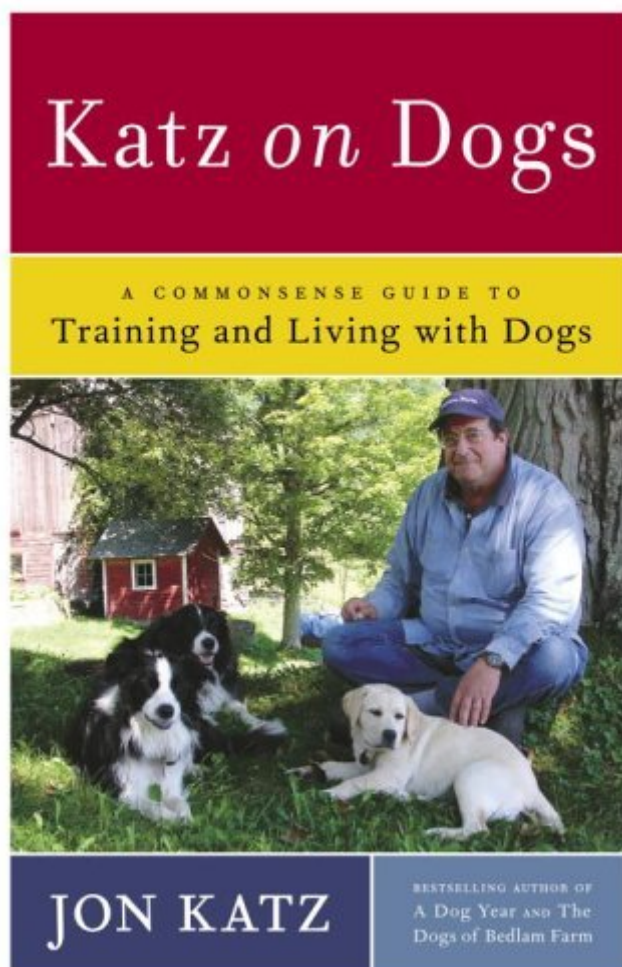


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Katz On Dogs: A Commonsense Guide To Training And Living With Dogs



Synopsis

In a nation where our love of dogs keeps growing and dog ownership has reached an all-time high, confusion about dogs and their behavioral problems is skyrocketing. Many dogs are out of control, untrained, chewing up furniture, taking medication for anxiety, and biting millions of people a year. Now, in this groundbreaking new guide, Jon Katz, a leading authority on the human-canine bond, offers a powerful and practical philosophy for living with a dog, from the moment we decide to get one to the sad day when one dies. Conventional training methods often fail dog owners, but Katz argues that we know our dogs better than anyone else possibly could, and therefore we are well suited to train them. It is imperative, he says, that we think rationally and responsibly about how we choose, train, and live with the dogs we love, and the more we learn about ourselves, the better we can recognize their wonderful animal natures. Misinterpreting dogs is a profound obstacle to understanding them. Katz believes that both people and dogs are unique—a chow differs from a Lab just as a city dweller differs from a farmer—and he describes how such individuality isn't addressed by even the best and most popular training methods. Not every training theory is for everyone, notes Katz, but almost anyone can train a dog and live with him comfortably. Katz on Dogs is filled with no-nonsense advice and answers to such key questions as: What kind of dog should I have? Is there a specific breed or kind of dog for my personality, family, or living situation? What is the best way to train a dog? Can I trust my vet? How often (and for how long) can a dog be left alone? Is it preferable to have only one dog, or are more better? What are the secrets to successful housebreaking? What are my dogs thinking, if anything? How can I walk my dog instead of having her walk me? Is it ever okay to give away a dog you love? When is it time to put my dog down? Katz draws from his own experience, his interactions with thousands of dog owners, vets, breeders, dog rescue workers, trainers, and behaviorists, and he has tested his approach with volunteer dog owners around the country. Their helpful and often inspiring stories illustrate how all of us can live well with our dogs. You can do it, Katz contends. You can live a loving and harmonious life with your dog. From the Hardcover edition.

