

Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:00

According to some social media influencer, dog trainer, popular presenters, it is absolutely not possible to train a dog, especially certain breeds of dogs or dogs with high prey drive to chase wildlife. It's not possible to train these dogs with a reinforcement-based approach alone. That these dogs absolutely must have some form of physical correction in order to be reliable and to be able to come when called.

And any of us that are trying to convince you it is possible, we are either frauds or we're liars. Now, I'm here today to tell you why they might think that's true, why it absolutely is not true. And thirdly, how it could be true for you and your dog.

00:01:07

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. Now, these so-called experts of dog training are adamant, I mean, I dare say confident and possibly even dominant when they proclaim into the camera lens that those of us who say reinforcement-based dog training can work are frauds. We know we're lying to the public and we're taking money under false pretenses, those of us who are teaching classes.

And the truth is that I personally have had success not only with my dogs, but literally tens of thousands of online students training in our program. But I get why some people may think it's not possible, and it comes back to a dog's innate prey drive.

00:01:57

Now in [Shaped by Dog episode number 232](#), I talked about something called 'The Canine Predatory Motor Sequence.' And that is an evolutionary sequence of events that has been altered with the way that we breed dogs today. Meaning that parts of this sequencing may be muted and diluted, and parts of it might be eliminated in some breeds, but it's still there in all domestic dogs.

And that sequence looks like this. The first stage is when a dog will alert or try to orient to a sight, a smell, a sound that they may hear that starts the sequencing. It's the first step in that predatory motor sequencing pattern. They will stop what they're doing, and they'll alert and orient. That step and every other step in the sequence is reinforced by the next step, meaning it's strengthened.

00:03:02

So, if a dog alerts and they're able to then eye lock or locate what it is they just oriented to, then the act of orienting gets reinforced by being able to locate what they heard, saw, or smelled. So, it's alert, orient, followed by locate and eye lock, and that is then followed up by stalking.

So, some dogs will go right into chase, but if the animal is far enough away, they will get a head start. And so, the animal that went from orient, locate, and went right to chase, wouldn't have a chance of catching that animal.

00:03:46

So, they learned very quickly to go to stalk, which think of a cat stalking their prey. Think of a Border Collie stalking their sheep because that part of a Border Collie's motor patterns is just an altered form of their innate canine predatory motor sequence. So, it goes from alert to orient, locate – eye stalk, then stalk, that's followed up by chase.



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:04:17

And then the chase is followed up by the grab bite, meaning a bite to just grab their prey. And that may be followed up by the need to kill the prey, eviscerate, degut the prey, and consume the prey. That is the entire sequencing.

And in our domestic dogs, obviously it has been altered through the domesticated breeding, the selection of animals, because we don't want dogs to go through that whole patterning and kill animals anymore.

00:04:46

And so why am I reliving this? I already talked about this in a [previous podcast episode](#). Because most dog trainers get the phone calls that dogs are a problem when the dogs are biting or chasing. And so, they zero in on that as the problem.

We are going to fix the bite and we're going to fix the chase. And how is that going to be fixed? You see, when a dog is that deep into that predatory sequencing pattern, they absolutely are now not in the thinking part of the brain.

And when a dog is not in the thinking part of the brain, they aren't open to learning. They aren't open to feedback from us, which is why, if you've seen that video clip that's got a ka-trillion views on YouTube with Fenton chasing the deer in the park in UK, the owner running after that dog screaming and swearing and saying, "Fenton!"

00:05:47

So, when you try to stop the chase or the bite, you are dealing with an animal who's not in their thinking brain. And that's why things like collar pops or long line pops or electric collars are really what people rely on to stop. Stop that animal. And if you are a trainer who has used these methods, then you are gonna say, "Well, Susan, if the dog is in that predatory sequencing, they don't want your cookie. So, cookie training isn't going to work."

Which is why, I mean, I can only, this is all conjecture on my part because I don't know why, would anyone adamantly call a group of dog trainers having success, frauds or liars. But possibly because they know that a cookie can't compete with the dog's innate drive when they're in an all-out flight mode.

00:06:46

I agree with them, but that's not what we do. That's not how we train. When you are focusing on the bite or the chase, what you're trying to do is suppress innate drive, suppress it. Don't let a dog express who they are. Let them get to that state. And say, "You can't be a dog. It's okay that you did all those other things, but you can't live out the rest of it, you can't."

