



# Episode 21: Dealing With Disappointment

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

disappointment, agility, failures, share, dog, uncomfortable, responses, feelings, podcast, empathy, silence, disappointed, person, world championships, sport, flailing, talk, feel, fail, pretty

This is the agility challenge podcast with Daisy peel, you're listening to Episode 21. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host, Daisy peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do list seems so long that you don't even know where to get started. This is the podcast for you. You can have the best training and the best skills and the best dog and access to the best trainers, coaches and instructors in the world. But if you don't have your mental game under control, you'll never be able to successfully use all those skills you have to the best of your abilities. Now let's dive in to today's episode. pretty regularly, it will come up amongst members in the agility challenge, which is my online dog agility training platform that we wish more people would share their failures publicly, mostly social media, it can be really easy to start feeling inadequate seeing nothing but an endless stream of successes in our social media newsfeed. I think most of us can relate to this. And I know that I certainly can, people will say that they would love to be able to learn from the failures of others brave enough to share those failures. And some people will say that they would simply feel better about their own failures, knowing that others were also experiencing failure. Now, you aren't likely to see me share a lot of my failures publicly. And that's for a couple of reasons. One of which is that as a professional, it's my successes and not my failures that are likely to get you interested in the content and the guidance that I can provide to you when it comes to improving your own performances. In the course of providing guidance and content, I'll of course include my failures in any given process or method. But that's in a setting where I can explain those failures and help you make sense of them, and how they may



be a necessary part of your own process. But the biggest reason that I'm unlikely to share my failures publicly is that when I fail, I'm typically pretty disappointed. And that is the real topic for this podcast episode disappointment. When I fail, usually in the ring at a big event, it can be a big disappointment for me, the higher the level of competition where that failure occurs, the higher my own level of disappointment, I feel it in my gut, it's uncomfortable, and it hurts. And it's not a mental space that I really want to spend any time in. Like most of us, my gut reaction is to work to get away from that discomfort. There can be a lot of negative self talk sometimes. And since I've been doing the sport for a long time, I have that little voice in my head that can pop up and say, See, I told you this is how it would turn out. I'm experienced, I knew this is how it would turn out. And there's no real point in me sharing my disappointment on social media. Because the responses to me sharing my disappointment and maybe to you, when you've shared your disappointment, are inevitably statements or comments like it's just dog agility. Or at least you got to go and compete. Or at least you have a dog to compete with. Or at least you're in good health, just a lot of at least at least at least. Now I know that people are trying to help me look on the bright side. And of course, when people make those comments to you and you share your disappointments, they are trying to help you look on the bright side. But really, most of those responses are more about the person making the comment and have nothing to do with any real sort of empathy for my disappointment. And why would they social media is about vocal, written engagement or video engagement. And often, empathy is a lot quieter. And it's a more personal type of engagement with a lot of silence, and sometimes just holding space to be a listener. responses like, I feel you or I totally get it. Or I've been there or I hear you, or man Yeah, disappointment sucks. It really hurts. Or I don't know what to say. But I'm glad you've shared this with me. Those those responses don't usually play well or lead to great discussion on social media. And that's what social media is all about is discussion. So those responses are usually most meaningful when they come from somebody who's able to just let the silence fill in the gaps. And again, social media and online communication is not about silence. Silence and those



kinds of interactions usually come more when you're there in person with somebody. It's also a lot more vulnerable, to be able to share your disappointment in person with somebody which I think a lot of us we feel more comfortable sharing Your disappointment online or on social media then in front of a real person. But when you share your disappointment with somebody who is able to just be there with you, in person and let the silence fill things in, then you're sharing your disappointment with somebody who can give you a response that comes from a place where they can take a moment to remember a disappointment that they felt and how it felt from somebody who can acknowledge how my disappointment feels in the moment, without turning it into something about them. From somebody who can let me know through their words or their actions, or just their silence, that they acknowledge my feelings, that my feelings are valid, and that really maybe all I need in the moment, I maybe don't need a solution. And this goes for you as well, you maybe don't need a solution, you maybe don't need a distraction. And you don't need a pep talk. I know for me, I definitely don't, I don't want a pep talk. If I'm disappointment, if I'm experiencing disappointment, I don't want a pep talk, I don't also probably don't need a solution, I just, I just kind of want to air my feelings and know that somebody is listening. So if somebody says, at least to me, when I share disappointment, that can be a pretty big red flag to me. And usually, I'm going to find a way to excuse myself from the conversation or, or change the conversation to be less about me and more about the other person. And I'm probably not going to make the mistake of sharing my disappointments with that particular person again, because it's my mistake for having shared with that person in the first place it maybe it just oversharing it's just I'm sharing disappointment with the wrong person. Most of the time, I when I make that mistake, I make it knowing full well, that the person I'm sharing with my disappointment with is not really capable of listening or not really capable of empathy. I'm just kind of flailing and making a bid for connection in that moment, instead of taking a moment to think about Alright, who can I share this with it really, it's more appropriate. And I have friends who are just not capable of empathy in those situations. And for me relying on those particular people to



