

The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:00

I have a couple of questions for you. How do you respond when you're training your puppy or your dog when things don't go well? I mean, when you're really discouraged or frustrated or disappointed in what's going on, how do you respond? Like, are you a slow simmer or quick burn? Do you throw things and get angry and yell and stomp or do you just quit?

How you respond has an unbelievable impact, not only on you, not only on everybody in the room when you are going through this frustration, but particularly on your dog. And today, I want to help you turn any setback you may have into an instant success for both you and your dog.

00:00:50

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And today I'm going to give you a step-by-step process so that you can change any kind of setback into your dog training and turn it into a guaranteed, empowered, success for you and your dog. I know it seems a little bit out there, but listen, we are all the same.

We train dogs and there'll be moments when we're frustrated, but what happens in that moment of frustration will make all the difference in the world for future training sessions with your dog. You know, personal development guru, Tony Robbins, he has this saying that 'It isn't the events in our lives that make or break us. It's the meaning we give those events.'

00:01:39

And today I'm going to give you the steps that I use to reframe moments of frustration or setbacks and turn them into opportunities where you can actually get successes with your dog training. So, picture this, you're training your dog, and your dog makes the wrong choice over and over and over again.

And if you're training a puppy, they might be getting frustrated. They might start biting or barking or spinning, which leads a little bit to your angst, and then they might run off, they might leave training, they might just quit. Or you could be like an agility handler who gets out there and forgets the course and you feel like such an idiot.

00:02:21

You just want to like crawl into a hole or you're in the middle of training something and you find you're making the same mistake you make over and over again. What happens next? If you're a normal human being, what happens next is you say things like, "Why can I never get this?" or "Why is my dog so stubborn?" or "Why do I keep making the same mistake over and over?"

Or "Why can I never be as good as those other trainers?", or "I don't have time for this. This is never going to work." Or any, a number of other disempowering statements that I'm sure has come out of your mouth like it used to come out of my mouth in times gone by.

00:03:07

But think about those statements. The first thing you need to know is your brain will always give you an answer and 100 percent believe the truth. So, if you ask your brain, "how can I be so stupid?" It will give you a list of reasons, of justifications, why you are stupid.



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

00:03:27

At times when you've done things that appeared to be stupid, your brain is a little computer that will spit out data. There was an interesting study I heard about recently where they took people who had a little connection between the two hemispheres of our brain. It's got a fancy two-word name.

And you know, some people, sometimes they have types of seizing where they cut that connection between the two hemispheres and people can live completely normal lives. Their brains, function, but they function in a way independently and you would never know it, except they did this study where they took patients who had had this surgery.

00:04:00

And they brought them into a room and said, "We just got to ask you a couple of questions." And the first thing they did was they had them cover one eye and read on a card. And the first thing it said was, "Please get up and close the door."

So, the person got up and closed the door, came back, they had them cover the other eye and said, "Why did you get up and close the door?" And the person might've explained, "Well, I thought we might want some privacy, or you said you were going to ask some questions. I thought the door was open. It might be better—."

00:04:27

Each and every patient gave a very logical, believable reason why they got up and closed the door. Because the one hemisphere didn't communicate with the other, because they only asked the one hemisphere and then asked the opposite, they didn't have an answer, but the brain was asked a question, and it gave an answer.

They did a similar thing where they piped or question into one ear. They said, "Get up and walk around." And then the person got up and walked around. And when the question came into the other ear, "Why were you just walking around?"

00:04:58

"Well, I've been sitting for a while. I thought I need to stretch my legs." They gave logical answers. So, the point is, be very, very careful of the questions you ask yourself. Because your little computer up there is going to give you an answer.

But the good news is you can ask better questions and get much, much better answers because there's a lot of information stored up here that we might not have conscious access to, but by asking that question, a lot of that information is going to come out.

00:05:28

So, that asking a better question in part is what's called "reframing an experience" that you've had. So, taking an event and changing it to give it a different meaning. For example, recently I saw a post on social media.

My sister-in-law put a post with all these pictures of my brother and her and the kids at my cousin's 50th birthday. And I was sure it was at their house. I recognized it was at their house. And so, I got in my feelings.