But there is another approach, and it isn't quite as unfair as that one because suppressing drive isn't training. Yes, people say my e-collar dog is trained to stop when they see wildlife and they will come when called. But that's kind of like saying my car is trained to stop when I hit the brakes because the training is all in the tools that are around that dog's neck.

00:07:46

And if you lost your remote or you dropped your remote and your dog was in mid-flight, you now are like my car with no brakes. And so, no one is stopping that dog. Not a reinforcement-based dog trainer, and certainly not the trainer who's lost their remote or whose batteries died. And so, what can we do? What is it that we do?



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:08:10

Because even though many of you who commented on [podcast episode number 304](#), where I discussed the use of electric collars, many of you said, "Well, Susan, you walk in the same field." I do walk in the same field every day with my dogs, but that's not to say my dogs have never walked off of the property.

Just last week I was in Germany, I was walking with my dog off leash in a national park where there was wildlife. And yes, my dog came across three deer. I would say less than 10 meters away. I would say it was probably more like half that distance, so maybe 15 feet away. We came around a corner and there were three deer.

00:08:50

Prophet saw them. He did his alert, he located, but he didn't follow up with the rest of that sequencing. Is that because he doesn't have it? Is that because he is wired differently? Is that because he doesn't have high prey drive? Oh, nay nay, to quote late great John Pinette. It's because I have interrupted that sequencing for my dog.

And that's the difference between how we have success as reinforcement-based dog trainers. We don't try to stop a dog that we know is not in their [thinking brain](#). I've said this many, many times here on Shaped by Dog. There's really three ways that you can deal with a dog training problem.

00:09:26

Let's call it four. First one is you can ignore it and when you're ignoring it, you might be relying on hope for it to go away. So, I guess that's kind of two methodologies. There are things that I ignore, sometimes [puppy biting](#). If I know my puppy's really tired, there's a reason why, it's my bad management of that puppy that they bit, then I'm not even gonna worry about it.

I'm not even gonna go to my journal and write it down. It's like, yeah, my bad. So, some things I will ignore. And then another form of training is managing. That's what a leash and collar is. We [manage our dog's behavior](#) when they potentially are a danger to themselves or others because of the environment that we have them in.

00:10:06

And then there is train. So, you can ignore, you can rely on hope, dog training, think they might outgrow it. You could manage and you can train. And effective, really effective dog training, I believe is a combination of ignoring consciously knowing you're ignoring and knowing what the consequences of you ignoring something is. Managing and training, you need to manage while you train.

And so why is it that my dogs, I have 100% faith in the recall in any environment? It's not because they don't have drive. Of all the dogs I've owned in my lifetimes rescue dogs, Terriers, Border Collies, they've all come from working lines. Well, maybe not the rescue dogs.

00:10:50

But the rescue dogs came with a history of reinforcement for these behaviors that we needed to stop. So, let's assume my dogs are as driven as anybody's. But what we do is something that I refer to as 'predatory redirection.'

There's something else very similar that's called 'predatory substitution' or 'predation substitution.' And what we want is we want the dog to alert, notice something, but then redirect out of the sequencing back to us.



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:11:24

Now you would say, "Why on earth would a dog do that? Why? What's in it for them?" Well, honestly, they're not going to do it for no reason. When we adopted Tater Salad, he was 15 months old, and he had a laundry list of things that his previous owner ignored, hoped he would outgrow, and he just got worse.

Because as I've said many times, if you aren't actively working through a strategic program of reinforcement, then the environment is actively reinforcing your dog for their behavior. And when the reinforcement is happening for the dog away from you, like Fenton chasing the deer in the park, when that reinforcement is so powerful, you're just building patterns of behavior that get more difficult to stop.

00:12:15

Were we able to change Tater Salad? 100% yes. Was it as easy if as if we'd raised them? No. Number one, he was a Bulldog mixed with a Terrier. Number two, he had all kinds of these rehearsals. But what we focused on was building this great relationship with the dog. Exactly the way I raised my puppies. And that is through all the games that's in our Recallers program.

Our Recallers program is filled with games that have specific goals and one section of the games that we teach, the goals are about predatory interruption or predatory redirection. We want to help that dog be able to alert. Because you can't stop the alert. It's going to happen. "Wo-woo? Oh s***."

