

### How I Use 1 Minute Training Sessions To Bring Clarity, Confidence And Calm Thinking To My Dogs

#### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

#### Transcript

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What if I told you with 60 seconds of your life, you could dramatically improve the outcome of your dog training, would you be interested in what you should be doing in those 60 seconds? If you are, then this podcast episode is for you.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. Today I'm talking about something that I have mentioned several times in past episodes here on Shaped by Dog, but I've never really gone into detail about it. I get questions about it. And so, I decided, "Hey, we need a podcast episode on this."

It is the one minute or [60 second evaluation of your dog training](#). It's something that's been a part of my dog training since I can remember, at least 20 years. And I believe it helps me be far more efficient. Now, the problem is too often people skip this step because 'I can just plow forward', and you plow forward, you become very efficient in your training. And it's really not necessary.

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People, it's 60 seconds of your life. Now, there are times when I won't do this 60 second evaluation and I will get to that as well. But if I'm teaching something new, if I'm adding a new distraction, if I'm adding new criteria, 60 second evaluation is part of the program.

Now, I've mentioned in [podcast episode number 131](#), what a good lesson plan looks like, but this goes a little bit deeper than just the lesson plan. It is what do you do in that 60 second evaluation and why do you need it?

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So, first of all, it's a time where I evaluate the [antecedent arrangements](#) that I've made for my dog or my puppy. Because if I dial it all in, my puppy's or dog's first choice is the correct choice. It's the obvious choice. Now, why would I want it to be that easy?

[Depending on the stage, age](#), or experience level of your dog, maybe you might want to challenge them a little bit, but the correct choice should be obvious to the dog. There might be 87 other choices to make for one dog, but that's because that dog's experience level is so high. If I'm starting with a brand-new puppy, there might be zero other choices other than the correct choice.

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So, what is important about your antecedent arrangements? It's the environment that you've set. How many distractions are out there? How big is it? What other reinforcement value can that puppy or dog find in that environment? It's the criteria. What do you want your dog to do before you consider it correct and you will offer reinforcement?

What are the rules of the game you're about to play? Now, if the criteria is overwhelming the dog, they're likely going to attempt several times fail and possibly give up or possibly get up. And by that, I mean, they might get invigorated and get more frantic and frustrated in the training environment. So, it could be the environment, it could be the criteria you've set.



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It could be the way that you're holding the props that you have included in your training. Maybe you're a little awkward and uncomfortable with that and you're dropping things. It could be [the way that you're delivering the reinforcement](#) you're giving. It could be the use of or the improper use of the [location specific markers](#) that you've chose to use.

So, those are five key things. Now there's probably a lot of other things, but if you focus on those five key things, how you've manipulated the environment, [the criteria that you've selected](#), the reinforcement you have decided to use, the location specific marker, how you're holding your tools and what tools you're using.

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Now that might be six things, but you get my point. If you consider all of those things, now you can identify why your dog is failing in that one-minute evaluation. So, I set a timer, I get my dog, I play with my dog. That is to change [my dog's emotional state](#). That's a given. If I can't do that, get my dog focused and engaged, I'm not moving on to the training.

My one-minute starts when I've decided my dog is in the right zone of genius. They're emotionally ready to go. Then I set my timer, and we move right into the training. Now, you might be training something like backup or retrieve. It could be even something as simple as [Crate Games](#) or [Hot Zone](#). Whatever it is you're training, you're evaluating those areas of dog training that may be limiting your dog's ability to learn.

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Sometimes I set my timer for one minute and after 10 seconds, I stopped the timer, give my dog a toy. We stopped that session. I put the dog up and then I go back to the lesson plan that I've set up for that session. And I go, "Oh, I have to change these things."

And so, the 'Oh, I have to change these things.' have led to lesson plans in my Home School the Dog, Recallers, and Handling 360 programs that have limited mistakes for my students that have brought clarity to those dogs.

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Because if the correct choice is obvious to the dog, then guess what? They're going to get more reinforcement every time they work with you. If they get more reinforcement every time they work with you, guess what else? They are choosing correct, which means their confidence about that skill is going to grow.

Which means, they're going to love training with you because they're getting a [transfer of value](#) to the whole training game. And the opposite is true. If you're not using that 60 second evaluation period, then you may not have clued in that you've created too much challenge by the vastness of the environment that you're training in.

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Or your criteria may include how many dogs are in the environment that you're training in, and what time of day is it, and what other distractions are there for the dog. So, you've overwhelmed the dog and therefore they're failing.

Now, if you aren't intentional about this one-minute session, here's what might happen. You just jump into a training session and your dog is not successful.



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Maybe they're distracted and you might get a little frustrated and you might try to help with some verbal coaching. "Hey, hey, hey, come on over here. Come on over here. What are you doing? What are you doing over there? That's crazy. That's not like you." And then you get the dog back in.

Remember, your dog's behavior is just feedback for you. But if you choose to ignore that feedback, you're more likely to go into a verbal lure. "Hey, hey, hey, get back over here. Leave it, leave it. Come on, we're doing something." And so, you ignore that feedback and you try to coax the dog or coach the dog back to the training.

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And then when they don't jump in and offer something because they've tried something a few times and it didn't work, you might then start to body lure, clap your hands, slap your legs, say, push the object you want them to interact with. "Hey, look at, what's this? What's this?" You might even put a cookie on top of it to [lure them towards the correct answer](#).

