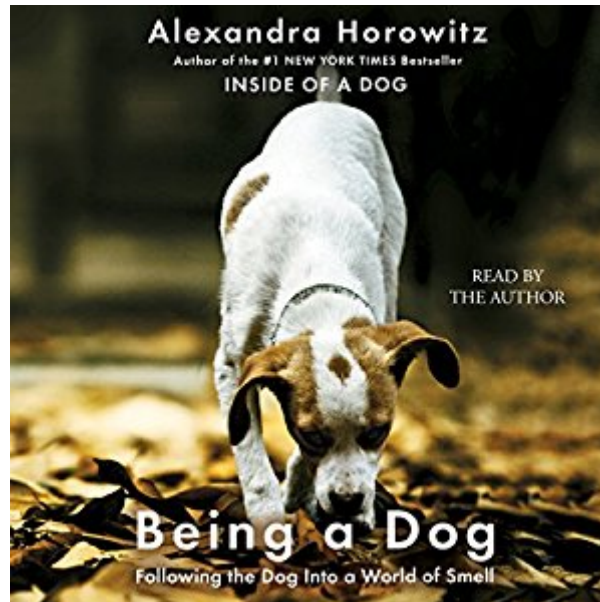


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Being A Dog



Synopsis

Alexandra Horowitz, the author of the lively, highly informative New York Times best-selling blockbuster *Inside of a Dog*, explains how dogs perceive the world through their most spectacular organ - the nose - and how we humans can put our underused sense of smell to work in surprising ways. What the dog sees and knows comes mostly through his nose, and the information that every dog takes in about the world just based on smell is unthinkably rich. To a dog there is no such thing as "fresh air". Every gulp of air is full of information. In *Being a Dog*, Alexandra Horowitz, an eminent research scientist in the field of dog cognition, explores what the nose knows by taking an imaginative leap into what it is like to be a dog. Inspired by her own family dogs, Finnegan and Upton, Horowitz sets off on a quest to make sense of scents. In addition to speaking to experts across the country, Horowitz visits the California Narcotic Canine Association Training Institute and the Stapleton Group's Vapor Wake explosives dog training team; she meets vets and researchers working with dogs to detect cancerous cells and anticipate epileptic seizures or diabetic shock; and she travels with Finnegan to the West Coast, where he learns how to find truffles. Horowitz even attempts to smell-train her own nose. *Being a Dog* is a scientifically rigorous book that presents cutting-edge research with literary flair. Revealing such surprising facts as panting dogs cannot smell to explaining how dogs tell time by detecting lingering smells, Horowitz covers the topic of noses - both canine and human - from curious and always fascinating angles. As we come to understand how rich, complex, and exciting the world around us appears to a dog's sense of smell, we can begin to better appreciate it through our own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an outstanding book--for the right reader. It may not be what some readers expect in that much of the book is Horowitz exploring the human sense of smell as a way to better understand a sensory world dominated by smell rather than sight. When you finish you will better understand that kind of world, understand the human sense of smell much better and your dog's sense of smell considerably better. Her writing is excellent. The book reads a little like science journalism and has a lot of first-person content as well as that person's two dogs. It's written with a light touch and some humor; you'll like her dogs by the end of the book, for sure. The major theme is that the world of smell is mostly overlooked by humans and that dog owners aren't very interested in their dogs' sense of smell. So pet dogs don't develop their full potential--and at the end Horowitz takes one of her dogs to what can be called smell training, and it's wonderful to read. The book makes it plain that smells are all around us all the time. A dog can smell the past from lingering smells, and smell the future in the sense of approaching storms. It's a vastly complex world mostly ignored by humans--one reason is that smells tend to concentrate close to the ground, so the dog's nose is a lot closer to the action, so to speak. As you read, Horowitz will take you on her field trips, which are fascinating. One is her field expedition (with a class) to smell city smells, in New York City. The intent was not to smell the city but become better at experiencing the city through smell as well as other senses. She describes at length, in a highly readable chapter, her visits to the Working Dog Center, which trains working scent dogs, who might become finders of the dead, tracking drugs, smell out insects, even cancer. Other sections of the book describe her expeditions with a couple of people training dogs to sniff truffles (in the Pacific Northwest), including a dog bred to smell out truffles, the Italian breed Lagotto Romagnolo. Another section is amazing--researchers into ecology rely on scats for a lot of information; the scat can be examined to determine diet, aspects of health, genetics can identify a particular individual and much more. Dogs can be trained to find specific scats for analysis, making wildlife population studies much easier and more accurate--and one dog can be trained on up to 20 species. One dog has been trained (encouraged might be a better word, the skill is inherent in most dogs) to detect killer whale poop at sea, which sinks in 30 minutes--and the dog has made aspects of orca study much easier. Another section of the book describes her exploring the world of professional human scent professionals--perfumiers and wine tasters. A human nose can be trained (though there are people who can smell little). And a trained human nose can better understand a dog's world. Still another examines human and other scents: we

humans give off a variety of scents and each person's is unique. We give off odors from what we eat, from illnesses such as periodontal disease, from what we wear, and how we feel. Her point is that the chemistry of smell is complex but still chemistry and so is the human body. The book is full of intriguing information. Dogs have 200 million to a billion nasal receptor cells, far more than humans--and they may dream in smells as we do in vision. A dog's tail wagging spreads odors, because there are some scent glands in the dog's rear area. About a dozen muscles are dedicated to moving the human nose around. The book explains quite well how taste and smell are related and how taste is connected to the brain (too complicated for a short review, but explained very well in the book).

I very much enjoyed her first book, being a dog lover and dog socializer for seeing eye lab pups and autism golden pups. I always want to better understand these amazing animals and their capabilities. However, in truth, I was somewhat disappointed in this second series book. It had some very interesting parts, but when it veered off into too many tangents about NON DOG related aspects of smell with humans, in medicine, in history, so in and so on I frankly got a little bored and wish it stay on topic, DOGS!

Horowitz has it right. I am a dog trainer and in her 2 books she has given me new insight into the dog world. She is a good writer, the books are well written and the information is priceless.

This was supposed to have been a gently used book. It was certainly handled with great care. I have found the information in this book very insightful and helpful. This is very beneficial to anyone who does tracking or nosework with their dog. Alexandria explains how the K9 nose works. I certainly recommend this book to those in the scent detection sports.

Enjoyable read for people who wonder what their dog experiences. Addresses what makes a dog do doglike things. Lot of fun with many, many interesting facts and insights. Best read after reading her first book "Mind of a Dog".

Book title more than a little misleading as it talks a great deal about human smelling. Does not compare favorably with Ms. Horowitz 1st book "The Inside of a dog"

Just started reading it. Absolutely fascinating. The analogies make her examples easy

to understand. I am rapidly gaining a new found respect for our canine companions.

A great book to understand your best buddy.

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