repeatedly show empathy that they're not capable of, it's just, it's a failure on my part, I don't avoid those friends altogether. I just know what their strengths and weaknesses are as a friend. And I, you know, when clear heads prevail, I recognize there's no point in my being disappointed in somebody who can't be there for me when I'm disappointed about something else, in a way that they already knew that they couldn't be. And I just, it's my fault, it's my responsibility to make sure I'm sharing my disappointment with the right people. And not every friend can be everything for every person. And it's really not fair of me to expect that. I do think it's important to know which of the people in your life can be there for you when you're disappointed or, or upset. And for me, that's a pretty short list and and the people on that list know how to hold space. And also, they know when to put their foot down and remind me that it's really not like me to go on and on about being disappointed without taking some action. But on the other hand, I'm pretty sure that the reason I make that mistake of oversharing and of expressing my disappointment in kind of a flailing ham handed way to people who are not on my short list is that being vulnerable and sharing with somebody in the hopes of receiving some empathy is a bid for connection. And hearing, at least in response is the opposite of connection. And by using those words, the person that I'm attempting to connect with is letting me know loud and clear that they're either not capable of, or desiring of that kind of connection in that moment, because it can be really uncomfortable. If you're not on somebody's shortlist, and they come to you. And they really are wanting to share some disappointment I, you know, you just, I don't, I can't be that person for you, or I shouldn't be that person for you, or this is uncomfortable for me. Or maybe I'm flailing around with my own disappointment. And I just, it's just not right.

Now also, I know when someone says, at least at least at least I know, of course, I'm fortunate to be able to even go to a big competition. And of course, I'm fortunate to have a dog or dogs to compete with. And of course, I'm fortunate to have loved ones that I have a great relationship with who can watch other dogs that I maybe need to leave at home. Of course, I know that I'm fortunate to have friends that I can compete



with and hang out with at the shows. And of course, I know that I'm fortunate to have the time and the money to be able to prepare to be at those big events. I know I'm using myself as an example. But of course this goes for any of us in this situation. I'm sure you're listening or watching and thinking yeah, that could be me as well. That's kind of the point. And of course, I know it's air quotes, just dog agility. But I mean, we could say that of all sports that they're just sports but Really, sports are also so so much more. And dog agility is a sport and it's no different. But the point is none of those at least comments or responses, even if it's my fault for over sharing my disappointment or sharing my disappointment with the wrong people who aren't on my shortlist, none of that really just diminishes my disappointment in the moment, you know, if I express my disappointment, and you simply remind me how lucky I am, you're just telling me that I'm not allowed to feel disappointment. And maybe you're right, I shouldn't be. It's inappropriate of me to share that with you, but, but it still can lead us to feel like, Oh, you're telling me I'm not allowed to feel disappointment, or at least that you don't want to hear that I'm feeling something that's uncomfortable and gut wrenching, and painful and you know, just uncomfortable. I have been doing agility for a long time. And over the years, like I said, before, I've been pretty disappointed at a lot of really amazing events, I could be in the middle of the most amazing event ever World Championships and feel disappointment. And in the moment. You know, I don't like feeling disappointment. Nobody does. I don't think it's pretty uncomfortable. I don't enjoy the feeling of reaching really high and falling short, because it's it's uncomfortable. It's unpleasant. And I know that I know that I'm not alone in this, I know that you probably already know all this, because there's a pretty good chance you have felt that disappointment yourself. So what do we do about it? Now, I always seem to recover from my disappointment. And it does seem like I manage to turn it into an opportunity to really look at the how and the why of my failures and to create plans to turn weaknesses into strengths, and then most importantly, to take actions on those plans. That's that's the final thing is that can you turn disappointment, not just into planning a lot of people make plans and goals. But can you turn that disappointment into plans and turn it into action, not just