Why wasn't I invited to my cousin's 50th birthday? I saw my uncle there. I saw my other cousin in the pictures, and I got kind of left out. I got feeling sorry for myself. Instantly, I was able to reframe it.



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

00:06:12

But funny thing, a few days later, I went hiking with my brother and his kids and he was telling me about how they went to my cousin's girlfriend's house for his 50th birthday. And I said, "Oh, I saw those pictures on social media. I thought it was at your place." He goes, "No, they had come to supper the night before. So, we might've had pictures mixed in with that."

So, immediately the meaning that I initially gave that was, "Oh, why did they leave me out? Why wouldn't they want me part of this?" But I was able to reframe that experience so that I didn't carry on going, "Well, poor me. I don't think I'm very well loved in this family, aren't I?"

00:06:52

You could snowball events when in actual fact you were wrong. But even if you are right, you've got to ask yourself a question. What is truth? There was a podcast I listened to recently. It was an awesome podcast where they said, you know, there is only certain truths in this world that are un-refutable. Like a dog has four legs.

You could ask every dog trainer from every side of the fence from no matter how they train dogs, if they agree with my philosophy that dogs are always doing the best they can with the education they've been given, or they have their own that all dogs need to have physical corrections, and they need to be told no.

00:07:34

All dog trainers, this is a question because it's the truth. The truth is most dogs have four legs. Now, all dogs are doing the best they can with the education they have in the environment that we put them in is not a universal truth. It's a perception that I have.

That perception is very likely not held by people who believe that dogs need to have an e-collar on in order for them to learn. So, you've got to understand that there's a lot of truths in life, but there's far, far, far more perceptions. And the way to live a happy, empowered life is to make those perceptions help you, take you to the place you want to be, help you to become the person you want to be.

00:08:24

My perception that dogs are doing the best they can with the education they've been given helps me to have patience with dogs, helps me to help other people bring out the best in the dogs. Always looking for an alternative way to use reinforcement in that dog's life.

We don't ever go to punishment because we don't think it's an option. If dogs are doing the best they can, why would we punish that? That is an example of a reframe. Is it the truth? It is the truth for me. I believe it in every part of my body, but it isn't an actual universal truth, is it?

00:09:02

So, let's see how we can reframe your experiences, give you the tools that you can change them in the blink of an eye. So, throughout the process of training a puppy or a dog, we will make an action. That action will give us an outcome. Now, that outcome will lead to a response from us.

If the outcome is a good one, like the puppy or the dog made a great choice, our response will be celebration. Of course, reinforcement and celebration. We feel so good about life because our puppy or our dog made the choice we wanted. Now, let's say the outcome isn't one we were looking for and it's one that's been repeated.



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

00:09:48

And so, that outcome, when we see it again, leads to a response from us that is fueled by frustration or disappointment or discouragement. The moment between the outcome and our response is where the opportunity to reframe experience lies.

And that's what we're going to talk about next. So, the first thing you're going to consider, and I know this isn't going to happen in the midst of that little gap between outcome and response, but we're going to get a little bit of research.

00:10:22

First of all, we're going to look at in your training environment, there are things that are going to happen that are within your control. There are things that are going to happen that are not within your control. Ultimately, our dog's choices are never within our control. We can't control that living being. We can only control the environment and the training that we give to them so that they make great choices.

So, the first thing you ask yourself is, 'Is this within my control in that the environment was overwhelming for the dog.', or 'I set them up for failure because my [expectations were too high.](#)', or 'The distractions were too much for that puppy.', or 'My mechanics were really, really flawed. I know that I can do better.'

00:11:09

So, if in the midst of going from outcome to response, you just ask yourself, "Is there something within my control that I can alter?" Then your response is immediately going to say, "I got this. Alright, we're either going to try it again, but I'm going to do this different." Or you're going to say, "We're going to play a game. I'm going to put you up. I'm going to change the environment."

Or you're going to say, "We're going to play a game. We're going to pack it in for today because I got a new training plan I'm going to have to come up with." If you know there's things within your control that can alter the outcome you've got, no reason to get frustrated, disappointed, or discouraged.

