

# **The Easiest Dogs to train, companion dogs, service dogs, and how to chose a good rescue dog**

## **By Rhonda Morrison**

Everyone has their favorite kind of dog, and chances are, it is your dog and you are in love with the dog and the breed itself. I love Cocker Spaniels; I have had two, both rescues, and both have been the best dogs in the world: easily trainable, eager to please, fun, and totally loving. With the wonderful Cocker I have now, Angel, I can sense his moods like a second skin; I know when he is feeling frustrated when he can't go for his walk, staring disconsolately outside at rain, snow or high wind, anything that would deter him from getting some much needed exercise. But he always accepts bad weather with cheerfulness and either naps on his big fluffy dog bed or becomes involved with his favorite stuffed bone or one of his favorite squeaky squirrels. It is my opinion, even after one negative rescue attempt, that all dogs are generally lovable and want to please. In addition, most dogs are trainable with the right trainer and a firm, consistent hand. The dogs with the highest intelligence are usually also the easiest to train, but that is not always the case. Dogs with fair marks in intelligence also love to play catch and will do tricks to please you. Besides high intelligence, work dogs, who have a job to do like herding cattle or sheep are also easier to train. Companionship dogs often require more work, but many are easy to train and those breeds will be outlined here. Note that the easiest dogs to train to do tricks and fetch are not always the easiest dogs to housebreak, and those difference will be broken down in the chapters that follow.

### **Different Breeds of dogs**

Dogs are usually categorized into the following groups. They include: guard dogs, hunting dogs, working dogs, herding dogs, sporting dogs, and companion dogs. Many dogs fall into two categories. The Cocker Spaniel is a sporting dog and can smell out and retrieve its prey if properly trained, but most commonly serves as a companion dog. The same is true of a Golden Retriever. The collie breeds and sheepdogs were bred to be herding dogs, but less and less herding is done these days and the Border Collie and The Old English Sheep dog are often chosen as companion dogs instead. Likewise, the Pembroke Welsh Corgi is an excellent guard dog and a herding dog, but is also a good family and companion dog. Another way to categorize dogs is the following: Scent Hounds, Sight Hounds, Pointers and Setters, and Toy breeds. Cross categorization is often common in these groups as well. A Beagle is scent hound and is used as a service dog for detecting illegal drugs and contraband; however, the Beagle is a very popular family pet. There are 186 AKC recognized breeds from the Affenspinscher to the Yorkshire Terrier, and 53 other breeds in the miscellaneous and Foundation Stock service breeds. According to the AKC, the five most popular breeds of dog are Golden Retrievers, German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, Yorkshire Terriers and Beagles followed by Poodles, Boxers, Dachshunds, Shih Tzu and Bulldogs. Quite simply, there are too many dogs to list! The king of dogs in all categories is the Labrador Retriever, followed closely by the Golden Retriever and the German Shepherd. These three dogs

excel in serving as family dogs, therapy dogs, and service dogs. All three dogs are easy to train, and very intelligent.

## Miniature Dogs

The first group of easily trained dogs are the miniature and small group. Keep in mind that every dog, like every person, has a personality and that personality traits could include stubbornness and a tendency for the dog to want his way. These small breeds have shown superior results in training endeavors:

1. Miniature Poodle: Playful and cheerful, loves to play; if he gets plenty of exercise, he loves to snuggle close to you.
2. Toy Poodle: Boundless energy, will be a good housedog if he gets a healthy amount of exercise, loves to play catch and swim, is loyal and easy to train.
3. Phaline: Super obedient, full of vim and vigor, likes to play outside and in the house, very loving and affectionate, easy to train (the easiest of the toy breeds).
4. The Miniature Schnauzer: Very friendly with children who are gentle with him, loves to please and obey, easily trainable, loves walks, is high energy and can get into trouble in the house if not played with.
5. Pembroke Welsh Corgi: Excellent guard dog, and good with considerate children, very obedient, needs plenty of exercise, barks when threatened and can bark too much if not trained to stop.
6. Schipperke: Very playful and loyal, loves to play and is easily trained, has lots of energy and can't be left off a leash (except in a fenced in area), is great at guarding the house, is stubborn if a firm hand is not used, has a distinctive bark that warns intruders way.
7. Bolognese: Super loyal, will follow you everywhere, very obedient, barks at intruders.
8. Yorkshire Terrier (Yorkie): Large personality in a tiny package, high energy, travels well, trains easily, is super friendly to the family.
9. Miniature pinscher (Min Pin): Easily trained, playful, is not afraid of anything, inquisitive.
10. The Cairn Terrier: Dorothy's dog in "The Wizard of Oz," playful, has bold terrier traits, but can be easily trained.
11. Border Terrier: Brave: Easily trained, assertive, likes to dig holes.
12. Silky Terrier: Fun, curious, follows you around, wants to please, good watchdog.
13. Norwich terrier: Loves attention, loves toys and balls, easily trainable,
14. Toy Fox terrier: Loyal and loves to spend time with the family, fun, playful, good for hearing impaired people, guards the house, wants to please you, trains quickly.
15. Toy American Eskimo: Has a desire to please, is loyal to his owners, easy to train, very quick learner,
16. Volpino: Energetic, easily trained, fun, loves to play outside and inside, good guard dog.
17. The Mittel German Spitz: Full of energy, easy to train, barks too much and has to be trained to stop.

