

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

00:00:00

In [podcast episode number 256](#), I asked you, "What was that cookie for?" And helped you to become aware of how you may be contributing to your dog's unwanted behavior. And in today's episode, I'm going to help you best utilize all of your dog's [favorite reinforcements](#) to fix that unwanted behavior.

00:00:31

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. There were a lot of comments in our last episode where many of you were having an epiphany, an awareness of how you may have been contributing, or you may still be contributing to the behavior that you would like to stop in your dog. And just know you are not alone, my friend.

It happens routinely. I'm going to share a story that happened many, many years ago. I was renting somebody's agility field. And at the end of my hour, the woman asked if she could ask me a dog training question. So, I said, of course.

00:01:06

And she was standing by the fence. And as she was asking the question, her dog came over and started barking at her. The question she was asking was about a nuisance behavior that the dog had. Now, in my mind, the [dog barking](#) at her was another nuisance behavior.

As she was trying to get through the story of what she wanted some input with, the dog kept barking. And so, she reached up and grabbed a [tennis ball](#) that she had shoved in the fence. And she gave it to the dog and the dog stopped barking.

00:01:37

And I said, "Can we just take a little time out here? I just want to help you understand what just happened." I said, "Do you realize what you just reinforced?" She said, "I didn't reinforce anything. I just stopped my dog from barking so that we could have this conversation."

And I said, "Is a tennis ball something your dog likes or doesn't like?" And she said, "Oh, she's obsessed about tennis balls." "So, when she barks at you, she gets tennis balls. Do you see now what you just reinforced?"

And it was a struggle for her to make the connection because she said, "No, no, no, this is just what we do. Like we just give her a tennis ball so that we can have conversations." And that is [management](#). You know, if that works for you, 100 percent okay, go on with your happy life.

00:02:22

But if you'd like to fix that, well, it starts with awareness. And its awareness that we opened up in the last episode. And if you haven't watched that, I suggest you go back and watch episode number 256. It's an awareness, an in-depth awareness of what is reinforcing to your dog.

All of the things, it's just so important that you realize it because things like your dog's jumping from the back of the furniture to the front of another piece of furniture across the room and chasing each other and being crazy and all this havoc that you live with, that doesn't just happen overnight.



00:03:00

It's a gradual progression as the thing before the thing, the dog figures out the patterns that lead to the reinforcement they want. And so, eventually your life feels a little bit out of control. So, number one thing is you need to have that awareness of yes, the things that you can help train your dog with, the foods that the dog loves, the toys that the dog loves, but also, I think probably the most powerful thing is the dog being given the [opportunity to choose](#).

So, permissions built into your dog training. Super powerful. Permission to go and run with another dog. [Permission to go and go for a swim](#). Permission to do the thing the dog loves the most. Access to those things. Permissions and access, powerful reinforcements, but that also leads to your awareness of what are all those activities that your dog absolutely loves.

00:03:59

Include things like, "Oh, he loves rolling on toys on his back." "He loves, yes, going crazy in the living room." What are those things that your dog loves? How do you know that your dog loves them? You have to become aware. The woman I was referring to in my opening story had no idea that tennis balls were something that has given the dog reinforcement outside of training.

She just thought of them as something she used in training. So, just bringing that awareness of the food, the toys, the permissions, the access, the activities, and the number of times you give your dog attention. Because that's a very, very big one as well.

00:04:44

As some of you had wrote in the comments on YouTube that your dog wakes you up in the middle of the night, that attention could be why the dog's waking up in the middle of the night. I'm going to share with you a story from a dog trainer in the US who was using me as a consult with her business.

She said, "Listen, I've got a problem with my own dog. Could you help me with that?" And I said, "Sure." She said, "You know, I just preface this by saying, I've had her [to the Veterinarian](#). They've done all kinds of tests and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that."

00:05:13

And I'm going to say that is a very good first step. Anytime you have anything that looks like it could be a behavioral dog training problem, but it also might be a medical issue. Make sure you get that medical issue checked out first.

She said, "But my dog wakes me up at two o'clock every single morning. Every single morning." I said, "All right, well, you need to walk me through what happens." Well, she's only [nine months old](#) and she was a Border Collie. I know that at nine months old maybe she doesn't have great [bladder control](#). And yes, some puppies take a little longer to get great bladder control, but at nine months old they definitely should be [sleeping through the night](#).