00:11:43

Just go change those things within your control. But sometimes those things are not within our control. Sometimes the environment changes. Sometimes somebody walks in. Dogs are just unpredictable. Sometimes the dog does things that you didn't expect. They might leave, they might start sniffing something, they might get distracted, they might who knows what.

We have to normalize dogs are dogs. They are not robots. So, we can set them up for the greatest success, but at the end of the day, it might not happen. Now, if they're making a choice, we don't want them to make over and over again, then you've got to look at the environment you've put them in or the education you've given them to lead them up to this place.

00:12:29

Because I have on my coffee mug, and I read this every day, and it says, 'The more I learn, the smarter my dog appears.' And that's so empowering because if my dog isn't making those choices, I've got to learn more. I've got to dig more into the [Shaped by Dog podcasts.](#)

I have to [jump over to YouTube](#) and really devour those Shaped by Dog episodes. The more you learn, the smarter your dog's going to appear. I promise you that. So, the things that are not within your control, those are likely the ones that are going to get you a little bit more discouraged. So, now we need to dial in that moment of discouragement. And how can we respond to that?



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

00:13:12

Instead of going to, 'Why does this always happen to me?', your brain's going to give you that list, remember? or 'I'm never going to get this.', or 'My dog's never going to get this.' Let's think of how we can reframe what is happening and think about it's happening for you. It's an opportunity for growth.

And guess what? Growth is brilliant. It means you're learning. It means you're discovering. You're having experiences that it's going to take you to a better place. Maybe is going to take you to [working with me](#) full time. Wouldn't that be awesome? I think I would like that.

00:13:45

And so, when something happens, the first thing you've got to do is catch yourself. This is going to be difficult. You're not going to immediately be in control of your emotions, but the moment you feel you go from outcome to response, check it down and say, "Okay, why am I frustrated? And is this truth? Is this a universal truth or is this my perception?"

Now if it's your perception that your dog never seems to get this right, how does that perception serve you? It probably doesn't, does it? It doesn't empower you. It doesn't raise your vibration as a human being.

00:14:26

We want to choose perceptions that help us to ascend to the person we're meant to be. We want to choose perceptions that enrich our relationship with our dogs. If our perception leads us to frustration and anger, guess what, your dog suffers. They become to be a little bit more aware of you in a not so positive way when they're training.

That's not what we want. We want everything we do in the name of training to enrich that relationship, to make it something very, very special. So, check what emotion you're feeling. Ask yourself, is your thought a universal truth or is it a perception?

00:15:10

Chances are it's a perception. Now, how can we change that? How can we go from where we are to growth. So, of course, reframing is going to be of limited value if you don't have the good dog training behind you. So, I need you to question the dog training that you're using now.

And if it's not serving you, find a dog training that's more aligned with the kind of person you want to be with your dog. Find dog training that has a systematic approach to take you where you want to go. Find dog training that has hundreds of success stories of people who've walked in the shoes you're walking in.

00:15:52

Now, with your own dog training right now, how you can help reframe is you've got to be [videoing your training](#). Because once you feel that moment of frustration, you can say, "Alright, buddy, we're going to take a little break here. I'm going to take a look at the video." You've got something to give you hope for what's going to happen next.

And every time you look at the video, I promise you it will be better than it felt. It always is. Next, [you're going to journal](#) because by journaling, you are going to be able to keep track of where you are today. It's so easy to get discouraged when you want to be somewhere where you're not. "Oh, when is this dog ever going to be house trained? Is it never going to sink into his—."



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

00:16:34

No. By keeping track of the [challenges you have currently](#) in a journal, you can look back on where you were last month and go, "Okay, we're actually kind of moving along." It's not a sprint. It's a marathon. Learning is just going to happen incrementally.

And if you're doing it with games, it's actually going to be more like a parade than a marathon. It's going to be fun. Every day is going to be fun. You're going to cut yourself some slack and move forward but [celebrate every single little success](#).

00:17:07

You have a journal that is a book of all of those celebrations. You've got a video that will tell you what actually happened. And now we're going to reframe your perception. You're going to ask yourself empowering questions. Ask yourself a question that's going to lead you to a better outcome.

