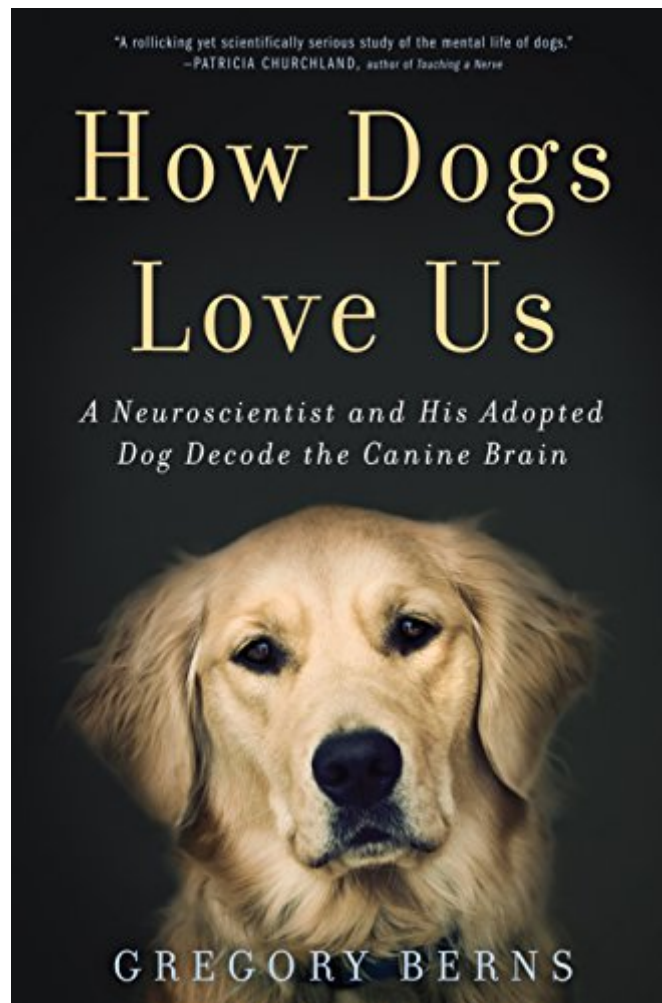




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# How Dogs Love Us: A Neuroscientist And His Adopted Dog Decode The Canine Brain



## Synopsis

The powerful bond between humans and dogs is one that's uniquely cherished. Loyal, obedient, and affectionate, they are truly our 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

At the age of 55 I began my first ever love affair with Jackson. He was a 12 week old Golden puppy and he took my heart completely into his keeping the day he rode home on my lap from the breeder. We had a good life and at the age of 12 1/2 he left for the Rainbow Bridge. That final day, in the comfort room at the vet, I sat in the floor, face to face with him looking into his eyes as he looked into mine. There I saw reflected tenderness, a little bit of fear and resignation but still the unbridled bond/love we shared. I loved him even more in that moment than I ever had, and he knew it. He laid down, head in my lap and closed his eyes and went peacefully on his way. It's been three months since that day and I have prayed every day that he truly knew how much he meant to me. Gregory Berns' recount of the Dog Project has given me great insight into the whole love affair I had with Jackson, and has assured me that all those moments of eye contact and caressing were truly reciprocal. The work is a great discussion of how it 'happens' with humans and their pets, especially dogs. There were times during the reading that I wanted less discussion of the science of fMRI and wanted to get to the real answer of my question, "Did Jackson love me?" In the end, however, even though it is a lengthy discussion of how the whole MRI process works and how it is applied scientifically, it was an 'easy to read and consider' recap, and it made perfect sense why the discussion was necessary. If you love a dog, read this book and find out how to glean even more of the euphoria you experience when the love from him or her begins to show. You are not crazy. You are not imagining it. You can make it even bigger and better if you understand "why." I thought never to have another dog. How could I surpass this past perfection? Now, I'm not so sure. What if I could do it again and make it better? I wept again in my grief. Now I rejoice in the respect and love that Berns and his family share with their pets and appreciate all the efforts, care and concern the team displayed in the whole project process. Thanks for telling me.

I read this book but I knew the answer to the above question for years. I have no doubt that they do. I also have first hand knowledge of service dogs as I have one. Most people see my dog & doubt his capabilities. Why, you ask? Because he is a 3 1/2 pd poodle. My medical condition is such that I have attacks similar to seizures. Given enough notification I can ward off my attacks with an

anti-seizure medication. I originally got my dog as a pet but when he was 5mos old he started telling me before had when I was going to have an attack. It took me a couple of months to realize a correlation between what he would & what happen to me within 30 min or so. From what I understand it is difficult to train a dog to recognize these type of symptoms because the attacks are as a result of a chemical imbalance that is different with each individual. My dog is a poodle which some people think are "yippy" dogs. My little boy is the exact opposite of that. He almost never barks but when he does I pay attention. He will start with a small yippy and get more insistent until I show him my medicine bottle and tell him I took my meds. I've had animals all my life and never doubted the connection between us but my little dog takes it to a higher dimension. And like Callie in this story he seems happier when he's on duty. He takes his job seriously and never lets me out of his sight for more than a few minutes. This book proves what most dog owners have said for a long time. It is a fantastic book to read without too much technological jargon but it has enough, after all this was a scientific experiment. I would highly recommend this book to all. The information it contains is very informative and well written. Try it, you won't be sorry especially if you are a dog person.

FABULOUS book. Gregory Berns got the crazy idea of training his dog to lie still in an MRI machine in the hope it would provide some insight into dogs' thinking. What he found brings scientific proof to something every dog person knows --- that dogs read us, anticipate our behavior, and act on that knowledge. Dogs, in short, have theory of mind. Berns rightly argues that this scientific evidence must change the way we think of and treat dogs. His book is filled with fairly complex scientific concepts but it is written beautifully and clearly. It is very easy to understand and, like a good adventure novel, pulls readers along with foreshadowing and suspense. I disagree with the reviewer who said the book is written "backwards." I really wanted to know how the idea developed, how the training was done, all the background stuff in the early chapters. I love that Berns is not an especially savvy dog person, at least at the beginning of the Dog Project, as he calls it. That makes it all the more sweet when he recognizes how hard dogs try to communicate with and understand humans. I have enormous respect for Berns and his team's commitment to ensuring that the dogs were willing, even eager, participants in every step. I especially enjoyed the long discussion of the ethical issues he faced in setting up the research and the insistence of all the human researchers that the dogs would always be free to opt out, at any time. This book is a testament to what amazing things can be accomplished when humans acknowledge their dogs' abilities, treat them as partners (rather than as property or as slaves) and engage with them in a respectful, positive manner. This should be

required reading for ALL dog lovers. It will be required reading for all of my students at Bergin U, the only place to study the dog-human relationship at the college level.

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