00:05:51

I said, "I need to know. You've got me curious." Every single night between two and three. The dog gets her up and she takes her out into the backyard off leash, that's important. The dog has a pee and then the dog starts bouncing off of her and seems like she has a lot of energy.

So, she plays Frisbee with her for a few minutes until she seems tired. So, she'll go back to sleep. Now, I think that's obvious why the dog's waking you up at two o'clock in the morning to have a pee. That's obvious to me, but clearly it wasn't obvious to this other professional dog trainer.



00:06:20

And so, I'm telling you that story because I want you as a pet owner to not feel bad if you have had some 'Aha's' about 'My dog has been getting me to reinforce them.' And also, I don't want you to think badly of your dog. It's not like your dogs are conniving. It's not like your dog is like, "Watch this, I'm going to get her to do what I want."

Dogs are far more brilliant than we are at picking up patterns of reinforcement. I'm going to give you another example of one of my own dogs, my little Jack Russell Terrier. She used to, as you were preparing food, run up my back making these crazy, screamy terrier noises. And I just tuned it out.

00:06:59

But when my late husband and I first moved in together and he took over the feeding of the dogs, this drove him insane. Which you know looking back, I think it should have driven me insane, really. I just wasn't present to it. And so, in order to keep peace between us and also keep him feeding the dogs, I just trained her to get up on a chair.

So, he fed them in the kitchen. I got her to get up anytime the bowls came out was a cue for her to get up on a kitchen chair. And how I did that was I made that a routine part of my day. You get up on the kitchen chair when I go in to make food for myself and I will give her little tidbits of food from time to time.

00:07:39

Now, the [rate of reinforcement](#) decreased over time because she got so good at that. I didn't have to reward her that often. Actually, I could go days without rewarding her. But here's what she learned. If she moved the chair on, we had these like old pine floor and it wasn't level. When she moved the chair, I could hear this rattling.

The more she rattled it, the more I had an awareness of, "Oh my gosh, she's been on that chair, and I haven't given her a cookie." So, I would end up giving her a cookie. And I didn't even realize I was reinforcing the rattling. I ended up with a dog who yes, always stayed on her chair, but yes, had a nice tap dance to it.

00:08:18

So, don't feel bad. If you've created these patterns of reinforcement. It's a [behavior chain](#), the thing before the thing, as I mentioned in [podcast episode number 16](#). It is antecedent arrangements, as I mentioned in [episode number 245](#). Knowing that will help you fix it.

Let's think of how our dogs get educated. And there's three big ways. Number one, it's when we intentionally focus our resources towards building a skill that helps build our relationship. Or building a skill that helps get us something else we want, like the dog bringing in the newspaper, which by the way, if you do it with reinforcement, it's going to help build your relationship as well.

00:09:03

So, that is intentional use of reinforcement. That's one way that the dog's going to earn an education. The second way the dog is going to earn an education, I'm going to call 'In the moment training triage.'

Now that means you get an unexpected behavior from your dog, like the dog didn't come when you called them. And so, you need a solution in the moment. Think of triage if somebody is out in battle and they break their leg.



00:09:35

Triage is they would get a stick and a belt, and they would wrap the belt around the stick to immobilize that leg. That's triage. So, training triage is, "Holy crap, I need my dog to come, and I don't know what to do." Or it could be, "Holy crap, my dog has dove in the pond and is bullying another dog for his toy." Training triage is number one, you need to stop the reinforcement that the dog is getting.

So, there's two ways that you can do that. Number one, you can create higher level reinforcement. So, if your dog decided not to come because they're just sniffing around, then you might like squeak a squeaky or slap a favorite toy on the ground or make a funny noise, whistle, or whatever it takes to trump the reinforcement that the dog is getting for doing what they're doing at that moment.

00:10:30

Now, if you have a dog that jumped in the water and they're stealing other dogs' toys, well, you probably don't have anything that's going to trump that reinforcement. So, you probably don't even need to try. What I would do, and remember, I'm not your typical dog owner, but I have done this, is I would jump in the water, clothes and all, and grab my dog and get them out.

