

PLAYING VITO'S THINKING GAME



DOGS THAT

Susan Garrett's By **DOG**
SHAPED PODCAST

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About Your eBook

Thank you for joining us!

I recognize that today, in particular, there are more and more trainers to choose from while on your dog training adventure. Your dog and I both thank you for choosing to invest your time with DogsThat.

Vito's Thinking Game is an easy, fun way to boost your dog's skills, strengthen your bond, and lay the foundation for advanced training. It's also a great game for enrichment, providing mental and physical exercise for dogs. Dogs LOVE playing Vito's Game, and it's a special game as you don't necessarily do the training but the reinforcing, so jump in and play.

You may choose to make notes directly in this document with a program such as Adobe Reader or any PDF app of your choice that suits your device. If printing the eBook, you may want to choose black and white, and print it in sections that leave out the title pages in order to save ink.

Alternatively, you can do what I've done and send the eBook to a copy print store to have it both printed and bound for your use.

Here's to setting our dogs and ourselves up for success!



Susan Garrett

www.DogsThat.com



This sentence is meant for Print Professionals:

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Vito's Thinking Game

Vito's Thinking Game is the ultimate transfer of value game. It has two parts, active and relaxation and each part is included every time the game is played. The game comes from Vito Cieca, a trainer from Italy.

Equipment

A mat, two reinforcement stations, treats cut up into small pieces.

Keys to Playing

- The trainer is emotionally unattached to any outcome.
- The trainer's only job is to observe and place rewards.
- No eye contact, motions, acknowledgements, markers, words, facial expressions are used by the trainer.
- Allow the dog to think and find their own success.

Part One - Active

- Sit on the floor with something to support your back. Have two 'reward stations' on each side of you, and your rewards held in a bowl.
- Ideally, play in a small area (a bathroom may be ideal). It is better to play with your dog off lead.
- In the game, there is no motion from you except for reward delivery and you are completely quiet.
- Start simply! Eventually the game can become more complex and has many applications.
- You are looking for your dog to move from side to side in front of you, and you putting a treat on the reward station to reinforce your dog's decision to target the station (so make sure the treat is delivered after your dog's decision). Remember, it's your dog's choice, you are simply the treat dispenser. Be patient.
- If your dog has great ItsYerChoice foundations, initially tap the treat on the reward station initially to let your dog know they can have treats that are placed there for them.
- End when your dog has been offering to go from station to station crossing in front of you and go straight into Part Two, the relaxation phase.



Part Two - Relaxation

- Starts with the dog's name and a cookie. Get as much of your dog on your lap as possible (see the important note below).
- Aim for your dog to be in a relaxed down position. If this is new, you may begin with stroking, soft speaking to reassure, but eventually say nothing - just hold and wait for relaxation.
- Alter your breathing to be deeper and relax yourself.
- Observe: muscle tightness, breathing, head heaviness, sighing- signs of relaxation in your dog.
- The session ends with dog's name.
- The more your play the quicker your dog will be able to relax for Part Two.

Important Note About Relaxation

As long as there are no issues with your dog the relaxation portion of this game is suitable. There is no need to SQUEEZE your dog or nuzzle the dog with your face or to pat them quickly. The idea is to be calm and relax with your position.

If you think you will have a challenge, or your dog is uncomfortable, or is a rescue new to your home, or a dog with a history, of course you would use common sense and adjust your approach.

The suggestion would be to put your dog on a flat collar or harness, and have them on a bed or mat next to you for the relaxation stage. Stroke the dog on the bed. Gradually you can move him to your lap.

The relaxation component of Vito's Thinking Game only requires you to hold the dog gently – it is a passive exercise.

Look for the joy in spending a few minutes relaxing with your dog.



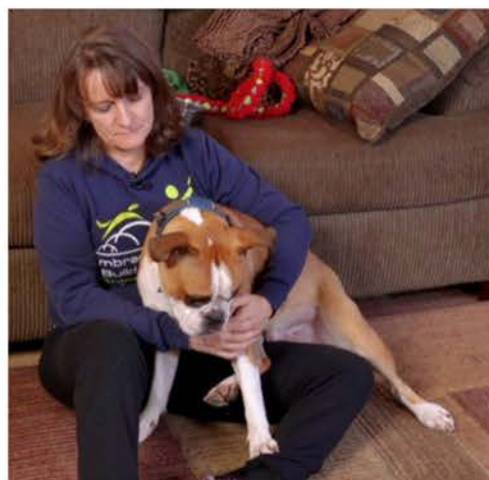
Benefits of Vito's Game for Dogs

- **Empowered** to freely offer responses.
- Builds **independence**.
- Strengthens **bond** with trainer.
- Learns to work **independently** away from handler.
- Grows **confidence** in working.
- Increases **problem solving**.
- Teaches **when you are working** and when you are not.
- Builds **persistence**/tolerance to failure.
- Teaches dog to **settle**.
- **Enrichment** - exercise for body and mind!



Benefits of Vito's Game for Trainers

- **Patience** in allowing dog to be brilliant.
- Strengthen **relationship** with dog.
- Grow **observational** skills.
- Gives **alternative thinking** to overcoming challenges.
- Gives a **model that dogs love** for the foundation training of many behaviors and advancing training for complex skills.



Vito's Game Notes

Vito's Game Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades, winning multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events 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 supported hundreds of thousands of people with enjoying a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, interviews, 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 over 180 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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