

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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Has there ever been a time in your life when things haven't worked out the way you had planned, when in fact they might have gone in the complete opposite direction? If so, then today's podcast is for you because it is all about navigating failure, thriving in uncertainty. And I have got a lot to share with you, so let's go.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And today I've got ten books. I'll give you the name of all ten of them at the end of this podcast, and they cover a wide range of topics. Today is a mindset podcast but if you're here for dog training, don't turn away because trust me, you will not be able to be the best dog trainer you can be for your dog unless you know how to recover from failure, unless you have the mindset that knows how to pivot.

I'm going to share with you steps on how I've done it over the years, and I think I've been really upfront with my failures and my pivots. [For example, This!](#) who is three years old this week and her grandmother at the age of three had already won a world championship. I believe actually many dogs in her family had won medals at national and world events by the age of three, maybe even the age of two.

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But here I was with a dog who barely wanted to play with me, and [so I had to pivot](#). I had to go to a plan B. So, what's a plan B? A plan B could be something small or it could be something major. For example, you've had a life circumstance where you've lost a family member or a family member has moved in with you, or you've suddenly lost your job, or you've lost your place to live and maybe you had to move in with other people.

These are big, big pivots, which require larger plan B's. Now, plan B's can happen in an instant, and they could also be a little more intentional like a day or a week or a month, or several months before you completely make that pivot.

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Now, plan B's can also be pretty small, like you are entered in an agility ring and the [dog breaks the start line](#), what's your plan B? Or you aren't where you thought you were going to be, and so what's your plan B? It could be you're standing in line for a coffee and a bagel and you're sure you put \$10 in your pocket, but you're searching now you have no \$10, what's your plan B? You really want that coffee so you've got to come up with a plan B. Do you have a credit card? That's a plan B. Or could you ask somebody to hold your spot in line while you go through the loose change in that ashtray in the car? That's a Plan B as well.

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Plan B's can be pretty small, but you're faced with the need to pivot and go to a plan B more often than you probably even realize. And the tack that you take when you make that pivot makes the difference between you being a success in what you're trying and you accepting the fact that you're just not good at this or you're just going to quit, you're just going to retire, you're just going to exit gracefully.



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It really is those plan B's that dictate that. And I want those of you who are listening to this podcast to have the most amazing life possible with your dog. And so that amazing life comes from being able to navigate during uncertain times. And we will have those uncertain times, all of us. So, plan B requires mental flexibility. It requires the ability to go, "Oh, it's not that? We're going in this direction."

Now, I'm going to share with you how you're going to get there. If you say, "Oh no, I'm a slow thinker. I got to really plan things out." Trust me, I've got your back. I've got you here. Plan B requires that you cultivate a mindset of resiliency and have a [growth mindset](#).

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Now, I've spoken about growth mindsets before in this podcast. I've referred to [Carol Dweck's great book *Mindset*](#) many, many times. It's a very valuable read and it'll give you some insight. Both through the science that she quotes and through the simple tricks that she has help you get your mindset in a positive one.

Now, a big part of your mindset is your self-talk. And I just can't remind you enough about this. The way you talk to yourself, and I know you do it, don't deny it. So as simple as tripping over the step and going, "Oh, how could you be so _____." How do you talk to yourself? Or when somebody says, "Oh, you didn't get this?" How do you respond by saying, "Oh, that's because I never do _____."

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That negative self-talk trust me, you are planting for your brain things you want in the future. The brain is always listening. Something I was reading today, they talked about language. We talk about how to spell, but actually it's a double meaning because it's a spell we put on ourselves by the words we use.

So be really conscientious about both, how you talk about yourself, how you talk about your dog. So, I'm lumping in how you talk about your dog or think about the actions or the behaviors of your dog. I'm lumping all that into self-talk because it has a massive impact. If you've watched this podcast or listened to this podcast in the past, you know I've talked about [the belief loop](#).

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Now what self-talk does is it fans the flames of your belief, and that belief is what leads to the outcome. It leads to the life you have. It all goes back to what you're believing. Now, I'm not saying just by changing your beliefs that all of a sudden, babies don't cry, and unicorns will always be dancing and lighting the way for you because there's more to it than that.

But it is a massive, massive part about it. And you can change the way you talk about yourself, about your dog just know to start off, this has probably nothing to do with you. It's your upbringing. It's possible trauma you had in your childhood. It's the coaches, the mentors you've had.

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Sadly, in dog sports or in dog training, there's a lot of people who are very ego driven. And so, in order for them to feed their own ego, they have to make sure they can demonstrate how much better they are than you in whatever it is that they're coaching you.

So, they'll say things like, "Let me just show you," or "Clearly you are not ready for this." Little subtle things that are planting ideas in your brain that you're just not good enough. And it's not true. Dog training is not an art. [Dog training is a science](#).



