

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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All kinds of amazing questions, dog training questions have come in over the past month. Questions from my daily routine, to feeding raw, to how to pick a breeder. And that leads us to another great Q&A.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. So many great questions have come in from you guys. And thank you for your questions. I think that this is going to have to be more than just a monthly event because so many good questions. Some I will make full podcast episodes from, and I'm going to answer as many questions as I can right now.

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First question, *How do I teach self-control when my dog loses it, anytime we return home from an outing?* You don't mention the age of your dog or the breed of your dog. I like to have, teach my dog Hot Zones. And I'll have either a raised dog bed or a regular dog bed. Number one, I've cooled my dogs out after they have walked.

But one of our, previously our youngest dog Belief, she goes on what we call her calming bed. It's just a mat in the living room that just allows her to chill out because she used to be that dog, would come in and get the zoomies and go cray cray, which would upset the other dogs.

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And it's, no, you've just been out, you had a big walk, you come— and that calming bed will only work if you've done the relaxation protocol, which you're going to find here on Shaped by Dog [podcast episode number 191](#).

So, teach your dog how to relax, how to be calm. Then you can use the calming bed effectively.

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Next question. *How do I maintain accountability for psychological safety and connection when reinforcement games fail?* So, Richie, this is a really, like deep question. And I wasn't really sure how to answer it, but I decided like, what if we just approach why does dog training fail?

And [dog training fails for potentially a lot of reasons](#). Number one is human error, human mechanics, your application of a process, your application of a methodology. So, that could lead to why somebody can try you know maybe see what I'm doing on a YouTube video without the coaching and without the steps to know how I got there and then try it with her own dog and go, "Well, that Susan Garrett, her training doesn't work."

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It's not the methodology. It's the application of the methodology that failed. So human error is one reason that it fails. Reinforcement that you chose. If it's not appropriate reinforcement for that dog in that environment, then that could lead to the failure.

The environment you chose, is it overwhelming for the dog? Are there way too many distractions for the stage and age of that dog?



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So human error, reinforcement, the environmental conditions, and finally, any kind of dog training can fail if it's a poorly written protocol. So, reinforcement-based dog training, and I always train with games, works brilliantly if the puppy or dog has clarity of 'how can I earn reinforcement.' And the protocol is strategically layered to give you outcomes that lead you in a direction you want your relationship or your dog's focus or your dog's behavior to go.

So, I hope that is going to help you, Richie. I hope that leads you to the question. It was a pretty deep question, and I wasn't really sure where you're going, but I hope that got you. And these questions are amazing guys, really.

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*Does training small training sessions with food encourage the dog to follow you around the house and not settle themselves?* Two things here. Number one, when you're training with small sessions with a lot of reinforcement, what you actually are doing is building a better relationship with your dog. When you have a great relationship, you just want to be around that person, don't you?

I remember my late husband, we were away down South, traveling in the RV, tiny little RV. We went all these kinds of places together. We got home and I don't know how long we were gone, over a month. And I was going to go grocery shopping.

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And I said to him, "Do you want to come with me?" And he said, "Didn't we just spend six weeks together in a motor home?" And I'm like, "Yeah, but come on." So, when you have a great relationship, you like spending time together.

So, yes, your dog or puppy may want to follow you around when you have built this great relationship. But the second part of this, have you taught the puppy how to settle? Have you taught the puppy when [it's dog time and when it's chill time](#)? And so that's, you know, as much effort as you put into playing games, I would encourage you to put as much or more effort into teaching a dog how to just relax.

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How to have some downtime. And I did go into detail in podcast episode number 191, where I was sharing how I approach the [relaxation protocol](#) with my dogs.

*How do you calm a dog when they are overreacting to a stranger, lunging on a leash?* There was a lot of questions about this. And I love how Jean Donaldson talks about things like this. You have to decide in dog training, is this a behavior? How do I get my dog to do this response? Or is it an emotion we're talking about?

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If it's emotion, we're not talking dog training, we're talking conditioning or generalization or desensitization or habituation. We are talking how to bring in value, not for choosing but for being. And so, [podcast episode number 184](#) is going to help you with that.

