the link that will take you to possibly a waiting page and I promise you it will be a valuable experience for both you and your dog.





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Now, if this episode has been meaningful to you, please give us a like on the video and please share it with another dog loving family member or friend. I would love for the world to take this on board. I would love for the world to just look at life with a dog a little bit different and how the lessons of behavior should be received.

I get that they're not always fun to live through, but just looking through it with a different lens could make all the difference. I'd love to know what you think. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Connected Dog Video Series

The Connected Dog <https://learn.doggyflix.com/interactive/>

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 78: How to Train a Rescue Dog with Behavior Problems](#)

[Podcast Episode 154: Car Vacations With Dogs: Tips To Make Holiday Road Trips Safe And Fun For All](#)

[Susan Garrett's DogsThat YouTube Channel](#)

[Podcast Episode 189: All The Things That Influence Your Dog's Behavior And What Behavior Tells You](#)

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

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



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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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