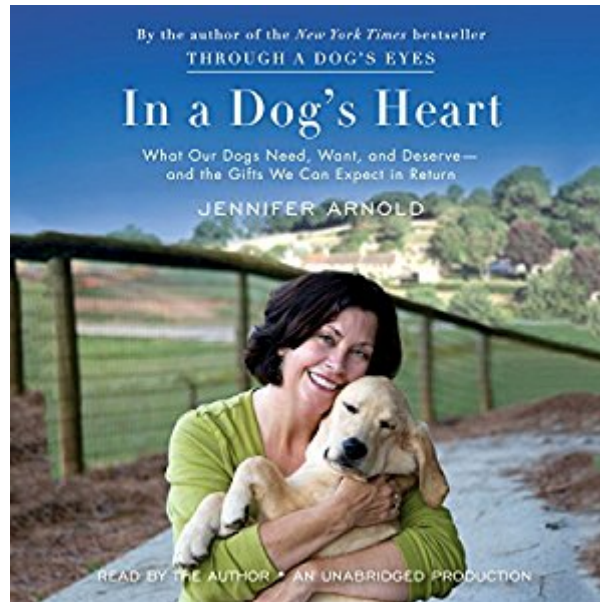


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# In A Dog's Heart: What Our Dogs Need, Want, And Deserve--and The Gifts We Can Expect In Return



## **Synopsis**

What our dogs need to live a good life, and why we must come through for them. Over the two decades she has spent raising and training service dogs for people with disabilities, Jennifer Arnold has come to a unique and profound understanding of the human-dog bond. Though it may seem simple and instinctive, the friendship and devotion we share with our pets is a wondrous evolutionary development. Our two species have come to rely on each - other for protection, companionship, comfort, and happiness - needs and benefits that go both ways. Yet when we step outside our designated roles and take on practices that require us to display dominance over our canine charges, we misread cues and misinterpret behavior, sometimes with disastrous results. Conversely, when communication between dog and keeper is clear and based on kindness and a willingness to see things through a dog's eyes, the payoff for both dog and owner is tremendous. When respect and care are brought together, we come to know the inalienable goodness in a dog's soul. As the founder of Canine Assistants, Arnold has implemented and advanced a methodology - Choice Teaching - that pairs scientific and behavioral knowledge about dogs with gentle incentive and encouragement to extraordinary effect. But she does not consider herself a dog trainer; rather, she sees herself as a relationship expert who improves the connection between humans and dogs and in the process betters the quality of life for both. In a Dog's Heart offers Arnold's offers her best practices and useful tips that range over a dog's whole life, including: how to choose the puppy that's destined for you from a bustling litter and what you need to have on hand before you bring that puppy home what to stock in your doggie first-aid kit how to keep your pet safe from dangers at home and in the outside world the challenges and rewards of adopting an older dog how to help your dog overcome anxious behavior, from separation anxiety to thunderstorm phobia when to recognize that it's time to let go. As in her bestselling first book, Through a Dog's Eyes, Arnold illustrates what she's learned through captivating and moving stories drawn from her experience. We learn about Grace, a black Lab who was rescued after she was thrown from a truck and delivered to Canine Assistants emaciated, dehydrated, and with a broken pelvis. As Grace recovered she displayed an unusual gift for scent detection and now spends her days sniffing out bombs on the Israeli border. We meet Casper, a Lab-golden mix who works full-time at Scottish Rite Children's Hospital in Atlanta, a best friend to kids undergoing cancer treatment, and a buddy ready to offer comfort as needed to the doctors on staff. We also discover the myriad ways in which dogs improve our lives - and what they need and deserve from us in return.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