But honestly, if you have a dog who's very fearful, you may need to ask for the help of a certified behaviorist, a veterinarian behaviorist. Somebody who really understands or somebody who really understands applied animal behavior, they're going to be able to help you with [the emotional side of dog training](#).



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You can't dog train emotion. Think of something that you're afraid of. If you're afraid of heights, or you're afraid of spiders, or you're afraid of snakes, people giving you like M&M candies isn't going to make you not be afraid of those things, right?

You can't dog train emotion. You have to approach it from a counter condition, desensitization, habituation, generalization point of view.

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*Do you make your own raw dog food?* We buy a commercial raw food and then we doctor it up. We put in a lot of vegetables, a lot of greens, some fruit, some supplements, oils. So, we don't make our own, but we sure do change it from its original state.

*How to train a puppy out of separation anxiety?* Alright so training for separation anxiety really begins with that relaxation protocol that I mentioned earlier. So, podcast episode number 191 will teach your dog how to relax and then be sure to watch [podcast episode number 200](#), the FRIDA Protocol with two of my very talented students sharing their insightful process on how to overcome separation anxiety.

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*Can reinforcement-based dog training be as effective as balanced, the more I think about more positive punishment makes sense?* Well, I didn't catch your name on this one, but all I can say is when I die, I don't want to come back as your dog.

Can reinforcement-based dog training be as effective as balanced? My dogs for the last 25, probably 30 years now have been trained without the use of physical punishment or verbal intimidation. And I think they're amazing family pets. And they've been world champions, national champions of sports many times over. So, if you're asking me, can it be as effective? Yes, it can.

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We have Tater Salad, the Bulldog Boston Terrier Pug cross who [we got as a rescue dog](#) as a 15-month-old puppy, who was a hot mess that he couldn't be walked on a leash because he was dragging people down the street. So, they just couldn't walk him. He destroyed the family's furniture. He couldn't greet dogs appropriately. He was turfed out of three daycare programs because of his lack of social skills around other dogs.

He's probably, everybody who watches me on social media, I bet you Tater Salad is everybody's favorite dog that lives in this house by far. Because he's just a great dog. He's an everyday dog. And so, did I get that from him with the use of physical corrections? No.

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I got that by being patient, applying protocols, evaluating the success, and altering based on his needs. Because honestly, I've never trained a 'Bulldogston' as we call them, a Bulldog cross with a Pug and a Boston Terrier. So, I think the people who tell you that reinforcement-based dog training won't work are the ones who will never have success with reinforcement-based dog training.

You know why? Because you're never going to outperform [your own beliefs](#). So, if you walk around with that belief in your head, as I walk around with the belief in my head that it is possible, 30 years later, I not only have done it myself. I've got the most amazing students that have come through our programs. There probably isn't a breed of dog that hasn't come through our programs that just has crazy behavior, crazy good success. So, a hundred percent, yes, it can be done.



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*How many times a week do you recommend to practice agility? What is over training?* You know, it depends on the age of the dog, the breed of the dog, the fitness. So, I don't do much agility training until the dog has great fitness and body awareness. And if the dog lacks drive, then the dog is the one who decides what overtraining is.

That's based on their attitude towards what you're doing. And you don't wait until they go, "Oh, I don't like this anymore," and then quit. Because then you're teaching the dog that agility is no fun. You always want to quit where on a high note.

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And if you have a dog who is a high drive dog, the length and width of their tongue at the end will tell me when it's time to quit. So, you never want a dog's tongue to start curling. Therefore, when I'm training in the hot weather you know, my [training sessions](#) might only be, I don't know, less than a minute long. And when it's cooler out, my training sessions are still not much more than maybe two minutes. Depends on what I'm really training.

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Okay, *how many different marker words do you use for one dog and why do you name the rewards differently?* I did a podcast on location specific reward markers, and it [is podcast episode 151](#). And I have many, many, many different marker words because it gives information to the dog with just a word. So, "cook" or "cookie" means I'm bringing you a reinforcement, you stay where you are, it will be a food reinforcement. I use the word "strike" now with my new puppy which means 'drive at the toy in my hand.' If that toy's on the ground, I say, "get it." So, you can find out more about that on podcast episode number 151.