00:13:09

But then once they alert, even if they locate, which they probably are going to do, alert and locate almost happens simultaneously. They alert, locate, redirect back to us. Because of the amazing relationship that we have built.

While we're building this amazing relationship, we don't allow the environment to feed our dog with all kinds of reinforcement that we have to fight against. So, what does this amazing relationship building look like for you and your dog?

00:13:41

Number one, you have got to care about where that reinforcement is happening. So, if you think of the alert, locate, stalking, cycling, when it happens when it's a puppy, when they are locating and stalking a leaf or locating and stalking a bird or locating and stalking, we laugh at it don't we? That is ignoring.

And I'm asking you, you're either consciously or unconsciously ignoring. When my Border Collie starts stalking a leaf, the first time it happens, I laugh at it. I think it's hysterical. And then I work on creating this great relationship with me so that they don't care about, like they catch the leaf and then they go, "Oh, that was boring."

00:14:22

And so, they don't. They don't because the value they're earning from me and the lack of value they're earning from the environment means they're happily going to redirect to me. So, I'm gonna walk you through some things that you can do right now that's going to help you and your dog get on your way to start the predatory redirection for you with your dog.

Now there's a bunch of games I'm gonna ask you to learn. There's a bunch of games I'm gonna ask you to play with your dog. What does that mean? "Oh, Susan, that sounds like a lot of work." It's relationship building.



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:15:00

You could get a kid to stop acting up in class by giving him a backhand, but you're just suppressing who they are. You're not allowing them to express themselves, have a conversation with you, build a relationship with what they're learning, so they don't want to act up in class.

Yes, stopping is so much easier than having a great relationship built on trust, mutual trust where the dog learns to trust you. It seems like it's a lot more work, but at the end of the day, I just think it's having a great time with your dog, and you end up with this dog who doesn't care about what the environment has to offer for them. They're happy to redirect back to you.

00:15:45

And so, what does it look like? Number one, you must have a head whip reaction to the name. What does that look like? If I say my dog's name, I want that head to whip around. Now, if you have a lot of family members that use the dog's name, maybe you have kids that just say, "Rover", "Rove", "Rover", "Rove, rove, rove." "What are you doing? Rove, rove." "Rove, rove, rove."

Then what the dog's name has become is something like Charlie Brown's teacher. When Charlie Brown's in class, all he hears "wa-wa, wa-wa-wa, wa-wa, wa." You're not getting a head whip to that because that is being ignored. So, we tell our students both in Home School the Dog and in Recallers, they have to [pick a special word](#) that is unique to their relationship with their dog.

00:16:30

A word that means 'head whip, come back to me.' And it doesn't mean you're going to do it from 50 feet. You're not gonna test it at the [bunny farm](#). You're going to rehearse it in the privacy of your own home. Likely a small room with zero distractions.

Just get that dog to whip their head around when they hear. Why would they do it? Because you're gonna offer them something amazing. Another part, having this dog redirect is building up a love for a [game of tug](#). If you don't have that with your dog, it's still possible. You can create tug drive in your dog. If you've got it, well done you but what we have to do is put some rules on it.

00:17:08

You don't tug unless I ask you to and you let go when I ask you. So, we've got the head whip number one, we've got tug games number two. [ItsYerChoice](#). Now ItsYerChoice is a game that basically starts as cookies in your hand, that the dog doesn't jump up and try to steal things that are in your hand. And it grows to include everything.

Taking a toy out of a toy bag and yes, seeing a deer in the park and looking back at you. ItsYerChoice. Making a good choice when they're a hundred meters away from me is just an extension of ItsYerChoice. So, I'm gonna leave a link to the show notes where you can join our ItsYerChoice Summit.

00:17:50

Now the games. The games I'm going to suggest start with [Hand Targets](#), like driven hand targets that the dogs love to do. You're gonna build these up with super high value food. I'll give you a link to how I teach hand targeting.

But you also want to teach things like a random sit, meaning walking around the house with your dog. First of all, [teach the sit](#) in a way that's enthusiastic and reinforcing for the dog. And I've got a YouTube video on how you can do that so that they love to sit.



