

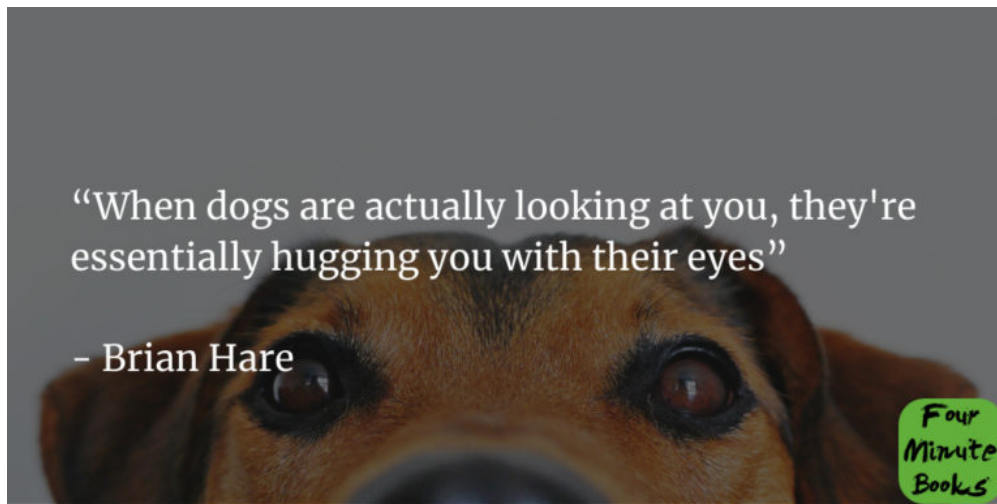
The Genius of Dogs Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Genius of Dogs* explores the curious mind of man's best friend in relation to human intelligence, as dogs and humans are connected and have many similarities that make the relationship between them so strong and unique.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Growing up we always heard that a dog is a man's best friend. Humans have always had a special connection with them. Nowadays, there are over 63 million households that own at least one dog in the United States alone! So what makes them so special to us?

Dogs have a remarkable ability to learn. We can train them to do tricks, ask for things or help people. They are clever animals, due to the fact that they managed to survive and reproduce over time. In comparison to other mammals, they are far from being endangered species or going extinct.

Like us, dogs have the ability to gather information from their surroundings. They also sense the fondness we feel for them. As a matter of fact, history proves that their ancestors, wolves, were the ones that started to bond with humans and came to live in their settlements.

They were coming for food and would stay with humans, even though sometimes they were chased off. Within a few generations, domesticated and savage wolves were already fundamentally different, as the ones who grew alongside humans became proto-dogs and preferred not to be with the pack anymore.

Essentially, dogs domesticated themselves and chose humans above all other animals. That is why *The Genius of Dogs* focuses on the relationship we have with them and their interesting behavior.

Here are my three favorite lessons from the book:

1. Like infants, dogs watch us and learn from us.
2. Humans and dogs can understand each other very well, up to a certain point.
3. Training a dog implies cognitive encounters.

Lesson 1: Dogs are similar to babies, as they watch and learn from humans

Similar to infants, dogs develop over time skills to survive and learn from humans when watching them. However, they learn much more rapidly than babies. Another similarity between the two is that dogs also learn how to observe their surroundings and have reactions.

An interesting fact about dogs is that they can understand human gestures without being trained to do so. Of course, if you want your pet to learn tricks and understand orders, you're going to have to put in some hours or hire a skilled individual to do so.

Just like your toddler, your four-legged pet can make the same errors. For example, if you hide an item behind a piece of furniture, and then move that object, in full view, into another hiding spot, they both would still search for it in its original hiding place.

Dogs managed to survive and develop alongside humans for a reason. **They've learned social skills, tolerance and to be approachable.** They're friendly and helpful. Unlike other species, these qualities helped them survive and become the most popular pets worldwide.

Maybe we can learn a thing or two from them as well. Being kind takes you places!

Lesson 2: Although dogs seem to understand us, there are some limitations to our common language

We love the idea of talking to our pets. Children are often trying to encourage their animal friends to speak up. So, we started talking to them and they started answering in their own ways. However, they don't actually understand words, but symbols.

For example, they can hear a specific word, like '*frisbee*' and recognize the respective object, if trained multiple times. They can even recognize objects from pictures. Moreover, dogs even learned how to trick us! For example, they can steal a piece of food without our knowledge and eat it secretly, knowing we wouldn't allow it.

However, there are certain limits to a dog's ability to understand things. They can't seem to perceive obstacles on their way, or basic notions of physics, such as the height or weight of an object as they're trying to pass through spots they don't fit in.

Nevertheless, dogs are social animals, and they stick with their owners under any conditions. This is how they keep on learning more and more from humans, and develop more intelligent traits, like identifying items and learning how to solve simple problems.

Lesson 3: Cognitive encounters are the guide for proper dog training

Behaviorism is a concept that explores how all behaviors are learned by conditioning and interactions with the environment. Behaviorists insist that integrating the '*right*' behavior is what matters in the education process, even if they're using some controversial methods.

Through this concept, learning happens when the subject is deprived of certain things and rewarded if they behave. Though criticized and considered unethical, this approach is effective in both animals and humans, after researchers conducted studies on rats and then on humans who wanted to quit smoking.

However, dogs are quite special animals, and behaviorism did not prove to be efficient on all breeds. After all, they're all different, just like us. Therefore, the focus switched on cognitive processes, such as acquiring information, storing, and comparing it. They developed these abilities at a minimal level because we domesticated them.

Some dogs seem to understand better using this approach instead. After all, their intelligence lies within their ability to understand us and communicate by responding to our gestures and key words. Many programs developed using this approach and having an '*alpha*' to direct them so that they learn from a principal character, similar to a wolf pack.

The Genius of Dogs Review

The book The Genius of Dogs offers a complex perspective on dogs, from their origins to their cognitive particularities. The reader will gain unique insights on the canine species and how dogs naturally communicate with humans. The aspects covered will surprise the reader while also giving him a new perspective on the four-legged animal.

Who would I recommend The Genius of Dogs summary to?

The person curious about the particularities of a dog's mind, the homeowner looking to adopt a pet, the veterinarian looking to learn more about the canine species, or the dog lover who's curious to find out more about his favorite pet.