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*Do you ever feel like a dog can't be trained in agility no matter how hard you work?* If you go back to the question about 'can this game-based training work?' or 'is there a time when it doesn't work?', I think within the context of agility, you've got to ask yourself, is a dog in pain? Is a dog injured? Are they structurally able to do the things that I'm asking them to do?

If the answer is, "Yeah, we can do those things and no, my dog's not in pain, and no, my dog is not injured. I've been to the veterinarian. I've had them thoroughly checked out. This seems to be that they're just not enjoying what they're doing." then I would go and check out [the two podcasts](#) I did about This! because it was a diet problem that caused the lack of motivation towards the sport.

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If all of those things are not the dog's problem, then you've got to go back to what I mentioned before. Is it the protocols that you're using to teach the dog? Is it the environment that you're trying to train in? Is it your application of those protocols? Is it the reinforcement you're using? There is a reason. I think that any dog should be able to be taught to love any kind of dog sport. It really depends on your approach to it provided the dog is physically sound and they're not in any pain.

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*Will you tell us more about the process that brought Prophet to Canada?* I did. [Podcast episode number 233](#) will go to all the details of flying him here from Germany. Well, actually via Switzerland to here to Ontario, Canada.



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*What's up with the slapping and pushing [with the tug game](#)?* So, I do a lot of interactive play with my dogs. When they're tugging, I'll slap them in the ribs. I might push them away and grab their muzzle and they growl. They love it. It gets them more engaged on the toy. If you've ever seen two dogs playing, they're very physical with each other. And so, I gauge each puppy and each dog. A smaller, softer dog, I might just play with one finger on their body. And my 12-week-old Border Collie puppy now, you know, he loves being smacked.

We call it '[Smack the Baby](#)' when they're tugging on that. Especially when I'm raising a dog for agility, because agility is a very physical sport where they have to bang into weave poles and up against tunnels. But even if I never did agility again, I just think dogs love engaging that way. And I love playing with them in that way.

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*Do you have any tips for Border Collie pup that wants [to lunge at and chase cars](#)?* So, any obsession, what we have is what the dog wants to do in this environment. And yes, I can tell you it's a counter conditioning, [desensitization issue](#).

But also, it is what is your list of what your dog really, really knows well and enjoys in that kind of environment. So, what other behaviors does your dog know that they can earn reinforcement? Like how big is that list and how much does your dog love it? For example, does your dog like to spin at the side or tug on a toy or what is that list?

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Because if your dog wants to chase cars, and you have a repertoire of other known, really engaging behaviors, you can before the car comes near ask for some of those behaviors. Heel. Go between my legs. Do things. And I would do it at a much further distance than standing beside the road.

So, whatever the obsession is for your dog, if it's kids on bicycles, what is the list of things they love to do? Let's grow that and replace that obsession. That obsession will become white noise. And I wouldn't let them rehearse that obsession while you're growing the list of things that they love to do.

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*How do you balance puppy training and a hectic life?* Uh, well my friend let me tell you, you can't. It doesn't exist. So, since my puppy arrived and I have been planning this for a month, my life is out of balance. So, my normal morning and evening routines are just slowly coming back into focus for me. They're still not where I would like them to be.

And so, there's going to be what a period of maybe six months, nine months, maybe a little longer where your life will be out of balance. And so, you have to put, what are the priorities? Getting, keeping the things that allow you to stay in good health has got to be number one. So, those are your priority. Puppies have to get some sort of training and you'll be amazed when you train a puppy with games, how much you can get done in 30 seconds to three minutes.

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Squeeze the training. Don't make it a big overwhelming event for you in your hectic life. Squeeze it in between making peanut butter sandwiches for your kids. I almost said peanut butter salad for your kids. Hey, I don't think that's a thing, but it sounds yummy, doesn't it? But I don't think the kids would really like salad with peanut butter and jelly, but I digress.



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So, it's got to fit in between the rest of your hectic life and just know like I love to grow my knowledge, but I have not read a book or read part of my books or my audio books since the puppy arrived. So, things will be out of balance for a while, but you can work at, "Oh, guess what? I don't have to be that vigilant now about my routine with the puppy in the morning because I set out that he gets nine hours of sleep."