saying you're going to do something, but actually doing it because at the end of the day, and I've mentioned this before, in some of my other podcast episodes, feeling disappointment might be uncomfortable, but it also is familiar. And there is some comfort in it, because you know that it feels familiar, and it sucks really sucks right now. But if you tell enough people that your disappointment that you're disappointed, and that you're experiencing disappointment, you're gonna get some comments back either in person or on social media that are going to make you feel better, and then you don't actually have to take any action. So that's the important thing, and I'm gonna come back to that. But going back to the disappointment itself, I've never really managed to simply skip from a poor performance or a performance that didn't meet my standards to that next step of just taking action, the pain of disappointment, the discomfort of disappointment seems to be at least for me, kind of a unnecessary bridge that I have to cross to get from the end of a poor performance to the beginnings of making plans and then taking actions on those plans, taking action on those plans to improve my performances. And I've been playing at the sport for a long time. And I don't know if it's because of the demographic of people that tends to participate in dog agility. But from the very beginning, I was told in a variety of ways to hide my disappointment, or even better to strive to not even experience disappointment. Now, I will say that there are some ways of being disappointment or expressing your disappointment that are more appropriate than others. Getting angry at your dog is not an appropriate or productive way to express your disappointment. But if you're told that you should never experience if you're doing it right, you're never going to experience disappointment. I don't buy that. And for a long time, I worked really hard at hiding disappointment and working to not even experience disappointment. But what I noticed was that the better I got at avoiding feelings of disappointment entirely. I noticed something else happened, the better I got at avoiding all feelings, it's pretty hard to tamp down some emotions and not others. Now this has also been encouraged, I think in a variety of ways in our sport and in a lot of lot of sports, or endeavors or hobbies or whatever you want to call it. You know don't get too excited. Don't be too proud. Don't brag.



Well, of course you did. Well, that was to be expected. You're you. Don't be disappointed. Don't be frustrated. And so, we are in a lot of ways, encouraged either implicitly or explicitly, not only to not feel disappointment, or to not express disappointment, but not to, not to feel it at all. And also not to experience too much happiness or too much joy in our wins, whether they're a podium win or a non podium win. But honestly, whether you are a novice competitor just starting out, or somebody like me who's been doing it for a long, long time, disappointment is disappointment. And it is not a comfortable feeling. It's not a comfortable experience. But the important thing is what we do with those feelings, and what we do with that experience of disappointment, because we can use it to spur growth, or we can allow it to prevent us from moving forward, we can say, Wow, this is super uncomfortable, I am not enjoying this feeling, how can I get better, so that I don't make that mistake again. Or we can just say, Wow, that really sucked. That was super uncomfortable, I'm just going to avoid this entirely. So that I have no possibility of experiencing disappointment again. It when we're experiencing disappointment, it doesn't matter what level we're at, or whether or not someone else would experience the same disappointment in the same situation. It's, it's real. And if we're discouraged from feeling those feelings of disappointment, because they're uncomfortable for others, who may not want to recognize those same feelings within themselves and nobody wins. But again, how we feel with disappointment, which usually comes hand in hand with some sort of failure is super important. And it's also important, I think, to remember that the harder you try for something and the more you're reaching for something, the more likely it is that you're just you're gonna fail. And failure is at least some of the time going to result in disappointment. I've talked a lot in this podcast in other episodes about leaning into failure and the discomfort of working in that sweet spot where growth is really happening. And we tend to see people at the top of the sport any sport, really. And we just assume that they're naturals, that they're talented. And that because they make something look easy that it must be for them easy. And we forget the the mountain of failure that that top competitor is standing on that mountain of failures and learning experiences and disappointments that top competitors



just keep making bigger and bigger and bigger, because they keep showing up. And that is hugely important that you keep showing up again, and again. And again, even though you know, maybe more often than not that you're going to lose, or you're going to fail. So right now, it's baseball season. Now I'm not a huge baseball fan, my