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:18:18

Then you want to grow the distance away from you so that they can sit further away and they can sit close up, and they don't have to come towards you to sit. Then you're going to work on [Reinforcement Zone](#), which is value for being at your side.

These are things that are important when we're taking our dogs out walking and there's a distraction. I want them to come into Reinforcement Zone. I use the cue 'side' for my right and 'close' for my left. But the words are meaningless if you don't build up the behaviors with great value. And next is what we call in our online classrooms, This or That Games.

00:18:54

Meaning ItsYerChoice taken into new context. You present the toy to your dog, which your dog loves to grab and tug, but instead of saying tug, you say, "sit." Will the dog choose to drive grab at something, which is prey drive, or will they choose to sit? You can then wiggle that toy and move it away. Will they still choose to sit?

If your dog isn't crazy about toys just yet, you can do the same thing with a handful of cookies. If your dog chooses to follow and not sit, you don't scold them, you don't correct them. You take that feedback as legitimate feedback from your dog. It's a critique of the training you've done.

00:19:35

More work needed, get back to work, build more fun into those games. And if you aren't sure how to build fun into these games, then I want to give you an opportunity to join our online classroom Home School the Dog. It's a small sampling of some of the games that we play in Recallers, but there's unique games that aren't even in Recallers.

It gives you a chance to create that head whip reaction. It gives you a chance to be coached in ItsYerChoice. Normally, this program sells for \$300, but because you're listening, if you write my team at wag@dogsthat.com with a subject line 'Prey Drive,' then you'll be sent a discount code so that you can join this program at 83% discount.

00:20:20

So, the secret to that predatory redirection is an amazing relationship. The amazing relationship can't be about dangling a meatball in front of your dog's face because then you're saying to the dog, 'What do you like more? The meatball or the deer?' They're picking the deer. Every time they're picking the deer.

But when the value comes through you, and that's what you learn in a program like Recallers or Home School the Dog, you learn how the value comes through you, how you pump up the value of your relationship while you are minimizing the value of the reinforcement to your dog.

00:20:58

And that my friends, is why my dogs and my students' dogs choose to come when called, regardless of the distractions that they face. It 100% is possible. It's possible for me, it's possible for our students, and it is possible for you as well.

There is one more tool that you are going to need when you are working through this, because at first it starts in your home where there's no distractions, and then you go into the backyard where there's some distractions maybe to the front yard where there's some distractions.



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:21:29

Eventually, we've got to get you out into the real world, and that's where the use of a head halter comes in. Now, I did a podcast that I'm going to put a link in the show notes on [the proper conditioning of a head halter](#). A head halter, when you put it on the dog, the goal should be to never have to use it.

So, you have to do a phenomenal job of conditioning the dog. You don't just slap it on, if the dog is fighting that head halter, if the dog doesn't like the sensation of it on their face, then you have gone about it the wrong way. The head halter is not for correction. It's not for punishment. It's not for popping or jerking.

00:22:12

The head halter is only for the times when you have overwhelmed your dog. And we have to get them out of the environment. So, I say this all the time. If you get into an environment where your dog is overwhelmed, they see wildlife, they see dogs running, they see kids running, and that prey drive is triggered.

If they're on a head halter, they get far, far more reinforcement from you in that situation because here's what happens. You go right to the nose clip, you turn the dog's head towards you, and you back away from the distraction. You give them their head and it's their choice. If they choose to redirect back to you, you feed them.

00:22:50

We're not telling them they're bad dogs because they didn't reorient back to us, but we control the continuation of that predation cycle. Now, if you are out and you find, "Well, I'm just redirecting all over the place." That's not the way to use a head halter.

A head halter is like an emergency break. It's only there when the level of training you put in isn't there. And how do you know that? The dog tells you by their behavior. It helps us get out of trouble so that we can go back and build more of those amazing relationship games so the dog will redirect back.

00:23:30

So, if I'm taking a dog for a walk like Kim's new rescue dog, he's more than 70% mixture of American Bulldog, American Bully, and German Shepherd, three very high prey drive dogs. Now, if I'm taking him for a walk, I play the games. I do hand targets. Hand targets shouldn't just be boring, come in and touch my hand.

