



# Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones

*American College of Veterinary Behaviorists , Debra F. Horwitz (Editor) , John Ciribassi (Editor) , Steve Dale (Contributor)*

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More than ninety percent of dog owners consider their pets to be members of their family. But often, despite our best intentions, we are letting our dogs down by not giving them the guidance and direction they need. Unwanted behavior is the number-one reason dogs are relinquished to shelters and rescue groups.

The key to training dogs effectively is first to understand why our dogs do what they do. And no one can address this more authoritatively than the diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Behavior, whose work, the culmination of years of rigorous training, takes them deep into the minds of dogs in an effort to decode how they think, how they communicate, and how they learn.

In *Decoding Your Dog*, these experts analyze problem behaviors, decipher the latest studies, and correct common misconceptions and outmoded theories. The book includes:

- Effective, veterinary-approved positive training methods
- Expert advice on socialization, housetraining, diet, and exercise
- Remedies for behavior problems such as OCD and aggression

With *Decoding Your Dog* the experts' experts deliver a must-have dog behavior guide that ultimately challenge the way we think about our dogs.

## **Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones Details**

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## **From Reader Review Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones for online ebook**

### **Michelle says**

Decoding your Dog is a decent book as an introduction to dog training and behavior. It summarizes the main points that you will read in more detail in other books. I think the biggest draw back is the level of redundancy found throughout the chapters. This is most likely in part, due to the fact that several people are writing this book. It would have been wiser to put a disclaimer at the beginning of the book about seeing a vet first prior to behavior modification and seeking professional help if the situation is too severe. These points were repeated soooo often in each chapter that it really bogged down the material.

In general, it is a good beginner book as an intro.

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### **Suzanne says**

An insightful book that gave me many helpful hints to better understand my new pup!!

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### **Kelly says**

Decoding Your Dog is a perfect introduction for first time dog owners, but anyone who owns or works with dogs will benefit from this. All of the information is backed up by studies and I love that it is compiled by veterinary and veterinary behaviorists. I have 2 dogs that have been through all levels of training, this book reaffirms everything that I've learned.

While some of the information does seem repetitive, that is because a lot of issues overlap. This isn't the be all, end all of training books, and the authors are aware of that. They provide resources at the end that you can use to further research. This book is a great start for anyone who wants to understand dogs.

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### **Norbert Hache says**

#### **Great insights on dogs behavior**

One of my two senior dogs currently started to become aggressive towards our other senior dog. I bought this book to try to find out about what would have caused the issue. I really enjoyed the reading and I got a lot of information I needed to understand a dogs behavior

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### **Debra Brunk says**

I was looking forward to reading this book once it was published - I even ordered it early. But I was disappointed. I learned a few things, but much of the book seems to be written for folks who either don't have dogs (yet) or who have dogs and have never bothered to spend much time with them. Solutions for problem behaviors seemed to fall into two groups: 1) give the dog a food toy or spend all your time with the dog, or 2) call a veterinary behaviorist. For the former, they don't address how to deal with an (eventually) overweight dog - or one that won't do anything without being given food. I also had some issues with their message about adopting. Basically they suggest adopting a dog from a known breeder, where you can see the behavior, etc. of the parents. This makes excellent sense in a perfect world; however, there are so many dogs out there that need homes that don't fit into this category. What do we do with them? I agree that picking a dog up at a shelter and then finding out you can't deal with the dog is not a good situation - especially for the dog. But having a behaviorist essentially warn the reader away from shelter dogs didn't sit well with me. The book is also highly repetitive, which I found annoying. Some additional editing could have addressed the redundancy that occurs many times throughout the book.

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### **Sarah says**

For complete dog novice's such as my family with our first puppy this book was reassuring and made me feel my instincts had led me down the right track when it comes to training our puppy. I got this book from the library after we had our puppy for about 8 weeks so did not follow the advice on selecting a puppy. I agree with another reader that writing off rescue pups or in our case a pup from an unplanned pregnancy (farm dog) is not ideal. I am glad I didn't read that advice before getting our lovely pup. What was reassuring for me is that what I had been telling my children about how they interact with the puppy can determine the way the puppy reacts to them, rather than as many people I have spoken to seem to think a dog should never react in an 'unacceptable' way no matter what people/ children do to them.

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### **Jane Weeks says**

I enjoyed this book very much. Even though I've had various dogs through most of my life, I still found lots of information that is helping me with my 2 3/4 year old rescued coonhound. I first read about the new(ish) scientific discoveries about dog behaviour with John Bradshaw's "Dog Sense," and this book makes that information useful, with practical approaches to behaviour modification.

I recommend this book to any prospective dog adoptor or old hand at the joy of canine companionship.

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### **Alle says**

Knocked this down a star for being so intensely targeted at beginners in the dog world. I was hoping I would learn at least a little bit, but nope - all review. That being said it is an accessible and fairly quick read for those who have never had a dog before, or those whose training methods are stuck 20 years in the past.