I would stop the reinforcement. I am committed to being a reinforcement-based dog trainer. And therefore, I recognize that reinforcement builds behavior. If I allow the dog, "Oh well, you just keep stealing toys and bullying those other dogs. It's okay."

00:11:09

It's not okay because A, they're my friend's dogs and that's not polite. B, it's building a behavior in my dog I don't want to see repeated. So, triage means you're in the moment, you need to stop the reinforcement by either trumping it with higher level reinforcement.

Or, it could be as simple as the dog is sniffing something, but they're on a leash. You could just walk up and put your hand over what they're sniffing, or you can just gently take them by the collar and move them away from what they were sniffing and call them to you a second time.

00:11:42

Training triage is all about in the moment. Now you're going to say, "Well, Susan, isn't that a behavior chain that you just told us about in episode number 256 that is creating problems?" Yes, it is. It is triage. You don't go to an orthopedic surgeon and have them fix your broken leg with a stick and their belt. No, they're going to be far more sophisticated than that.

And so, that's not the way that I suggest we train. It's the way we triage in the moment. Alright so, we have intentional skill building with high value rewards that we know are effective for our dogs. We have training triage.

00:12:19

And the third way dogs get educated is unintentional, unconscious, or unknown reinforcements that the dog gets either by prompting us to do something or it's completely unrelated to us. An example might be [stealing food from the counter](#), or [chasing squirrels](#) in the backyard, barking at the delivery driver as he comes up and leaves, or just making a yip because they don't want to be locked into this crate.

And then maybe that yip turns into a bark later on because the yip worked earlier, I'm just going to go into a bark. And then the bark doesn't seem to be working so I'm going to get really barky. And so, those things are possibly unknown to you. They are possibly reinforcements that the dog is earning just from their environment that you are not even aware it's going on. So, here's the formula.



## Episode: #257

### How To Use Your Dog's Favorite Reinforcements To Fix Unwanted Inadvertent Behaviors

00:13:20

The more intentional reinforcement that the dog receives from you through skill training, through developing a relationship together, the more intentional the reinforcements are coming in for training things like [walking on a loose leash](#), walking at your side, or [doing tricks](#) or retrieving toys for you, laying on a bed or [relaxing while you cut their nails](#).

Any number of things that we train our family pets to enjoy, the higher the value and the density of reinforcement that the dog gets intentionally with you and the lower the amount of unknown, unconscious, or unintentional reinforcement the dog gets away from you, you're rarely going to need that training triage.

00:14:06

Because the more value the dog's gotten with you and listening to you and responding to you and the lower value they've gotten from their environment or away from you means they're going to have a better relationship with you than they have with the environment or away from you.

So, those times when they surprise you with their behavior of not doing what you ask becomes very, very seldom. But it may happen. So, I'm going to give you a formula of what you are going to do when you are triaging your dog's behavior.

00:14:40

As I mentioned, number one, to stop reinforcement. Number two, you're going to say out loud, "That was a training triage. Whoo! Nailed it! Training triage right there." Number three, you're going to say, "What was the reinforcement that my dog just got?" You might even mention, "Did I get reinforced for doing it?"

Because if it reinforces you, it's going to be harder for you to do step number four. So, if you could just squeak a squeaky and the dog came back to you, then you get reinforced because crisis averted, the dog didn't run off, it came back to you. Fenton never chased those deer in the park. And so, it's gone.

00:15:20

But if you say this was training triage, and you recognize what that reinforcement reinforced in you, then you're going to go to step four. And that is, where's the gap? The gap between what I expected my dog to do and what my dog is capable of doing in that situation. Remember, our dogs will always do the best they can with the education we've given them in the environment we've put them in.

So, [if there's a failure](#), chances are there's a gap. Your expectations are much higher than the dog's capabilities in the environment that you've put them in. So, when you're triaging, know, "Wow, okay, this is enlightening." There's a gap.

00:16:01

So, step five is, what is your plan? If you're a member of our Recallers program, there's a very high probability that you can go to one of the games or you can go to one of our extra programs we have on [Pedicure Please](#) if your dog's gap is about accepting getting their nails cut.