Sometimes we have our dogs running to us and touching our hands. Sometimes the dog jumps up in the air and touches our hand. If the dog alerts and orients to a distraction, I wait for a second and see if he will redirect back to me. If he doesn't, I say his name, which should give me a head whip. A head whip is followed by reinforcement, but I should only have to do that a few times.

00:24:13

Because after a few times, the dog should predict that when I pause, he should reorient, and when he does that, I give him a jackpot. I say the word "search" and I throw a jackpot of cookies in the ground behind him. This is important people.

I said, I let the dog orient. I wait for them to redirect. If they don't, I say their name. Then when they look back, I give them a cookie, and we keep walking. I do it again. If I have to say their name, I give them a cookie. Eventually they will reorient back to me. And if they don't, say I'm out walking with one of my dogs, I will tell my dog [to lie down](#).



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

00:24:49

You want to work this where you can control the distractions. And when the dog lies down, then Waffles will reorient back to me, and then I will reinforce that with a handful of cookies behind them. The handful of cookies behind them is super important because number one, it gives them the opportunity to have a lot of really high value cookies.

Number two, they're in the grass, so he's searching, he's sniffing. That is a decompression exercise for him. He gets to wash away the stress of the alert, orient, redirect instead of lock eye and fixate. He gets to wash away all that stress. Plus, that scenting is just such a great way for the dog to use their nose.

00:25:27

However, I did not say my dog sees a dog and I throw cookies in the grass. I'm not saying that's wrong, I'm just saying that's not part of how I use them. Okay? So, it is a very strategically layered program. First, you're building that amazing relationship either in Home School the Dog, or possibly as a member of our Recallers community, or for now, if you're going to go along with some of the YouTube videos that I have for you, you could give that a try.

Trust me, being in a coaching program with myself and our coaches for a year is going to exponentially improve your success rate. You're going to work on the relationship building. Then you're going to take the show on the road, only when you've conditioned the head halter. Then you're going to work through the games on the head halter, looking for that alert, orient, and redirect back.

00:26:19

Massive celebration when that happens. And if it doesn't, you simply turn the dog's head and get out of the environment, giving them a chance to have success by letting go of the head halter and seeing, what is their choice. They should come right back into Reinforcement Zone if you've put in the work to build value for that.

It is so much fun building an amazing relationship with a dog you love and honestly, six months of your time putting in these games means you have a lifetime of games to play with your dog. Plus, you get a dog that you can take just about anywhere because you can trust them.

I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.





Episode: #305

Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

Join Home School the Dog:

To join Home School the Dog at a special discount, write to us at wag@dogsthat.com with the subject line: *Prey Drive*

Learn To Play ItsYerChoice:

[Learn how to play the ItsYerChoice \(IYC\) Game](#)

Hand Target and More Functional Games

Get the Hand Target Game and more foundational training games in our free Connected Dog Season of Nuance Video Series running for a limited time - <https://dogsthat.com/y/305/connected>

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 232: Canine Predatory Motor Sequence: Understand Your Dog's Prey Drive To Enrich Your Life Together](#)

[Podcast Episode 304: Let's Talk About E-Collars: Why Dog Trainers Are So Divided](#)

[Podcast Episode 7: You, Your Dog, Maslow and Lizard Brain](#)

[Podcast Episode 234: How To Stop Puppy Biting: Avoid Mistakes With Susan Garrett's Backup Plan](#)

[Podcast Episode 293: MRI: A Simple 3 Part Dog Training Formula To Fix Problems Like Counter Surfing, Reactivity And More](#)

[Blog Post: A GAME to Preserve Your Dog's Recall Cue](#)

[Podcast Episode 276: What No One Tells You About The Best Place To Train Your Puppy Or Rescue Dog](#)

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

[Podcast Episode 68: 3 Easy Tricks Every Dog Should Know](#)

[Podcast Episode 155: 10 Ways To Teach A Sit WITHOUT A Food Lure! Unreal Results For Puppies And Dogs Of All Ages](#)

[YouTube Video: Understanding Your Dog's Reinforcement Zone \(RZ\) with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 40: Using A Head Halter On A Dog, Why My Approach Is So Different](#)

[Podcast Episode 145: 10 Ways To Teach A Dog To Lay Down And How To Shape It Without Luring](#)



Are R+ Trainers Frauds? Can A Dog Come When Called Around Wildlife Without Using Punishers?

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>