If you had just done a one-minute evaluation, you could have stopped and said, there was too much failure. Is it the environment? Did I not set up an environment that created success? Was it the criteria? Was I lumping? Was I waiting for the dog to do too much or were the distractions in the environment too tempting?

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Was it the reinforcement I chose to use? Was it how I was holding all of these tools in trying to get to the dog? Or was it my location specific markers the dog really didn't have an understanding of, therefore, it added more confusion to the dog.

Anything could be possible, but if you have set a timer and if you also have videoed your training, you can stop the timer, grab the video, look at what happened in that session, and you're going to go, "Wow, I didn't even notice. How many times my dog tried something, and they got it wrong, and they didn't get reinforcement."

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Now for some dogs, they might keep trying and trying and trying. For others, they might just stop and walk off and sniff. And yet others might just get more frantic and start tearing the place apart. Your one-minute evaluation will avoid any of those possibilities, because when that timer goes off, you're going to stop the timer.

You're going to play with your dog. You're going to put the dog up. You might look at your video. You might not. I might not. I might go, "That was a freaking awesome session. My dog nailed it. It was amazing. I'm going to jump back in, set my timer for two or three minutes, and I'm going to go back and do it again."

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You might say that, or you might say, "I think I could tweak one thing. I think I could help make just this one thing a little clearer." Or after one minute evaluation, you may say, "I made that way too easy. He got like 12 reinforcements in one minute."

And that's never a bad thing. Giving the dog a lot of extra reinforcement. But you might put them up and say, "What's another layer that I can add to this? Just going to give my dog a little bit of an extra challenge." One minute evaluation.



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Now I mentioned there will be a time when I will choose not to use my one-minute evaluation. What does that look like? If I am just practicing a skill my dog really knows, I will obviously set a timer, but I won't set a timer to evaluate the setup.

Because if it's a skill my dog already knows, my lesson plan will include how many distractions I've had before, how many I have now. So, I'll just go out and rehearse what we've done in the past. It's highly unlikely I'll need a one-minute timer for that. I'm not saying don't do it.

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If you want to get into a good dog training habit and set a one-minute timer every time, I don't see the harm in that with one little asterisk. \*Dogs are brilliant at figuring out ends of sessions if you use a timer. What I like to do is either stop my timer before the alarm goes off. Or stop it when the alarm goes off but keep training for a random amount of time.

It might be five seconds, it might be 20 seconds, it might be 10 seconds. So, that the dog's hearing alarm doesn't predict a terminal end to their fun. Now with a one-minute evaluation, it shouldn't be a terminal end. You should just be evaluating what's going on and making an adjustment and getting back to training.

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However, if it was a bit of a disaster one minute, well, ideally, if it was a bit of a disaster, you would have stopped it long before one minute. But if it wasn't a really good evaluation in one minute, you might have to put the dog up, reconstruct your environment, set the antecedents, so that the dog does have success so that your training does grow their confidence so that the dog does learn to love to train with you.

And look, I get it. For more years in my life, I've been a professional dog trainer than I have been alive and not been a professional dog trainer. So, for me, this is natural and it's just something I do automatically.

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And it might not feel natural to you, but why not take a page out of a successful professional dog trainer's book and just try this for two weeks. I bet after two weeks you will have created a new habit that you will stick to. Remember, you don't have to do it every time.

I don't see the harm in maybe not doing it every time, but you really need to do it, especially when you're teaching a new skill or if you're a relatively new trainer, because I promise there will be something you will need to tweak about your mechanics, the way you deliver reinforcement, [the rate of the reinforcement](#), the placement of the reinforcement.

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There will be something that you can get better at by doing the one-minute evaluation. If you're a relatively new trainer or you're a trainer that you feel has the potential for a lot of growth ahead of you as a dog trainer. One-minute evaluations, 60 seconds that will change your life as a dog trainer.

Now, I would love to hear from you. I would love it if you will go and whatever you were training yesterday, the last thing you trained, go back, set the environment, set a timer, do a one-minute evaluation, jump over to my YouTube channel, and let me know what that looked like for you. Did it feel awkward and uncomfortable?





## Episode: #274

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Did it improve your dog's ability to get more reinforcement and grow more confidence? If so, I hope you're proving it to yourself. 60 seconds is a worthy investment. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### Get Crate Games Online:

[Crate Games Online](#)

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 259: Use These Simple Shaping Hacks To Expedite Your Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 131: How Would Susan Garrett Plan Your Dog Training Sessions?](#)

[Podcast Episode 245: Make Dog Training Easy! Quick Guide To Antecedent Arrangements](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 272: 10 Engaging Chase Games To Increase Your Picky Eater Dog's Food Drive](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 188: Why You Should Change Your Strategy Rather Than Your Criteria When Dog Training](#)

[YouTube Playlist: The Emotional State of Dogs with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 266: Hot Zone And Stays – How One Dog Training Nuance Can Fix Anxiety And Duration](#)

[Podcast Episode 177: Dog Training Outside The Box: Transfer Of Value Case Study](#)

[Podcast Episode 175: Food Luring VS Shaping In Dog Training: How Science Changed How I Teach Dogs](#)

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



# How I Use 1 Minute Training Sessions To Bring Clarity, Confidence And Calm Thinking To My Dogs

### 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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