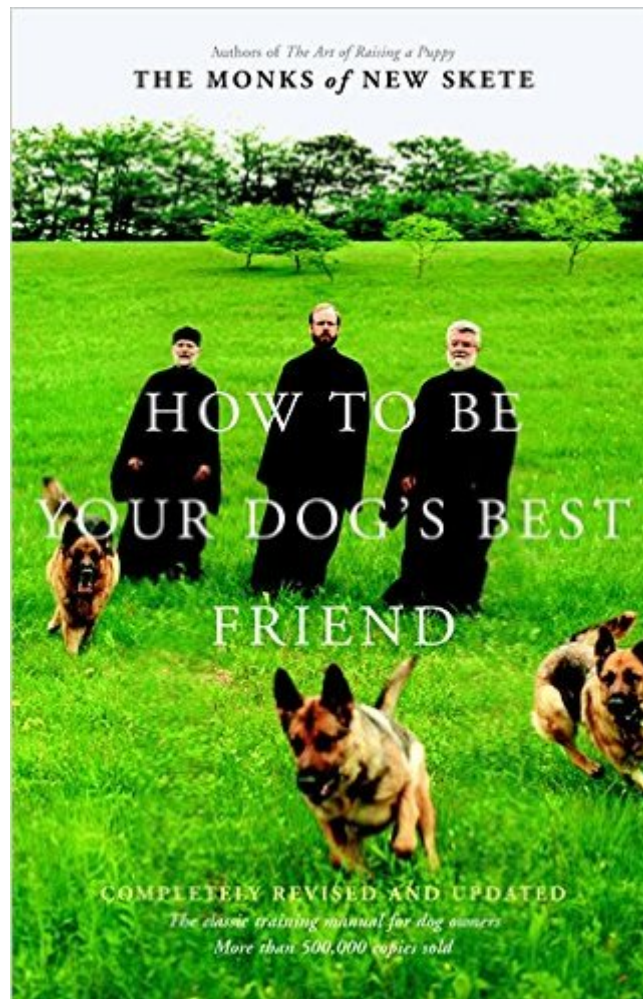


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How To Be Your Dog's Best Friend: The Classic Training Manual For Dog Owners (Revised & Updated Edition)



Synopsis

For nearly a quarter century, *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend* has been the standard against which all other dog-training books have been measured. This new, expanded edition, with a fresh new design and new photographs throughout, preserves the best features of the original classic while bringing the book fully up-to-date. The result: the ultimate training manual for a new generation of dog owners - and, of course, for their canine best friends. The Monks of New Skete have achieved international renown as breeders of German shepherds and as outstanding trainers of dogs of all breeds. Their unique approach to canine training, developed and refined over three decades, is based on the philosophy that "understanding is the key to communication, compassion, and communion" with your dog. The importance of honest and effective communication with your dog is underscored throughout this guide, especially in the practical training exercises: a detailed, comprehensive, fully illustrated obedience course through which the monks lead you (and your dog) step-by-step. *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend* covers virtually every aspect of living with and caring for your dog, including: Selecting a dog (what breed? male? female? puppy or older dog?) to fit your lifestyle Where to get - and where not to get - a dog Reading a pedigree Training your dog or puppy - when, where, and how The proper use of praise and discipline Feeding, grooming, and ensuring your dog's physical fitness Recognizing and correcting canine behavioral problems The particular challenges of raising a dog where you live - in the city, country, or suburb The proper techniques for complete care of your pet at every stage of his or her life In this new edition, *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend* has been expanded to encompass the latest equipment (e.g., retractable leashes, "invisible" fences); new trends in training and care (doggy day care, professional dog walkers, etc.); and dozens of new anecdotes and case studies, drawn from the monks' own experience, that bring to life the essential training concepts. In its scope, its clarity, and its authority, *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend* remains unrivaled as a basic training guide for dog owners. Like no other book, this guide can help you understand and appreciate your dog's nature as well as his or her distinct personality - and in so doing, it can significantly enrich the life you share with your dog.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend" is an excellent reference book for the first time dog owner and trainer. As well as the normal chapters on how to choose, socialise, feed, groom and train a puppy, the Monks cover topics as varied as how to read a puppy's pedigree, how to massage your dog, and how your dog's living environment will impact upon his training needs. Unlike many training manuals, the Monks of New Skete strike a nice balance between "dominance" based training methods and formal training. The Monks stress the importance of earning your dog's trust and respect and the importance of being a strong pack leader for your dog; they also recognise the need for formal training, and spend several chapters explaining how this is best accomplished. Most training books are heavily biased towards one or other method, so it is nice to read a book which realises that both are ingredients in successful dog training. The training methods discussed are fairly traditional, with the Monks either luring or gently moulding the dog into shape, then praising. However they also advocate classically conditioning a positive reinforcer (keys jingling), which can then be used at strategic times to help a dog relax; and they do discuss and recommend clicker methods for "sensitive" dogs. Contrary to some reviews posted below, the Monks of New Skete do in fact advocate using plenty of positive reinforcement in their training. Confusion on this issue probably stems from the fact that the Monks do not advocate constantly using food treats while training. However, food treats are not the only positive reinforcement method available to a trainer. As the Monks point out "Food treats are an extremely effective motivator to help dogs learn..."