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Anyone who applies themselves can get really, really good at it. So, you need to remember that it starts with you, look in the mirror, how do you talk about yourself? And it also comes from the programming you're giving your brain. So, your brain might be programmed by things like meditation or visualization or reading or Netflix or Facebook and TikTok or mantras. Do you see what I mean?

Several of those things would be really, really good to program your brain because they're intentionally taking you to a better place. Some of those things are taking the power to program your brain and you're giving it away to complete strangers. "Here, put in any ideas you want. I'm going autopilot right now."

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Don't do that to yourself. Be intentional. Plant amazing ideas about what's possible for you and your dog. Make sure that brain gets programmed the way you want it to get programmed. Navigating your plan B in any instance is really about having mental agility, about being flexible.

You know, Tony Robbins always said, "It's not what happens to us, it's the perception that we give what happens to us." We are all just living life through our own perception. It's a lens. It's the colored lens that we see things through. And so, what is the perception of what just happened? Can you reframe?

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And that's what some of these books are going to talk to you about so you can reframe your thinking by doing what [Shawn Achor in his great book *The Happiness Advantage*](#), he mentions 'turning negative momentum into positive momentum. So being able to reframe what's happening at the time that it's happening.

Now in his book, Shawn recommends that performance is actually enhanced with happiness. So, by digging into that brain of ours, the perception, we actually are dialing up the happiness, which leads to an enhanced experience no matter what it is that we're working on with our dog.

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Now, I know it's easy to get wrapped up, especially the big setbacks. It's difficult to pivot from those big setbacks. In [Ryan Holiday's great book, *The Obstacle is the Way*](#), which he's got a lot of great books, but that's one of them. In this book, he talks about perception, action, and will are the three things that allows us to turn adversity into opportunity.

And again, that's the pivot. That's the mindset to be able to do that, to look at what's going on. I'm going to give you five keys at the end of today to work on in order to get there for yourself. I think along the way it's super important that you recognize both your strengths and your dog's strengths.

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I think of my Terrier Decaff, who was never super confident. We had a lot of [fear issues](#) when she was growing up. Some [aggression issues](#) when she was quite young. And I could maybe do a podcast about Decaff and share the laundry list of challenges we had to go through.

But I looked at what is she great at? She's not as fast as other dogs in agility. She actually was one of the smallest dogs in her height class. What is she great at? She doesn't have a big stride. She's nowhere near as fast as some of the Shelties and Pyrenees and Shepherds that we were running against. But what she could do is turn super, super tight. And so, let's focus on the things we're good at, not the things that are out of our control, the things that other dogs can do super well, right?



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So that's the pivot. Focusing on your strengths. What are your assets or the things, the attributes that you have. Maybe you don't have a great place to train, but you've got like a small room. But you have more time because maybe you don't have kids that you have to run off to soccer, so you have a little bit more time to train your dogs.

Focus on the things that you do have. Keep programming your brain for good. You got to think of plan B, as I mentioned, as a pivot. If not 'this', then 'that'. What is your 'that' recognizing I'm in 'this', I've got to go to 'that'. Now it could be as I [recall my dog](#), I'm at the park and my dog says, "I'm not coming." What is your plan B? And you better think of one quite quickly because there's a busy road not that far away.

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'My plan B is I'm going to drop to the ground and roll around and make all these goofy noises.' Well, for a lot of dogs that would work. They're going to go, "What the heck is going on down there?" Guess what, plan B isn't something that is done consistently, because if you're doing it consistently, then you failed on your plan A planning.

So, plan B [when your dog didn't come at the park](#) might be you know, turning and screaming and flailing your arms and running in the opposite direction. Okay, so what is your plan B needs to be something that is thought out ahead of time. More on that later, cue the dramatic music.

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In order to adopt a resilient mindset, you really have to detach yourself from outcomes. Sure, wouldn't we all like a dog who is perfect, who doesn't give us any challenges, who just seems so in sync with us and does everything we want, and so easy to train and just a blessing to have in the house from the time they were eight weeks all the way through their lifetime. That rarely happens. It happens in Disney a lot, but it rarely happens in my world.

But you need to detach yourself from the outcomes so that you can objectively look at what you've got. And so, it might be, plan B in your training at the end of week. "Well, this is where my training really didn't go as planned so my plan B right now is to come up with a new plan A." What does that look like?

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You can't get hung up on those of you who are competing on the trophies. And people say to me, I've had many students say to me, "You tell me not to get hung up on the trophies. That's easy for you because you have so many of them." And I truly believe I have so many of them because that has never been what I'm working towards. It really has always been a cherry on the vegan chocolate chip cookie.

