

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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Every once in a while, my team will post a 'ask me anything' post on social media where you can fill in any question you want and that happened last week. I didn't get around to answering your questions. I will today and there's some interesting ones. We should do this more often. Let's get to it.

00:00:27

First question, "*How would you handle a dog that is barking and lunging at you if you were a pet sitter in the dog's home?*"

Well, first of all, it would really depend on if the owner was there or if they weren't. Did I know the history of the dog or didn't I? Did I know the dog had a [bite](#) history that they were a danger, and you know, all that information would be very pertinent.

But obviously I would call up my friend Michael Shikashio and say, "Hey, do you got something you could do for pet sitters because I'm kind of curious."

If I really knew the dog, I just wanted to mitigate the situation. I'd probably grab a handful of attractive treats, say search, toss them on the ground, and then you know, keep doing that until he goes, "Oh yeah, it's you." You know, but you're not going to do that if you don't know the dog because you could get bit.

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Okay, next question. "*Do you have international aspirations for This!?*"

What a great question. So, if you've been following the podcast, you've heard [my story with This!](#), how we've struggled to get to a place where she finds joy in the work she does. Do I have international aspirations? My goals with my dogs are never to be, or win, or do.

My goals are always to bring out, bring out the absolute best of that dog. If that absolute best means, we would be going to a world championship representing my country, I'm open to that. But if her absolute best is just enjoying the sport and having fun, I'm open to that, too.

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So, you know, the sport is evolving so fast and there's so many good dogs. Even if I did think this dog's got what it takes to be on the podium at a World Championship or be amongst some of the best in the world out of the world championships, you know, I am a 62-year-old handler in a sport that's dominated by 20 and early 30-something handlers. So, there's always that. But I love doing things people don't think could or should be done.

So, I'm always keeping myself open to the fact that age is just a number, and where there's a will, there's a way, and yes, we could get there if her best was good enough to be amongst the best. Great question. I actually haven't thought about that since she was a wee puppy.

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Next question. "*What does your daily routine look like? Everyday routines, morning habits, a day in the life?*"



Okay, so that's actually in the midst of being changed, so maybe you should come back and ask me this one later. My morning starts at five. At the latest, that's 5:30, but my morning is set up by my evening. So, let's start with my evening routine. My goal is to be in my bedroom by 8:30pm. I am currently recording a podcast and it is past 8:30 at night, so I have got to get better at that.

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My evening routine has got to be an appointment that can't be moved. That's what it's got to become for me.

So, my evening routine looks like this. I will read then I will go downstairs and sauna and do a meditation. So that's 20 to 30 minutes in the sauna, then I shower, and I journal my day, journal my gratitude. And I turn on my, I've got one of those mattress covers that pumps cold water under you while you sleep. I make sure that's programmed.

I turn on a sleep background and it's usually something from YouTube that's like some sort of megahertz that will put you to sleep. And close all the blinds, the blackout blinds in my room, and I go to sleep.

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So, my goal is to be in bed between nine and 9:30 at night. And my morning routine, because it's set up for my evening routine, I'm up between five and 5:30, but five is my goal. But I have this year newly prioritized sleep, so I will not get out of bed if I haven't had seven hours of sleep. Now, if I just can't sleep, because sometimes the monkeys they get chattering and I'm always thinking about dog training, and so some days I will get up, but it's rare.

At the beginning of this year, I made a commitment seven to eight hours. So that's always my goal. I go outside, I do some breath work, ten minutes outside barefoot, depending on the weather and I do some work looking at the sun for my eyes. I'm usually out there walking with the dogs for ten minutes.

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And like I said, this has been a new routine because I've got some new health items that I'm working into my morning routine, which is why my sauna, which I used to do in the morning now I do it at night. And I love that because it helps me to sleep. It's awesome.

So, then I meditate my evening meditation and sauna sometimes if it's a late night that will get cut for sleep.

My morning meditation pretty much never gets cut. And so, I meditate, do cardio, get that over with otherwise, if it gets too late in the morning, I will think of reasons why I don't need to do it. I do not like doing cardio.