Our dog Cadfael, a 190-pound English Mastiff, is a great example of what the Monks' training can do for a dog and his owners. He is our first dog and Best Friend came through for us time and time again. While I read many books about dogs before Cadfael came to live with us, the Monks' book and Dogs for Dummies proved the most helpful both in practical and philosophical matters. I also recommend the Monks' book on puppies and their videos. I think one of the most important services the Monks offer to future dog owners is their attitude that the dog represents a major, major

commitment on your part, in terms of time, money and emotional involvement. If you are not willing to invest in the dog, you will shortchange the relationship on all levels. The relationship will suffer. We feel this is particularly true in the case of a dog that is expected to spend most of his time outdoors. The monks are right: if you want an animal to live outdoors in a pen, get a cow or sheep or chicken that has not been bred to be social with human beings. From the very beginning, before we brought Cadfael home as an 8-week-old, 18-pound puppy, we incorporated the lessons in this book. We followed the monks' advice as far as finding the right breed for us and the right breeder. We bought our supplies well in advance, including the enormous crate (which we used for the first year). We both took vacations so that we could be with him constantly for the first three weeks or so, to focus on housetraining and socialization. From how to keep a dog from jumping up on you (who wants a dog who's taller than you and outweighs you by 60 pounds jumping on you?

Don't let the bad reviews scare you... this book is too valuable to allow yourself to be dissuaded by politically-correct morons who take the monk's ideas out of context. Truly, every bad review I have read on completely overstate and misrepresent the monk's ideas on physical discipline. The monks do NOT advocate beating your dog. They also ONLY support physical discipline for SEVERE transgressions, such as violent behavior by the dog or serious household destruction, NOT as a way to teach your dog to sit or stay. Also, they are very specific about how to use physical discipline, which is helpful... for instance, they say you should never use an object to hit your dog, you should never hit a dog from behind or above, and in fact you shouldn't need to hit your dog unless ABSOLUTELY necessary, when other methods fail. Physical discipline is NOT a first recourse for the monks. Having said that, they also try to emphasize (in a very helpful way) that a dog is not a person! All too often, people anthropomorphize their dogs. They are DOGS! The monks understand the animal that is a dog, and try to have this understanding be as independent as possible from humanity, aside from the human-dog relationship. Therefore, dogs expect a certain degree of physical discipline that is entirely appropriate (look at how a mother disciplines her pups) which MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR HUMANS! Do not mistake dogs for people... the monks are not suggesting that you use physical discipline on your children! You may well find an effective approach that does not involve physical discipline... which is fine. According to the monks, however, this only serves to alleviate your own HUMAN feelings of guilt.

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