Or it could be in the Bring Me program if the gap is your dog's running off with a toy and not bringing it back. Or it could be in going through all the games if it is that the dog isn't [coming when they're called](#) in an environment that you expected. But it's important when you're triaging, you cycle through those five things.



00:16:39

Number one, you're going to stop the reinforcement either through trumping it or stopping it. And remember, this is all about keeping your dog safe in many situations. Sometimes it's just nuisance, but training triage isn't something you're going to never do because sometimes things happen, and we're surprised by it. We need to keep our dogs safe.

So, stop the reinforcement, number one. Number two, our dog's safe now, they're back with us, we can say out loud, "That was training triage." Number three, we're going to ask, where was the reinforcement for the dog? And was there some reinforcement for me in there? Number four, where's the gap? Expectations and capabilities. And number five, what's your next step?

00:17:24

Now I mentioned Recallers in there. And you know, if you jump on my YouTube channel, there is so [many different games](#) that we have in there. But I look at Recallers as fun university for dogs and their owners. That should be like, you know, you have like letters after your name. I have a BSC, you know, when you graduate for something. It should be like Fun University for Dogs, it's FUD. All right.

And I believe that's why it's so effective. Because it's games that the dogs love to play, and the people love to play it. And there was something floating around on Twitter recently. I'm not suggesting everything on Twitter is true. So, I'm going to back this up with a little bit of facts.

00:18:02

It said, it takes 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain when you're learning something. But if the learning happens in play, it only takes 10 to 20 repetitions. Now, I dug as much as I could, and I couldn't find a study that backed that up.

But I have seen this, and this is truth. When they're talking about students, like you and I as students in school, and they say a gifted student will learn it in one to four repetitions. That's impressive, seriously. A typical student will learn it in four to 14 repetitions. A struggling student will learn it in 14 to 40 repetitions.

00:18:44

And a dyslexic student will learn it in 40 to 200 repetitions. So, as I've mentioned here on the podcast, I am [dyslexic](#), but what I did is I learned early on as a student to take the things that I was struggling with and make them into a game because there was no way I had the attention span to do 200 repetitions of anything. But I could play a game for hours and hours and hours.

I could stay in a gym for hours and hours and hours. I became obsessed about things very, very easily. So, my point is, I believe the statement about the synapse is happening faster in a game could be true because I've experienced it with myself. I actually got really good marks in school. And I did it because I made a game out of the learning.

00:19:35

Now, if you have a low intentional learning or it's inconsistent or sporadic intentional learning for your dog, now what does that look like? Unfortunately, people get their dogs, they go through one eight-week training class.

And how often do you really practice when you go through that training class? And they expect, "Okay, I've put in the work, my dog should be trained." How long has it taken you to learn about dog training? [Education never ends](#). It doesn't end for us.



# Episode: #257

## How To Use Your Dog's Favorite Reinforcements To Fix Unwanted Inadvertent Behaviors

00:20:03

And guess what, we're higher capability learners than dogs. Therefore, our expectations should be, it takes as long as it takes. And there is no magic number. Every dog is different. Every breed of dog is different. And it really depends on what we are teaching.

So, if we have a low number of intentional reinforcements that we're giving a dog, and if we have a very high number for our dogs of unconscious unintentional reinforcement for a dog, a lot of times you end up with a rescue dog and that's how Tater Salad came into the house. Because he had so many reinforcements for things you never would like to see a dog to do.

00:20:41

What will happen is people will say, "Well, this [reinforcement-based dog training doesn't work](#). Because look at, I still have this horrific behavior." And so, then they will be convinced you need to bring in some punishment because reinforcement-based dog training doesn't work.

And what happens, especially if you follow some of the more sensational trainers that are popular on YouTube or in social media, not all of them. I'm not grouping them all into the same bucket, but some of them are very violent with their approach. And they will shut the dog down from offering anything.

00:21:13

And so, the behavior gets fixed because the dog becomes more worried of you or of doing something that you don't want to do. And if you're listening to this podcast, I know that's not the relationship you want with your dog. And if you're experimenting with it, then I would love to help you.

So, go through all these podcast episodes, do a deep dive on the free training that I have on my YouTube channel. And if you think FUD is for you and your dog, if you would like to be part of Fun University for your dog and you, then I'm going to make that possible right now.