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I have red light panels that I stand in front of, and the new thing is I bought myself a power plate, which is one of those like vibrational plates that's really good for bone density. And so that is one of the new things that's, I'm kind of doubling those up doing, I'm going to try to do the red-light therapy standing on that power plate.

And so, after my red-light therapy I go to the gym, and I do myofascial release and five days a week I work with a coach, and I do a functional patterns workout. So that's 45 minutes to an hour. So, my morning routine takes me up to generally eight o'clock, and that's when I'll go and do dog training.



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Now, sometimes I have a workout at eight o'clock, so I'll dog train after that, but I don't get to my desk to work until 10 o'clock. And there are some mornings that now my workouts have been bumped to 11, so I have to juggle that. I'll do a little bit of work before my workout, but like I said, so all of this is kind of new.

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Okay, that was a not a dog training question, but I think everybody should have morning rituals and evening rituals that set up morning rituals to be better.

Okay. *"When you train running contacts, do you use a target mat?"*

Yes, I do. I used to use a bed and I still do with wee puppies. I think it's fun to get them to target a bed. Then I put my target in the bed and it's all in Agility Nation if you're a member of [Agility Nation](#) what I do with the target mat for running contact training.

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*"What is essential for your relation with your dog?"*

I'm not sure what you mean, but if I had to say like, what are some essentials, it would be learning from the dog and learning [what the dog values](#), how the dog self-regulates, and how I can [help that dog self-regulate](#). And obviously things like does a dog like being patted or does the dog like being scratched? Do they like their belly scratched?

So those are the things, but really the deepest relationship is about focusing on meeting the dog's needs. And that obviously involves a lot of joy, [bringing joy into their world](#), which brings joy into my world. Not sure if that was your question, but there's the answer.

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*"How do you work with behavior changes of a dog with health issues that creates pain?"*

That's a great question. You probably are going to have to change up the ways that dog self-regulates. Maybe test them with things that they can shred or things that they can chew. Obviously, I would do everything in my power to stop the pain.

There's a great new injection that Swagger gets for pain blocking for his arthritis. He gets it once a month and that's done wonders. I'll find out and put it in the \*show notes what it is (\**Librela*). Acupuncture is amazing for dogs in pain. So, I would obviously do everything I could to eliminate that pain.

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My older dogs get a cold laser every week. They get massage, osteo treatments with an osteopath, energy work. So, there's a lot of things that I do to mitigate that pain because that is going to affect the dog's quality of life for sure.

*"At what age did you decide to become a dog trainer and why?"*

Wow, good question. I think dog training made that decision for me. I didn't set out to be a [dog trainer](#). I wanted to be a veterinarian and I went to the University of Guelph. I got a degree in Animal Science, but my marks you know, you needed marks that were way higher than what I could achieve, doing as much social activity as I was doing at university.



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And I love science, so I went into the pharmaceutical world in research, veterinarian pharmaceuticals, and I did research, then I did marketing. And in the meanwhile, I was riding horses, and somebody said, "You should take this Jack Russell puppy." And I had showed dogs with my sister as a teenager, and I love dogs, but I wasn't obsessed with dogs.

And I realized that was really what I was meant to do, but I was meant to gather a lot of other experiences. I had trained so many other peoples' dogs because I just knew how to do it. I don't know how. I trained our family pet tricks. And then from there I read a few books.

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So, I trained other peoples' dogs and then when I got my dog of my own, my very first dog of my own, I was in, I believe I was 29 or 28, and it was within six months of owning her, I was still doing a lot of riding, but I knew and I told somebody that I was working for, teaching dog training at that time, I thought open up a franchise of their business, but I knew I was going to be a professional dog trainer.

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But it wasn't something I wanted to, I wish I was, you know I see kids, junior handlers that are like, they're working through our Recaller Program with their family pet when they're eight years old or ten years old, and they're just so talented and I'm so envious of that because you keep going, you keep being curious to learn and you are going to be running circles around the knowledge I have about dog training when you get to be my age.

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So, you know the sky is the limit for those of you who are young, who love dogs, and who continue to be curious about how to bring joy in their life.