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Training

Customer Reviews

A single guy living in the city, I adopted a retired racing greyhound a couple of months ago. I had lived with a couple of dogs before (not my own) and long wanted one for myself. This feeling intensified this year, and I got myself into a situation to bring one home. I was fortunate to bring home a dog who was already well socialized with people, large dogs, and even had some experiences with cats, and was good on a leash. As she and I adapted into life together (aided by a good guide to the breed and particular situation of retired racers), things were OK. But they weren't great. Although she was food motivated, she gets distrustful and resists situations where there are treats involved at the same time I'm trying to grab or hold her. This has made some grooming difficult, and also some basic training. She charged her food bowl, beginning to eat before it was fully set down. Initially, this either annoyed or frustrated me. And since she was good on her leash and good with people and fairly good around most animals (especially larger ones), I wondered if that was good enough. But something in my mind felt like it wasn't. Yet none of the training material I looked at really felt like it addressed our situation - our moods, upbringing, etc. I came across a column by Jon Katz online (which was taken from this book) which basically said it's dangerous to put too much of our own emotions onto our dogs - to think that they're mad at us for going to work, for example. Being reminded that my dog was just a dog, no matter how lovable or personable she can be, was the nudge that I needed. Shortly after reading that article, I saw this book at the bookstore and picked it up. This book does not provide any grand theory on dog training.

I originally became interested in this book for two reasons. First, I'd read somewhere that Katz considers two dogs to be company and three to be, no, not a crowd, but a pack. I have five Newfies at the moment so my ears perked up at the reference to pack. Secondly, I was getting pretty sick and tired of all these experts on the web telling well-intentioned dog lovers that they were bad people if they didn't train their dogs in the one true way which is . . . [fill in the blank here, there are lots of answers, most of them wrong]. Katz had me hooked half way through his introduction. His goal, he stated, was not to be all knowing, but to be useful. He offers a common sense approach which is in sharp contrast to the "tyranny [which] surrounds dog training" (p. XX). This approach leads him to address difficult questions like: why do you really want a dog, is it ever OK to give away a dog that you love, how do you face the death of a beloved pet? In the end, Katz doesn't really answer these toughies, rather he offers a framework for thinking them through in order to arrive at your own answers. His case studies are sometimes poignant, occasionally humorous, but always worth the time to read and reflect on them. In the course of 218 pages, which read quickly and easily as though they were many pages fewer, the author's messages come through. The major message: obedience is a lousy word to describe what is actually the ongoing development of a dialogue between two very different species. Katz, and I'm sure many of us, derives extraordinary pleasure from learning to communicate with this alien species. The minor message: be flexible, if one approach fails, try another one.

I was very disappointed in this book. I'd read a few things by Jon Katz, and I've owned dogs for 17 years so I'm not a novice owner or trainer by any means, but I picked up "Katz On Dogs" thinking that it would be an interesting read even if I already knew my way around the topics it covers. I wasn't prepared for the way Katz seems to belittle people who do things differently than he does. There's a tone of defensiveness in a lot of his writing in this book, and it grates. In the chapter "What to Buy, Whom to Trust" he writes about diet and veterinary care, and he cuts no slack to those of us who have opted to go beyond grocery-store kibble and the routine of annual vaccinations and unquestioning acceptance of conventional veterinary practices. I've owned Shelties for years, and in 1998 my dearest Sheltie was diagnosed with an inoperable cancer. He had a malignant tumor in his mouth. The vets told me he'd probably not make it to Christmas, which was eight weeks away. Chemotherapy and radiation weren't treatment options, so I was faced with taking my 7-year old dog home and watching him die. Instead of doing that, I enlisted the aid of an experienced herbalist. I spent hours and hours on the internet, reading everything I could find about canine cancer. I joined e-mail lists and visited internet boards. I treated my Sheltie's cancer with nutritional therapy: I gave

him a dozen different supplements and fed him a diet of raw meat and raw vegetables, which I had balanced by a nutritionist. And my dog lived for 7 ½ years with that malignant tumor. His immune system and the cancer were in a standoff, and they remained so until January 2006, when at the age of 14 years and 7 months, my Sheltie died - not of cancer, but of old age and liver failure.

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