So, detach yourself from those outcomes. And I'm going to remind you about [celebrations](#) because they're a super important part of your review. And going back to that self-talk, what happens after plan A fails?

And it could be you're walking down the street and the dog reacts badly to [somebody with a child](#) or [reacts inappropriately to another dog](#), or you are at a competition and it just goes south and your dog just starts being the class clown and starts [running around the ring](#) or rolling on its back or doing something goofy that it's easy for you to be embarrassed or maybe even a little ashamed, and you've got to, "Don't go there."



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That's a perception. Be objective. What is your plan B? We're going to get our dog under control. And then how do you recount that situation? So often people need to go to justification. "Well, you know, I didn't give him his [regular exercise](#) today." Or "Well, there's somebody and the neighbor's dogs in season."

No, but guess what, there's a great bumper sticker, right? Here's the thing about excuses. Your friends don't need them, and your enemies won't believe them. Just stay in the present and pivot to your plan B, get things back on course, and then let's check in and do a review of what happened and see what we can learn. What lessons are there for you to learn?

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Okay, back to some of the books. I'm just going to go through these books. I said I'd do it at the end, but I'm going to do it right now. Some of them are really tactical science-based books and others are not. You'll know them by their titles and by what I say about them likely.

[Eckhart Tolle's The Power of Now](#), this book is really about being present and how ego can derail happiness and being present to what's going on in this moment actually magnifies the ability to be happy in the future, but if you focus too much on the future, you actually decrease the possibility to be happy.

[Atomic Habits](#), I spoke about that book a lot, and also [The Power of Habit](#). Two really, really good books, strategic books. Here's a couple more that are not as strategic, but really good books. [Man's Search for Meaning](#).

Really good book if you haven't read it as I'm going to give this a shout out just because it's the name of my puppy and it's a great book. They're kind of like meditations, but they can just be short stories or short passages. [The Prophet](#).

[Choose Wonder Over Worry](#). It's both a 'how to' book, but also, it's a really good book to help give you strategies. [George Leonard's Mastery](#), he talks about being sure you choose the correct mentor because the correct mentor will help you see that mastery isn't the achievement, that mastery is the journey and practice isn't a task. Practice is a path. So, another really, really super good book.

The [Unbeatable Mind by Mark Divine](#) is a little intense because he is a former Navy SEAL, very interesting, very strategic, some really good insights. He talks about being a heart-centered leader. Now this is a, you know, rough tough Navy SEAL talking about being a heart-centered leader and a teammate that's in service of the team. So, you know, rough tough's Navy SEAL, but definitely understands what's important. And I think you can just turn, when you think of teammate, we're obviously thinking of our dogs.

Now different situations, maybe not, but it's so important that you get that strategy that includes the [mindset of raising and training your dog](#) of course.

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So, I'm going to give you five things that I'm hoping will be of help to you.

Number one, you've got to have goals no matter what it is you're doing. If you're [raising a puppy](#), if you have an adolescent dog, if you have a [rescue dog](#), if you're just saying, "I've had enough, I'm now present to the fact that my dog's life has gotten very small because he's so difficult to manage and I want to change things."



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You've got to have a big picture and that big picture is going to be focused on what's important, what is important to you as a dog owner. And if you want me to put it into words, here are the three things that I always go back to.

Number one, is [growing confidence](#) in that dog. Because a confident dog I believe is a dog that has less anxiety and has a happier, more fuller life. So, grow confidence is number one.

[Grow connection](#) is number two. That's just the relationship you have. And if you're doing dog sports, that's what the success of dog sports is reliant on, is that connection or relationship you have with your dog.

And number three, [grow consistency](#) so that your dog has consistent, reliable behaviors. That's what makes a great family pet, and a great competition dog.

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Number two, your plan includes both a plan A and a plan B. So, what are you going to do if your dog doesn't sit when you ask them to sit? What are you going to do when your dog doesn't come when called? What is the plan B in the moment? And then hopefully you never have to use these plan B's, but you visualize "Uh oh, this is what's happened. My dog sees a squirrel. My dog sees a rabbit. Uh oh, plan B."

Now, before you take your dog off leash, you're going to say, "Well, I know there's no squirrels in this area, so I'm going to take my dog off leash." That's plan A. Plan B is 'There's a rogue squirrel. What are you going to do then?'

Number three is the pivot. It's the transition from plan A to plan B. That is your pivot, and it has to, if it's instantaneous, if it's a small setback that we're transitioning from, then it's going to be an in-the-moment transition. And how does that get easy for you? "Oh Susan, I'm not a fast thinker. I can't juggle things. I was just focused on something else."

So, somebody throws a toy in the pond and their dog goes to get it, and then suddenly your dog goes and jumps on top of their dog. What's your plan B? Hey sister, jump in the pond right after your dog, right? Don't A, let your dog hurt the other dog. And B, don't let that other dog you know, get in a little scrap with your dog in the middle of the water.