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## **Meredith says**

For beginners only. This is really a series of essays from different vets and as a result you end up with an incohesive manual for dog owners. My favorite WTF was the essay on choosing the right dog. Basically, don't adopt an adult dog from a shelter unless you are sure it is a well behaved well adjusted dog. Um, no matter how well the shelter evaluates the dog you don't know 100% what you are getting! and so then what is to be done with adult dogs that don't fit this description? Listen, I think the idea of the vet behaviorist title for vets is a good thing but being a vet does not make you an expert in dog behavior. If the topics in this book interest you, read some Patricia McConnell who is far more knowledgeable.

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## **Brandi D'angelo says**

This is an excellent book that brings us all up to speed on the latest science of dog behavior. It challenges the old theory of humans needing to be dominant over their dog. I highly recommend it, especially if you are having any behavioral issues with your dog. The book starts out with choosing a dog, general training and then addresses specific issues such as separation anxiety, aggression, house-training, etc.

One helpful tip that everyone can use right away is how to properly greet a dog. *"The respectful way to greet a dog is no direct eye contact and no reaching out or over a dog. Instead, give the dog a chance to sniff you before engaging in direct physical contact or visual contact."* Of course, this is so contrary to how *humans* greet each other with eye contact and hugs. Kids especially like to rush up, put their faces in the dog's face and hug them. I try to teach every kid I know not to do this. It may save them in the future!

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## **Sandra says**

Even though the behaviorists at AVSAB are kind of my personal gods on canine behavior, I am still miffed with this book even after the newest edition. Most of the content is from 2014, when several things that are recommended in here had already been proven to be detrimental to canine welfare in long term studies way before then. How on earth is it still ok to recommend Citronella collars? Yes, if only given two options on earth, a shock or citronella collar, choose the citronella. Thankfully we now know that they are far from the only options, and they are among the worst an owner can use. Furthermore, when talking about chewing materials that are not artificial like puzzles or toys, the ONLY one that is talked about is rawhide. That is asinine to me. What about bully sticks? Again, in 2014 it was widely known what horrible effects rawhide has on the canine intestinal tract and overall health. Additionally, I always get a little upset when I notice that quite clearly, a company has paid some of the recommendations, in this case Purina. There are many, many higher quality foods available, prescription or over the counter, than Purina. I found that a little unsettling. To continue, this book is for dog owners and not people like myself whose profession is in this field. I cannot say I would wholeheartedly recommend this book as the definitions, for instants of the four learning quadrant, sound convoluted and not clear cut. If I were an owner, I'd be confused.

I also am having issues with the fact that while the AVSAB position statement on punishment is much clearer, this book doesn't go far enough in denouncing aversive methods. Again, this is for owners, and some of them may be on the fence. If I read 'should never use' I would say 'oh, ok, that sounds bad, I will stay away from that. If I read 'we do not recommend' as a reader, that gives me some leeway.'

The highlights for me included interaction with kids and senior dogs with cognitive disorders.

Good information in all, but the message is not always strong enough.

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### **Cyndie says**

This book was all I hoped for and more.

As a veterinarian, finding training books to recommend to clients is very frustrating. Some training advice is downright dangerous (see Cesar Milan) and many books have enough significant inaccuracies to prevent me from endorsing them (an unseemly number of training books make unnecessary and potentially dangerous feeding recommendations.)

This book echoes all the current science and focuses on safe, positive reinforcement techniques, appropriately emphasizing when owners should see a vet because a medical condition might be causing their dog's behavioral problem.

It is a relief to have a comprehensive book that discusses all the major training and behavioral concerns I address in practice on a regular basis in such an approachable way. The book makes excellent use of interesting stories, down to earth explanations, and good science.

As a pet owner it's hard to know which trainers to believe - especially when dangerous dominance based training methods are still being touted on TV.

This is the book you can trust. It was well done by the experts of the experts - the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists.

Fellow vets - recommend this book to this clients but also make sure to read it yourselves too! I do a lot of reading in behavior and there was still quite a bit of practical advice I picked up from this book.

Definitely a must read for anyone who has or works with dogs.

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### **Me says**

Good tips and advice for those who have just adopted, brought an older dog into the family, have a new puppy and/or are experiencing behavioral problems. In short, something for any dog owner! I especially liked the chapter on separation anxiety.

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### **Lectus says**

Wow! This book comes with an 'Acknowledgments,' a 'Foreword,' a 'Preface,' and an 'Introduction.' After all that, you get 315 pages of nothing you cannot find online, a 'Conclusion,' an 'about the editors,' 'about the authors'.... Seriously, these people could not stop writing!!!

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**Keely says**

I really felt like I got a lot out of this book being a first time dog owner. I have had family pets as a kid, but never was the primary care giver until now. I really enjoyed learning about dog behavior and have been applying a lot of the training techniques with great success. I recommend this to anyone who truly wants to understand their dogs behavior and even learn a trick or two in creating a well balanced and happy relationship with their pet. :-)

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