*"I have a new puppy, ten-weeks, and I want to know how to start introducing her to other dogs."*

We have a podcast, [podcast episode number 72](#) that goes into that in great detail.

*"Do you have any tips for juniors trying to showcase themselves in the sport and really put their name out there?"*

I assume the sport is dog agility and I would contact, whoever is your mentor, whoever you look up to and say, "I would like to spend some time with you and work for you for free. And here's my skills."

You've got to make sure that you put it in a way that brings them value, because there's probably hundreds of kids that would love to work for professional dog trainers. So how can you bring value to them? "You know, I'm great with a computer and I love to work hard, and I can do the jobs that nobody else in your business wants to do."

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So that's the first thing that I would do. And you know, contact many, if you get told "no" don't be afraid to ask 20 others. I mean, if there aren't 20 others that you value, then keep coming around to the first person. Because when I was coming into this business, there definitely wasn't 20 people that I looked up to and wanted to learn from. So, keep learning, doing what you can to stay on the path of learning the right way, learning the right things. Don't be distracted by people that you know in your heart isn't the way to train dogs. And don't be discouraged by what people may say or do when you say I want to be a professional dog trainer. Don't let anybody's words discourage you.



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*“Is it a coincidence that all your Border Collies have prick ears or is there a reason you choose those over the others?”*

No, it is an absolute coincidence. My first Border Collie had little rosebud ears, so you know, I used to say the only thing I cared about with Border Collie ears is that they both do the same thing.

And honestly now I wouldn't care if my next puppies had one ear up, then one ear down. I don't care. I just love the dogs, or I love the puppy instantly.

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So, I used to tape ears, like confirmation people do, and now I just feel that that interferes with my relationship with my puppies. Maybe I'm not good enough at doing it that my dogs don't love it and I don't like to force them to do something they don't love to do. So, ears are not a priority to me.

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*“Do you think nervous or reactive dogs can do agility and enter competitions?”*

Nola, I think it is absolutely possible if you are patient with the dog and let them tell you when they are ready. If you build in the layers and don't put your desire to do agility ahead of the dog's comfort in an agility environment.

If you do it slow, which means do a lot of the foundational things at home away from any [stressful environment](#), the answer is a hundred percent yes.

They will continue to bloom and flourish before your eyes, and you'll see a different dog come through, through the sport of agility. It's amazing what it does to the confidence level of dogs who are a little less confident.

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*“What skills can my dog gain through your Recallers?”*

Wow. So many skills. Number one, you are going to learn a ton of skills, which you are going to be the vector for the dog to learn. So, you are going to learn better mechanics as a dog trainer. When to reinforce, what reinforcement to choose, what's the best reinforcement for this situation, what value of reinforcement should you use.

Should you let your dog fail or should you intervene. And if you do intervene, what's a good way to intervene and what is a not-so-good way to intervene. How to recognize [your dog's motivational level](#) and what to do so that it stays at a healthy stage and doesn't get too high or too low.

Those are the general things, and then you're going to learn all these games that teach things like Reinforcement Zone, how to hang out at your side, which leads to great [loose leash walking](#). It leads to the dog being able to understand how to do a tight turn in agility and drive back to you.

You're going to learn how to teach your dog [how to listen](#) no matter what. If they're a long way away and you ask them to sit, they can sit. If you're running away from them, you ask them to sit, they can sit. Your dog is going to learn how to ignore high-value distractions. If they're running towards a squirrel and you say sit, they're going to sit.



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So basically, we're going to teach your dog that there's a lot of white noise that now might be the environment going "pick me, pick me" and all of that is going to minimize and turn into white noise all through the [Recallers Program](#). And oh yeah, guess what, your dog will learn a brilliant recall as well.

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*"No question, but you are amazing, and your podcast is the best. So much positive energy it brings me joy daily".*

Thank you for that. That's very kind.

*"How is Belief different from your Border Collies and did you, example, have to adjust some of your training, and did you have to adjust some of your training approaches?"*

Well, Belief is half-Terrier, so that makes her very, very different. But she is a quarter Border Collie, so there is a little similarity. So, how is she different? You know I find with my Jack Russell Terriers when I raised them, I would tell people for the first ten weeks, maybe 16 weeks that they were with me, Jack Russell Terriers just wanted to do things with me.