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So that pivot can be a moment of time, it could be a day, a week, a month or more. And the pivot always goes back to what's important. What's important is going to be always laid out ahead of time before you go into whatever big adventure that you just went into.

Number four now comes the review after the fact. Okay plan A or plan B is now finished. Now we're going to review. First of all, you're going to look at what resiliency have you developed? What growth has happened right here in the moment?

"Well, I learned that I can be embarrassed and recover. That I don't adopt that as a personality trait. That I don't have to defend or justify. I just have to you know, apologize if my dog interrupted with another person or another dog, and then go plan B. Now I'm into my step four, which is my review."

"What did I just learn? What am I celebrating? What happened great in that scenario?" There may or may not be something, but your ability to transition could be the celebration. So, what did you learn? What are you celebrating? What resiliency have you developed even further?



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Because that resiliency is what was going to give you the ability to make those pivots faster in the future. And the final thing of your review is, what gets shared? Please, please, please do not share the drama of why you had to go to plan B.

“Well, my dog took a dump here, so then I had to do this.” Because what you're doing is rehearsing for your brain that ‘whenever my dog and I get together, something bad happens.’ You are putting that energy, it's a lower vibration energy. You're putting it out to the universe that ‘this is the relationship I have with my dog and woe is me.’ That doesn't get shared.

If somebody asks how something went, “You know what, we learned some great lessons and here's where we were amazing.” That gets shared my friend. The other toxic stuff just gets put in a pile, we pick out our lessons, we put the rest of away. It doesn't serve us to go down to that lower vibrational place to share a story of drama for Facebook, for our friends.

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It doesn't matter. Remember, friends don't need it, enemies aren't going to believe it anyway. Now, here's where you've got to [go to that journal](#) and what are those action steps. Yes, in the journal you write all the review points. But what's your next best thing? What can you do right now that's going to improve what just happened today?

And then what's the long-term planning look like? It may look like coming over to Shaped by Dog and doing a deep dive, maybe on YouTube of one of our [playlists about mindset](#), or about [puppy raising](#), or about [overcoming challenges](#). Whatever it is, I hope you're including us in it.

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Okay, I know this wasn't dog training. I thank you if you stayed right to the end and I would love to hear feedback from you. Was this helpful? For me Plan B's are important. We need to celebrate that we can pivot, that we can transition. And then we're going to focus on how we're going to make our plan A so darn strong, so darn successful that Plan B is something that rarely comes into play. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Susan's Recommended Reading:

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

[The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work by Shawn Achor](#)

[The Obstacle Is the Way: The Timeless Art of Turning Trials into Triumph by Ryan Holiday](#)

[The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment by Eckhart Tolle](#)

[Atomic Habits by James Clear](#)

[The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg](#)

[Man's Search For Meaning by Victor E Frankl](#)

[The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran](#)

[Choose Wonder Over Worry by Amber Rae](#)

[Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment by George Leonard](#)

[Unbeatable Mind: Forge Resiliency and Mental Toughness to Succeed at an Elite Level by Mark Divine](#)





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Resources:

[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](#)

[Podcast Episode 117: What's More Important Than Your Dog Training Sessions?](#)

[Podcast Episode 195: Making Your Mind Your Most Powerful Dog Training Tool](#)

[Podcast Episode 224: Unleashing Fluency In Dog Training: Cracking The Canine Communication Code](#)

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

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

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

[Podcast Episode 147: Teach Your Dog To Listen Off Leash And Far Away](#)

[YouTube Video: Catch Your Runaway Dog! Stop Chasing And Do This In An Emergency](#)

[Podcast Episode 41: Get a Behaved Dog by Celebrating Milestones!](#)

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

[YouTube Video: Calm Your Reactive Or Anxious Dog And Reduce Your Stress About Lunging, Barking, Growling](#)

[Podcast Episode 114: Dog Agility Training: 3 Big Mistakes All Dog Owners Should Avoid](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Exercising Your Dog's Body and Mind: Tips and Games with Susan Garrett](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 218: Puppy Development Stages And Your Dog's Behavior](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 139: Remove Confusion And Build Your Dog's Confidence With One Simple Dog Training Habit](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 198: What Does "Positive Is Not Permissive" Really Mean In Dog Training?](#)

[Podcast Episode 71: Pro Dog Trainer's Secret to Help Your Naughty Dog](#)

[YouTube Playlist: The Heart / Mind Connection Side of Dog Training with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Puppy Essentials with Susan Garrett Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 227: My Foolproof Strategy To Overcoming Dog Training Challenges](#)



Navigating Failure In Dog Training: What's Your Plan B?

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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