husband has a favorite baseball team that he likes to watch. And so I have actually started to enjoy watching the games. And the thing that's crazy to me is that a really good batter has what's called a 300 batting average. And that means success only 30% of the time, that's just crazy. That means 70% of the time failure. But the cool thing to me is that those athletes and this is true across the board, those athletes are able to just go all in again and again. And again, looking for those failure opportunities, looking for situations that are likely to produce the highest of highs or the lowest of lows, and that that ultimately is what is going to determine success, growth and mastery. Now this upcoming weekend, is the FCI agility World Championships. And the American Kennel Club has sent a team overseas I've been on that team, seven or eight times, I can't remember exactly. But that is the most cool event to compete at or be a spectator at. And the reason is that it's a one arena, one ring event where everybody is giving their attention to that one person in the ring, who is putting it all on the line going all in. And something amazing is going to happen or not. But that person in the arena who is competing for their country's team, I guarantee you has had to go all in over and over and over again. And more often than not, it has resulted in some sort of failure. But that competitor has showed up again and again and again and again. And that's the important thing is that you show up and you learn from those mistakes that cause the failure and then the disappointment and you analyze it and you look at your video and you analyze your footwork and how can you help your dog be better how can you help yourself be better? And that is too me one of the coolest things about that event is that everybody there is watching that one ring, giving their attention to that endeavor. And so I think it's important to remember that the more you care, and the harder you





try, and the more you really go all in, the more likely you're setting yourself up for something amazing or disappointing. But even that is amazing, really, if you just pick yourself up and keep at it again, and again and again. And you use those feelings of disappointment to analyze those performances and your training, and you're handling and your fitness in every aspect of the game. And just relish in the fact that you care enough about it to have those feelings, whether they are amazing, joyous feelings, or feelings of disappointment. So also, you know, pump your fist, if your dog holds it start line, even if the rest of the run is a complete disaster, if that start line was a non podium victory for you, and you have worked so hard at that start line, celebrate it, do a fist pump doing you know, air, guitar, whatever, that's the thing is that it's okay to be disappointed. As long as you're not taking it out on your dog and appropriately. But it's okay to be disappointed. And it's okay to admit man, I really wanted that I really tried for that I really worked for that. And I did not make it. And it's also okay to celebrate your wins. Even if they're small wins, there's no such thing. It's just a small, it's a win win is a win, whether it's a podium or not, if you worked hard for it, and you failed a lot to get where you are, it's a win. So if you've experienced disappointment, at any point along the way, and your dog agility, handling and training journey, I say congratulations, pat yourself on the back. Because that means you are trying to do something that was maybe just beyond your reach, you stuck your neck out, and you took a chance, you let yourself be vulnerable to the possibility of disappointment, and also to the possibility of massive success and growth. And you can't have one without the other. It's just what you do with it that matters. And if we want to see more people share their failures and disappointments, we need to encourage that with our own knee jerk responses to those shared feelings, we need to make sure that our responses are appropriate. So if like me, I've done this myself, I'm not free of blame or guilt here, I'm not perfect. But think about if you have played that air quotes, again, at least game with somebody who shared a disappointment with you. Now maybe that person really should be sharing their disappointment with someone who can more appropriately hold space for them, you know, maybe you're in a hurry, maybe you've got a dog, maybe it's just not the right



time, and you're just not the right person. And I think it's okay to say that it's okay to say that sounds really disappointing and uncomfortable. I wish I could hold space for you right now. But I can't for whatever reason, I know I played the at least game I try really hard not to. Because I also know how it makes me want to retreat further into my own cave, when I share a disappointment or something that makes me sad or bummed. And I get that at least response myself. So at the very least I can work on my end and never again use the at least strategy on somebody else who comes to me to share disappointment, whether it's in private or in public. So I wanted to talk about disappointment. I actually got a request from an agility challenge member who's also a podcast listener to talk about disappointment. And like most of my podcast episodes, it takes me a while to kind of think about Alright, What angle do I want to come at this from? And I thought that the week before agility World Championships would be a really good time to talk about this. Because if you guys are watching the live stream of agility World Championships, or if you're at agility World Championships, if you tried out for agility World Championships for your country's team and didn't quite make it. Probably at some point, there was disappointment. And that's totally fine. Congratulations, you tried. You didn't make it, you failed. You're gonna pick yourself up and show up again. And again. And again and again, because that is what the greats do. So that's it for this episode of the agility challenge podcast. If you like what you heard, let me know leave a comment, give me a shout out. If you've got a topic you'd like me to tackle. I would love to hear it. And until next time, check out the other episodes, and I will see you guys online. If you enjoyed today's podcast and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things I talked about today. Head to the webpage for today's episode, [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 21 and scroll To the bottom, you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. Now I'm a pretty tech savvy person myself, but even for me, it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of that page. So go ahead, head over to [podcast dot the agility](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com)



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