Buried Treasures:

Discovering wisdom from observing your dog

A journal by DogandDojo.com

Hello fellow dog-lover,

Thank you for visiting us at Dog and Dojo! I'm glad you share my love for canine companions and can at least sense the deeper, spiritual connections we share with these animals, if not fully articulate it. Yet. My hope is this booklet helps you see more clearly how your dog can guide you to more wisdom, confidence, and inspiration with less emotional reactivity and mindless chatter. In other words ...

more balance, less bark.

I know that sounds like a tall order. Especially if your dog currently door dashes, jumps all over your guests, eats off the counter, and bounces around you on walks. But believe me, your dog is up to the challenge. Are you?

What's in this journal?

You'll find questions and prompts about your dog and your emotional reactions to various situations. There are also little mindfulness insights sprinkled throughout. Finally, I've included blank spaces for you to glue in pictures of your dog or to draw him to make it more personal. Please help yourself to printing this off as many times as you like and do one for each animal in your family. You'll see how each animal's contributions to your spiritual growth are as unique as they are.

How to get the most out of it

While the idea of learning from your dog (I hope) sounds exciting, please take your time. The key to getting the most out of this journal, and your pup, is to slow down and breathe. We all excel at thinking with our minds, but the gold is in the sensations within the body. That's where you'll find your answers. When you think you've written everything you can think of, dive into those sensations. It isn't easy, but the prompts build up to it, so you'll have plenty of practice.

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A bit of inspiration

Need some sense of direction as you take off on this journey? Well, your answers will be as unique as your DNA. But to give you an idea of what's possible, here are a few links to posts on Dog and Dojo highlighting major ah-ha moments thanks to my dogs, Rico, Whiskey, and, Roxy (may she rest in peace).

Learning to live in the present moment

Bullying signifies weakness

The real power of intention

How to manage difficult people

Accepting what I cannot change

And a few posts with practical information about how to practice meditating with your dogs ...

Walking meditation

Focusing under pressure

Eight ordinary moments for meditation

Learning to come when called

If you want to share insights gained from your pets, I'd love to hear from you! Please email me at doganddojo@gmail.com if you'd like to submit a story to DogandDojo.com.

It's your turn ... have fun!

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Describe your dog's physical characteristics, like coat color and texture; how he carries his ears, head, and tail; how he moves; his facial expressions; the sounds he makes and when he makes them, etc.

Part One:
Re-acquainting with your dog

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Now describe your dog's personality. Think about how he listens (does he make eye contact, tilt his head, or seem indifferent); how he greets others (dog, human, and others); how he behaves indoors versus outdoors, in crowds, and alone with you, etc.

Give a dog a bone.
Better yet, give him
five minutes of
undivided attention
and petting each day.
You'll both benefit.

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If your dog were a person, who would he be? A concert pianist? A drill sergeant? A kindergarten student? Describe your dog as that character.

Now describe your dog in three ways using words you wouldn't ordinarily pick. For example, instead of "perky, pointy ears," try "ears like two pitched roofs."

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Part Two:
Memory Lane

My dog's favorite places to go with me are ...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

And I know they're his favorite because ...

_____

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A time when my dog made me laugh was ...

Our emotional reactions highlight places we can use a little healing...

But I felt mad when ...

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My dog really surprised me when he ...

I was surprised by my own reaction when my dog ...

...and the best part is dogs don't get offended while we work on our sensitivities.

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Part Three: Digging up dirt

If I could get my dog to understand one thing, it would be ...

If he could get me to understand one thing, I bet it would be …

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If I could magically change one behavior in my dog, it would be ___ because it makes me feel like ___ . I feel that way because ...

Many do not know that we are here in this world to live in harmony. — Buddha

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Activities I know would be healthy for both of us, but I don't have time are ...

Ways I can adjust my daily schedule to fit in more healthy activities

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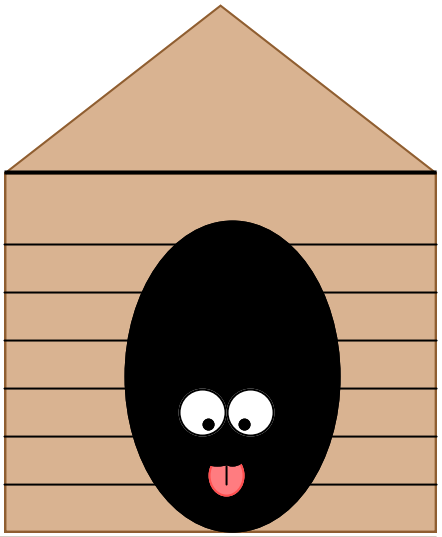
Practical reasons why I haven't already made those healthy changes

Describe some of the fears that make those reasons sound practical



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A time when I had to be brave for my dog was when ...

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So here are the things I can do to address my current fears ...

Courage is the price that life extracts for gaining peace. — Amelia Earhart

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Now read through everything you've written and highlight words and phrases that jump out at you. In these last pages, reflect on why you have such a strong reaction to them. Write whatever comes to mind.

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