If I get up out of bed at seven hours, I don't wake him. If I do get go in and wake him at nine hours, but I'm still doing something, then I'll just take him out for a quick pee and I'll put him in his pen in the kitchen. So, we're working on changing the schedule, but new puppy, things are going to be out of balance.

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Just make sure the things that are the three most important things in your life, your health being number one, maintain their priorities, the three most important things. Let the puppy kind of squeeze in between the lines of those three most important things.

*Do you prefer males or females?* I always said I prefer female dogs when I'm choosing puppies, but I've got to tell you, my new boy is an amazing puppy. Swagger, my 12-and-a-half, just such a gift for me. And the last dog I had before those two, Buzzy, he was an amazing dog. So, I've always said I prefer females, but I definitely am open to the right male.

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*How do you know when is the right time to start reducing treat rewards?* I don't think of, "Oh, this is the time I reward less." I may think in terms of, "Alright, I'm putting these two behaviors into a chain, so I don't have to reward after this one." I'm only going to reward when we get to the end.

So, for example, I've taught my puppy to spin. Well, now he can spin and then come into Reinforcement Zone at my side. Those are two behaviors, but he doesn't get a cookie for the spin. He only gets a cookie when he gets into Reinforcement Zone. So, I don't think in terms of, "I've got to get rid of this food. My goal is never to give this puppy any treats or any toys for anything he ever does."

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When will that happen? That's not what real life is like, like as human beings, we get reinforced for things that we do. And that's why we continue to do them. And dogs, I mean, they're even a little more feral than us. So, if we don't structure the life so that reinforcement comes from us, then they're going to look elsewhere for that reinforcement.

Plus, isn't it an amazing thing to be able to do to give your dog a cookie for something that they did awesomely or to praise them or to give them toys? So, feeding a dog or giving toys is going to be the end of a behavior chain for the rest of my dog's life. That's just the way it is.

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But having said that, I could ask any one of my adult dogs to do any number of behaviors and without me having any food or toys on me, because the way we train, it is just a game. And the value of playing that game with me is so strong that I don't need the food or treats. So, I could probably ask them to do, I don't know, 20, 30, 40 things. Train for 10, 15 minutes and never give them a food reward. But why would I want to do that? Come on, it's fun, right? Giving your dog a reward for a job well done, it's just fun.



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*Are breeders registered with the AKC CKC de facto reputable or good? If not, how can I tell?*

Unfortunately, no. There are [puppy mills that are registered with the Kennel Club](#) all over the world, not just in America. How can you tell? Ask questions, make notes, it might be a topic of a great podcast or what are the characteristics of a great breeder?

You know, on my [previous live](#) I talked about asking to come in and see the puppies, but depending on the breed there may be a bioregulations why they don't want just everybody coming in to see the puppies. So, do they have closed circuit TV that you can see the puppies and how do you know those are really the puppies?

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Well, you know there's other thing questions that you can ask. So no, that asking if you know, have they gone through courses on, and they'll say, "Oh, I've been breeding dogs for 40 years and I don't need to do any courses." So, what kind of clearances, health clearances do they do? Can you see the paperwork on those health clearances?

How open and receptive are they to your questions? If they say, "We have a puppy available right now." then that is not your breeder. Trust me. It would be a great coincidence if they should be asking you more questions than you're asking them. If they're a really reputable breeder, they are going to want to know about you, about the life that that puppy is going to live. They're going to care so much about that puppy that they want to make sure you're the right home and the right person.

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*My vet said it's dangerous to feed raw food because of the risk of disease from infected animals. What's your take?* There's a lot of, I'm sorry to say uninformed veterinarians because it sounds like a judgment and maybe it is on my part, but there's a lot of really well-informed veterinarians who embrace raw feeding.

Like [Dr. Laurie Coger](#). I've given her a shout out. She's a friend of the podcast. [Dr. Karen Becker](#). There's a lot. Dr. Susan Thixton. You check out her website, [truthaboutpetfood.com](http://truthaboutpetfood.com). There's a lot of really brilliant veterinarians who know about raw food. Here's my lay person's take on that comment.