So, instead of saying like, "Why do I keep making the same mistake?" You might say, "Okay, Susan, what lesson have I not learned that has led me to this outcome?" Or you're going to celebrate. "I am one persistent girl. I have worked through challenge after challenge after challenge, and yet here I am still loving on my dog and having fun training dogs."

00:17:48

You're not going to allow yourself to drop to a toxic level where there's a lot of drama. We're going to say, "I love that my dog is such an excellent communicator." Instead of saying, "How can he be so stubborn?" Because that dog is communicating where the value is. The dog is communicating that there's some confusion for him.

Because if he understood, if he found value in working with you, he wouldn't be leaving and doing his own thing. So, you're going to reframe and create a new perception on what you see so that it leads you to be empowered.

00:18:25

So, instead of saying, "I don't have enough time to train my dog." you're going to say, "I love that dogs are lifelong learners, and it doesn't matter when we get there. Were going to get there if I take daily action. Just three minutes a day, we're going to get there."

So, I want you to start first with compassion for yourself. This isn't going to happen overnight. There's no switch I can tell you to flick on or off. But if you catch yourself in that gap, eventually that gap is just going to be a place for pause where you're going to get very intentional about the conversation, you're about to have with yourself or with your dog.

00:19:03

And the people that are training with you are going to notice this new you. And they're going to love it and then they might take notice and take action. So, it starts number one with self-compassion. You want to move from a place of being a victim, "Why do I get these dogs all the time that just never learn?", to becoming a person who's a lifelong learner.

That it doesn't matter what's happening. It's "What is the information I can get?" "Where's the data in the failure that just happened so I can move on." Nobody likes to fail, but we want to be able to take something positive from that experience. You and I, we all have a choice in how we think and how we feel. Reframing allows us to take advantage of that choice and say, "I refuse to become negative. I refuse to trip over my lip. I refuse. I am going to be an empowered learner no matter what."



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

00:20:00

We will all have those knee jerk reactions when we get frustrated, but eventually we contain those knee jerk reactions. That's a default reaction. That is a scarcity minded reaction. We want to turn that moment between outcome and response into a place where we don't have a default reaction.

We have an intentional by design reaction, one that empowers us. And so, the reframe from whatever we feel goes to a statement or a question that helps us to take deliberate, intentional, empowered action towards a better outcome in the future.

00:20:46

That's what we want. Intentional, deliberate, empowered action towards a better outcome in the future. Now that might mean you end your training session and jump over to YouTube to watch some of our YouTube videos. It might mean you join one of our programs. It might mean you find yourself a mentor that can help take you to that better place.

Or it might mean you just go back and review your notes, look at your video, celebrate what successes you had, and move to a better outcome. But do it intentionally, not by default. Number one, is that outcome within your control? Yes, make the changes. No, reframe the truth you're believing right now. Catch yourself in that moment between outcome and response.

00:21:37

Choose a response by design, not by default. Reframe that event. Choose your own perception. One that aligns with the kind of person you want to be for your dog. I hope all of this makes sense. And if it does, do me a favor, please share this on social media. I think this is an incredibly important podcast episode.

Not only because it's going to help so many dog owners, it's going to help so many dogs because they're going to have a person that no matter what happens in that training, that dog is never going to feel like they were horribly bad. That dog is going to feel like 'We're going to get there. This is happening.'

00:22:20

It's going to help everybody have a much better relationship with their dog because they're choosing an intentional perception that works for them and not against their future. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 250: Expectations Vs Reality: Navigating The Path To Dog Training Success](#)

[Shaped by Dog Podcast](#)

[DogsThat YouTube Channel](#)

[DogsThat Careers: Join Our Team](#)

[Podcast Episode 133: Become Your Own Dog Training Coach With This Video Strategy](#)

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

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

[Podcast Episode 248: Milestones That Transform Your Dog's Life! Goals To Achieve Dog Training Success](#)



The Power of Perception: Reframing Dog Training Setbacks Into Success

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 <https://dogsthat.com>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/>
- TikTok <https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat>
- Pinterest <https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/susangarrett>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs>