00:21:50

Now, Recallers is a program, if you go to my website, you're going to see that it is available year-round at an investment I believe at \$767.

But because you're listening to this episode, if you write to my team at [wag@dogsthat.com](mailto:wag@dogsthat.com) with a subject line of 'FUD', F-U-D, Fun University for Dogs and their owners, of course, you're going to have fun too.

Then my team will give you a discount. And they will give you access to join Recallers at far less than \$767. So, I'm not saying this because I think, well, I do. I do think everybody in the world of the dog should be in Recallers. I do. I know that there'd be a lot less trauma in dog's lives. There'd be a lot more clarity in the lives of the people who own dogs.

00:22:40

But if you're not in a position to make that commitment to your dog right now, relisten to this episode, do what you absolutely can do, and maybe work towards it in the future.

If you have a question about the protocol, about how you can go about fixing what is broken, about how you've been doing in the moment triage training, or about what that means to you and your dog, just jump over to YouTube. Leave me a comment here.

I'd love to know if all of this makes sense. Reinforcement-based dog training doesn't just work. I believe it works better than any [other form of dog training](#) on the planet when it's done effectively.





## Episode: #257

# How To Use Your Dog's Favorite Reinforcements To Fix Unwanted Inadvertent Behaviors

00:23:22

And for it to be done effectively, you have to know what is reinforcing your dog and you have to be intentionally reinforcing them in a way that creates an alternate life for them that they would never consider any of that other reinforcement out there.

I know it works for not just me, it's worked for the tens of thousands of students we've had go through our online courses. And I know it'll work for you and your dog, but please leave me a question. I'd love to hear from you. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### **Recallers:**

Write in to us at [wag@dogsthat.com](mailto:wag@dogsthat.com) with the subject line "FUD/ Fun University for Dogs" for a very special opportunity to join us in Recallers.

### **Your Dog's Pedicure Please Program:**

[Join Pedicure Please](#)





## How To Use Your Dog's Favorite Reinforcements To Fix Unwanted Inadvertent Behaviors

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 256: What Was That Cookie For?! When Positive Reinforcement In Dog Training Goes Wrong](#)

[Podcast Episode 205: The Hidden World Of Reinforcement For Dogs And Why You Need To Know](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Stop Barking Dogs! Why Dogs Bark And Anti-Bark Action Plan With Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 226: Safe Toys For Dogs And Why To Avoid Tennis Balls And Sticks](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 253: 7 Ways To Instantly Make Your Dog's Life Better](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Reinforcement, Permissions and Transfer of Value in Dog Training with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Video: Vet Visits For Dogs: How To Create A Positive Experience For Everyone](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 254: Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It](#)

[Podcast Episode 26: Pro Dog Training Tips to Get Your Puppy to Sleep All Night](#)

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

[YouTube Playlist: Behavior Chains in Dog Training with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 16: The Thing Before Your Dog's Thing](#)

[Podcast Episode 239: Barking Dogs! How To Help Your Dog Be Quiet And Stop Annoying Barking](#)

[Podcast Episode 33: How Do I Stop My Dog Counter Surfing?!](#)

[Podcast Episode 24: Distraction Intensity Index: Help For Dogs Who Chase Chipmunks, Bicycles, And Neighbor's Cats](#)

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

[YouTube Video: 5 Tips for Dog Trick Training with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 107: Pedicure Please: 3 Steps To Dog Nail Trimming Or Grooming Success At Home!](#)

[Podcast Episode 228: Navigating Failure In Dog Training: What's Your Plan B?](#)

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

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

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

[Podcast Episode 50: Can Your Worst Challenge Make You a Better Dog Trainer?](#)

[Podcast Episode 247: Redefining Expertise In Dog Training And What Counts More Than Years Of Experience](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 146: Balanced Dog Training: Does It Really Exist?](#)



## How To Use Your Dog's Favorite Reinforcements To Fix Unwanted Inadvertent Behaviors

### 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>
Instagram	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/">https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/</a>
TikTok	<a href="https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat">https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat</a>
LinkedIn	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat">https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat</a>
Pinterest	<a href="https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/">https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/susangarrett">https://twitter.com/susangarrett</a>
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat">https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat</a>
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs">https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs</a>