There are at least as many books on raising dogs as there are on raising children, and undoubtedly as many points of view. There are scores of television shows and Internet sites professing to have the "secret" of success in teaching Fido what to do, and more importantly, what NOT to do. So what makes "In a Dog's Heart" any different? What makes companion animal trainer and dog rescuer Jennifer Arnold the voice we should listen to? She starts with one simple premise: treat "man's best friend" like a friend. Dogs have evolved and grown alongside mankind for thousands of years. Their wants and needs are parallel to our own - to be physically well, to be safe, to know friendship and love, and to be content in their lives. And as dogs help us find these things for ourselves, as friends we should help them do the same. Arnold points out that much is made in current dog training of the "pack mentality" of the dog's wolf ancestors. The theory is that our dogs must be taught their place, with we their owners as the "alpha" canines. Arnold shows (and research supports) that dogs are not wolves, and even if they were, a pack is not a group of unassociated animals fighting for dominance. A pack is a family unit; the alpha pair are the parents, and the pack works together to supply its needs. Think about it - a group of animals continually fighting each other for dominance would not last as a unit for long in the wild. And they won't last long in the home either. Arnold gives us helpful pointers for understanding our dog's behaviors from the dog's perspective. He just wants to be well, and safe, and loved, and happy. He simply lacks the vocal ability to tell us how that can happen. He acts out his worries and fears (like many of us humans do as well).

"In a Dog's Heart", Jennifer Arnold, author and founder of Canine Assistants, an organization which trains service dogs, discusses the A to Z of dog ownership (or guardianship, as she occasionally says), informing us on how to best care for and train our dogs, and through numerous anecdotes, what they in turn have to offer us. She discusses everything from how to pick out a puppy to take home with you (or what to look for if instead adopting an adult dog), proper nutrition and veterinarian care, how to see the world through the dog's eyes, how to correct and modify their behavior as needed, and even when it's time to say goodbye and let your pet go. In the appendices, she gives step by step instructions on how to train your pet and/or modify your pet's behavior on a wide variety of subjects. She advocates a gentle approach, and is not a fan of many of the techniques espoused by Cesar Millan, the "Dog Whisperer", although she does not doubt his sincerity or love of dogs. Their differences in approach are somewhat analogous to the two schools of thought of raising children, between "tough love" and a softer parental approach. I've been around dogs most of my life, and I see benefits to both sides explanations and techniques, although I'm probably a little more in Ms Arnold's camp, both for dogs and children. :-) Surprisingly, I learned a great deal about dogs in the book. For example, one of the appendices lists things that are toxic to dogs, such as apples, grapes, and many other fruits. I never fed fruit to any of our dogs that I can remember, but when I was a boy, my siblings and I used to sneak our poodle a lot of "people food" under the table, without our realizing that some of our food could have been harmful to our pet.

I am way too much of a softie -- as many animal lovers are. Well, I made the mistake of starting to read this book in a public place in my small town. That was a HUGE mistake. The first chapter of the book is stuffed with stories that made me cry like a crazy person. There were stories of dogs with cancer, dogs saving human lives, dogs abused. Honestly, I was so embarrassed. But the book is good and interesting, and I didn't particularly want to put it down (and it did not help that I had my 10 month old rescue puppy by my side). Generally speaking, this book is a well written book about responsible dog ownership. The author clearly loves dogs and clearly knows a lot about quality dog training. Although I nearly put the book in the trash after she stated Purina, Royal Canin and Iams were all highly trustworthy, recommended brands of dog food. She kept praising Purina. I actually bought a bag of Purina puppy chow to feed my dog when she came home from the shelter -- only so I could mix it in to transition to the high quality food I got her. I was shocked by the ingredients in Puppy Chow. This dog expert is advocating people feed their dog "Whole grain corn, corn gluten meal, chicken by-product meal, brewers rice, animal fat preserved with mixed-tocopherols (form of Vitamin E), soybean meal, egg and chicken flavor, barley, animal digest...." Ew. The author actually

lost a \*lot\* of credibility with me at that point. Maybe Purina is a sponsor of her Canine Assistants program and so she \*has\* to praise them -- I don't know. But it was very odd and very out of sync with the rest of the book.

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