But after that point, they started to look out to the environment for reinforcement, where a lot of Border Collies are a little bit opposite in that they're looking at the environment, but once they click about how reinforcing you could be, then they just become a sponge and want to learn more from you.

So, things with Belief, we've taken slower. We've been a lot more patient. I think the biggest challenge with her is her ability to self-regulate her emotions. She can get too high, and she takes it out on Swagger. And I don't mean that she's aggressive towards him, but she grabs a toy and just he wants to sleep.

I mean, he loves to play with her, but you know, he is who he is. And so, he doesn't have the energizer bunny attitude. So, a lot of times he wants to be by the fire and sleep, and she'll grab a toy and just jump on him and put it in his face, and put it in his face, and put it in his face.

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And so, we have had a lot of our training time for the first, she's now 15 months or 16 months, for all of those months a big chunk of her training time is teaching her how to relax when a dog says, "No, thank you," how to respect that and just go and chill or chew on a bone, which she's doing more and more of.

So that's the biggest thing that she has been different. She's like a dream to train. She's super easy. She's very, very smart. She's very, very fast and very, very keen to learn. So, there's a lot of similarities. I mean, a lot of breeds, it's not just Border Collies that have those characteristics but yeah, some differences. She runs very, very hot. And you would think Border Collies do but way more than Border Collies. I think she would rival Buzz, my dog Buzz, who I wrote [Shaping Success](#) about for how hot she gets.

00:18:04

*"Will Crate Games help Milo with bad separation anxiety? He's best crated upstairs in blackout room."*  
You know, Milo might need the help of a certified behaviorist veterinarian, so keep that in mind. [Crate Games](#) will definitely help him to be more comfortable and confident in a crate. But if he absolutely has such high anxiety that he can't be left alone in a room, then definitely sometimes you need the expert advice of a behaviorist.



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And I don't mean a dog trainer who calls themselves a behaviorist. I mean a certified veterinarian medical Behaviorist or applied behavior analysis, somebody who really understands how to help them.

Now you could also, along with Crate Games, I would make sure you go to [podcast episode 191](#), where I talked about the relaxation protocol.

And for sure, for sure, for sure you need to visit [podcast episode number 200](#), where I talked about the FRIDA Protocol. That's definitely going to help Milo.

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Okay, A lot of phenomenal questions. We need to do this more often. Leave me a comment, let me know. Should we do this like once a month where I just put out 'ask me anything' and I sit here and read your questions just off the top. I had never seen any of these questions. I'm just reading them and answering them as they come along. So, thank you to those of you who wrote in, and I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

*\*The injection for Swagger for arthritis is Librela*

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

[Podcast Episode 203: Reactive, Unmotivated and Fearful: Finding Resiliency For This! Beyond Dog Training Part 1](#)

[Podcast Episode 204: Dog Behavior And Diet: Recovery For This! Beyond Dog Training Part 2](#)

[Agility Nation](#)

[Podcast Episode 196: Why Mastering Reinforcement Is The Linchpin To Reinforcement Based Dog Training](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Dysregulated Dogs: Emotional Coping Strategies, Co-Regulation, Self-Regulation, and Habituation with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 176: Why Your Dog's Emotions Are A Critical Element Of Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 37: Dog Training as a Career](#)

[Podcast Episode 72: Preventing Dog Aggression: Introducing Dogs or Puppies with Project Togetherness](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Fearful Dogs Help with Susan Garrett](#)

[Recallers](#)

[Podcast Episode 86: How to Train Unmotivated or Overexcited Dogs](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Loose Leash Walking with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Video: How To Get Your Dog To Listen Outside Off Leash \(Step By Step Guide\)](#)

[Book: Shaping Success by Susan Garrett](#)

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Podcast Episode 191: Get Your Dog To Calm Down With This Common Sense Protocol For Relaxation](#)

[Podcast Episode 200: Solve Your Dog's Separation Anxiety With FRIDA: Expanding Calm With Functional Relaxation](#)



#### 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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