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When I put myself through university, I milked cows for a living, so I lived on dairy farms. And every once in a while, something untoward would happen to a calf and they would die, or a cow would get some disease and they would die. And I mean, if it was a smaller animal, we often would just bury them in the field.

Somewhere around, I don't know, a couple of weeks after that, the dogs would dig that animal up and eat it. Now, why did they never get sick? Because dogs have a very short digestive tract compared to ours. They have different enzymes, different gut microbe. So, no, you can't compare that.

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There's a risk of buying chicken from the grocery store and bringing it into your home. There's a risk of you getting disease from that. Not because the animal's diseased, but there's salmonella that could happen. Does that mean everybody should become vegan? I don't think that would be a bad idea being that I'm a plant-based eater myself. However, I don't think you should because you're afraid of getting sick from the meat.



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Most reputable commercial raw companies use human grade meat right now. So, is that a reason to not feed raw? No. To me, that is not a reason, but don't take my word for it because I am a lay person. I've fed my dogs raw for probably 30 years now, but don't take my word for it. Check out some of the names of the brilliant veterinarians that I've already listed.

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*Which of your courses do you recommend to a first-time dog owner who wants to do agility?*  
Absolutely, Recallers. Or Home School the Dog and then Recallers. Or Crate Games then Home School the Dog and Recallers. But Recallers is the one, that I think. I don't even care if you've won world championships in agility.

I think everybody on the planet who has a dog should go through Recallers because there's so much good dog training in there for everybody. No matter who you are. I think there will be some wow moments for everybody. So, that's where to start. And then from there, you can graduate to our Handling360 program, which will teach you all the foundation you need to know about dog agility.

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Okay, thank you for these amazing questions, guys. Keep them coming. We'll do this again. And I think we're going to have to go to two Q&As a month because too many. And I think I will take some of these questions, make them a full-length podcast episode. Others, maybe I'll do like reels on them. See you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### **Susan Garrett's Online Programs Mentioned**

[Recallers](#)

[Home School the Dog](#)

[Crate Games](#)

[Handling 360](#)

### **Resources**

[Podcast Episode 99: When Reinforcement Based Dog Training Doesn't Work](#)

[YouTube Video: Take Control of Dog Time to Calm Down Excited Dog Greetings and Reduce Anxiety](#)

[Podcast Episode 184: Proofing Vs Generalizing In Dog Training To Grow Skills And Confidence](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 79: Reduce Anxiety and Grow Your Dog's Confidence with These Pro Dog Training Tips](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 217: Understanding Emotional Regulation In Dogs To Create Calm](#)

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

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

[Podcast Episode 8: Get Your Dog in the Belief Loop of Awesome](#)







## Episode: #235

### AMA With Susan Garrett: Leash Lunging, Dog Anxiety, Agility Angst, Bad Breeders, And More

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

[Podcast Episode 151: How Location Specific Reinforcement Markers Will Improve Your Dog Training!](#)

[Podcast Episode 193: Do Different Dogs Really Need Different Dog Training Methods?](#)

[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 206: First Dog Agility Competition: Creating Joy For This! By Maximizing Reinforcement](#)

[Podcast Episode 233: Flying A Dog Or Puppy: Susan's Pre-Flight Plan](#)

[Podcast Episode 89: Why Dogs Should Not Tug: The Truth Revealed](#)

[Podcast Episode 95: How Playing with Your Dog Like a Puppy Can Reduce Fear](#)

[Podcast Episode 24: Help for Dogs who Chase Chipmunks, Bicycles, and Neighbor's Cats \(Distraction Intensity Index\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 215: What Your Destructive, Lunging, Nipping Or Hyper Dog Or Puppy Is Trying To Teach You](#)

[YouTube Video: Fighting For The Victims Of Puppy Mills](#)

[Live Replay: Puppy Mill Awareness](#)

[Dr. Laurie Coger](#)

[Dr. Karen Becker](#)

[Dr. Susan Thixton](#)



#### 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.



#### Meet Us Online

Website	<a href="https://dogsthat.com">https://dogsthat.com</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/">https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/</a>
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