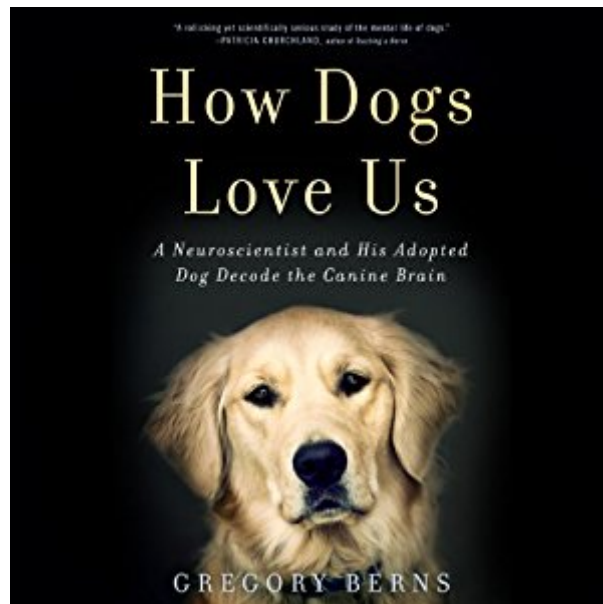# How Dogs Love Us: A Neuroscientist And His Adopted Dog Decode The Canine Brain

Synopsis

The powerful bond between humans and dogs is one that's uniquely cherished. Loyal, obedient, and affectionate, they are truly "man's best friend." But do dogs love us the way we love them? Emory University neuroscientist Gregory Berns had spent decades using MRI imaging technology to study how the human brain works, but a different question still nagged at him: What is my dog thinking? After his family adopted Callie, a shy, skinny terrier mix, Berns decided that there was only one way to answer that question - use an MRI machine to scan the dog's brain. His colleagues dismissed the idea. Everyone knew that dogs needed to be restrained or sedated for MRI scans. But if the military could train dogs to operate calmly in some of the most challenging environments, surely there must be a way to train dogs to sit in an MRI scanner. With this radical conviction, Berns and his dog would embark on a remarkable journey and be the first to glimpse the inner workings of the canine brain. Painstakingly, the two worked together to overcome the many technical, legal, and behavioral hurdles. Berns's research offers surprising results on how dogs empathize with human emotions, how they love us, and why dogs and humans share one of the most remarkable friendships in the animal kingdom. How Dogs Love Us answers the age-old question of dog lovers everywhere and offers profound new evidence that dogs should be treated as we would treat our best human friends: with love, respect, and appreciation for their social and emotional intelligence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most products are relatively easy to rate on the 5-star scale. This was not one of those cases.

Rating this book was a tough decision.Why? Well, first, because I am a huge dog lover. My dog and I have a very close bond and my friends often comment on how well my dog and I communicate. So of course I was interested in a book promising to "decode the canine brain" and tell me "How Dogs Love Us."Despite the heavily scientific content, the book was very readable and well written. There were very few days when I didn't want to pick it up and continue reading it. A book that readable would usually get at least 4 stars from me; so why am I giving this one 3? Largely for these reasons:1. I felt that the book did not deliver on its title, and did not deliver fully on it's subtitle or elements of its description, including why the "pack leader" theory favored by Cesar Millan (The Dog Whisperer) is the wrong theory to use with dogs.2. I was frustrated with how much of the book was taken up with the process of training the author's dog, Callie (an adopted terrier mix) and a volunteer's dog, MacKenzie (a purebred Border Collie), to get used to being enclosed in the MRI, enduring the loud noise of the machine and holding still enough to get good brain scans. Yes, I get it--I know these are not things natural to dogs so it will require persistent training. But, in my opinion, way too much time was spent describing every step of this process.3. The author mentions briefly that, after the initial success of the Dog Project using Callie and McKenzie, he and his team expanded the Project to include multiple other volunteer dogs to see if the results they got from Callie and McKenzie's fMRIs were characteristic of other dogs/breeds.

This book is really in depth scientifically speaking but also delves into the heart and real understanding between man and dogs. It is concise and well written but it is NOT a story tale, all fluffy and huggy but real science . A story about how a man wanted to actually know if there was a way to see brain responses for what a dog feels for the humans they live and associate with. It had never been done before , in fact the idea of a dog staying in a working MRI was not thought possible, at least while he was awake. . Think of the huge sounds an MRI makes, then add a dogs incredible hearing plus the fact that in order to do a brain scan, the dog would have to hold its head PERFECTLY still for many seconds. Thats perfectly. Not even a quiver. Let alone the cost of using an MRI for the project and just think of the nay-sayers. "Why" they would ask. Well Dr. Gregory Berns thought that humans and dogs were so "tight" and had been so for eons, learning this would help both species. This is that story. I found it at times almost too much in depth but it was so well laid out and often translated in a student commonality that I would finally "get it". Just the fact that there was so much time involved JUST to be able to get the dogs (there were two) to enter and lay quietly in a MRI was a challenge for the ages! The fact that Dr. Berns not only accomplished this and a lot more, shows the depth of his belief that it was an important thing to understand. There

were tantalizing glimpses into possibilities of understanding even more of a dogs thought process. Not only did Gregory Burns learn some really wild science, he learned also how canine/human bonding happened and his understanding of that relationship would enrich his life not only with dogs, but his surroundings.

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