18. Mexican Hairless Toy: Very compassionate, follows you from room to room, clingy, easy to train but training must be all centered on positive reinforcement.
19. Japanese Spitz: Loyal and loving, cheerful companion, easy to train, good with young children, patient.
20. Swedish Valhund: Easy to train, playful, very focused on his masters, very loyal, loves to play fetch and all sorts of other games.
21. Lowchen: Happy, cheerful, playful, easy to train.
22. Affenpinscher: Eager to learn, easy to train, playful, a good companion, kisses and hugs, is hard to housetrain in the first few months, not always friendly towards other dogs.
23. Coton De Tulear: Affectionate, friendly, easy to train.
24. Havanese: Easy to train, gentle and quiet, wants to stay close to their masters, great guard dogs, affectionate.
25. Alopekis: Eager, great personality, easy to train.
26. Cocker Spaniel: Friendly dogs, very affectionate, easy to train, very smart.

## Medium Sized Dogs

These medium breed dogs are the easiest to train:

1. Bearded Collie: Full of energy, very intelligent, easily trained,
2. Australian cattle dog: Friendly to family, loyal, easily trainable,
3. Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog: Super smart, loyal to his owners, easily trained.
4. Welsh Springer Spaniel: A favorite among hunters, smart, easily trained, needs exercise every day.
5. Shetland Sheepdog (Sheltie): Calm, loyal, easily trained, very smart, thrives in a farm environment.
6. American Eskimo: Noble, good guard dog, smart, can be shy,
7. Border Collie: Very energetic, needs exercise and prefers having a job to do, easy to train “but” gets bored easily, not always a good house pet because he requires a lot of physical and mental stimulation.
8. American Water Spaniel: Has lots of energy, needs exercise, very trainable.
9. Belgian Shepherd Tervuren: A strong dog, good personality, full of life and is very agile, easy to train.
10. German Wirehaired Pointer: Is a great hunter, very smart, easy to train, likes a job to do, very active.
11. Belgian Shepherd Laekenois: A good hunting dog and natural sheep herder, easy to train, wants to please.
12. Belgian Shepherd Malinois: Can handle inclement weather, great hunting dog, very trainable.
13. French Brittany: Friendly, adapts easily to indoor and outdoor activities, easy to train.
14. Field Spaniel: Noble, A good guard dog, emotional, loyal to family, easy to train.

15. Australian Shepherd: Great personality, has a lot of energy, needs exercise, an excellent guard dog, a great family dog.
16. Rough Collie: Eager to please, very smart, loyal to owners, good guard dog.
17. Standard Schnauzer: Great personality, easily trained, loyal to owners and handlers, likes to play.
18. Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever: Good personality, very loving and affectionate, very smart and alert, easily trained.
19. Weimaraner: Lots of energy, can be stubborn, very smart, relatively easy to train.
20. Xoloitzcuintli: These delightful companions come in toy, miniature, and standard size. His name is said “show-low-eats-queent-lee” or “show-low.” He is quiet, easy to train and house train, said to emit warmth from his skin, good for people with arthritis.

## Large dogs

Large dogs who are easy to train:

1. Labrador retriever: The king of dogs, super obedient, super friendly, easy to train, can function as a service dog or an emotional therapy dog, very loyal to family and friendly to strangers.
2. Golden Retriever: The champion of dogs, great as pets, great as service dogs, easy to train, love to play catch, have a “soft mouth” in playing with toys and bringing back prey in that they don’t tear items or animals apart, great personality, friendly to all.
3. Bouvier des Flanders: Herding dog, loves to have a job to do, easily trained.
4. Greater Swiss Mountain Dog: Protective and affectionate, easily trained.
5. Doberman Pinscher: Named for a German tax collector, Louis Doberman who wanted an official and no nonsense dog to take on his rounds. Noble with excellent bearing, great protector, trains easily.
6. Beauceron: Herding dogs (grazing cattle and sheep etc.), good field guard dogs and excellent home guard dog. In the two World Wars, the Beauceron was used by the military to convey information, transport supplies of goods, mine detection, and to help the wounded. Today they work with the military and police for various missions. Easily trained and highly sought after.
7. Curly-Coated Retriever: Great bird hunter; this dog has a great personality, likes to be active, loves to play, is easy to train.
8. German Shorthaired Pointer: Great personality, very smart, very trainable, full of energy, patient.
9. Groenendael: Smart and loyal dog, good guard dog, friendly, easy to train.
10. Large Munsterlander: Easy to train, full of life, affectionate and loyal towards masters.
11. Dalmatian: Official Fire Dog. Active, lively, very friendly, loves to play, has lots of energy, relatively easy to train.
12. Flat-Coated Retriever: Lively personality, loyal to owner, eager to please, easily trainable, likes to play, friendly.
13. Gordon Setter: Loyal, Happy and active, eager to please, easy to train, good guard dog.

14. Chesapeake Bay Retriever: good personality, stays close to owner, wants to please, very smart, great guard dog.

## Housebreaking

As stated before, all dogs can be trained, but some breeds present more of a challenge. This is especially true of house breaking a dog, whether it is a puppy, an adult dog, or a new rescue who just needs to learn the rules again. The easiest dogs to housebreak and the hardest are as follows:

Easiest Dogs to housebreak:

- Boston Terrier
- Chow Chow
- Doberman Pinscher
- Norwegian Elkhound
- Poodle
- Shar pei
- Shiba Inu-other Japanese Dogs

Dogs which are hard to housebreak and why:

1. Scent hounds are often hard to housebreak because they are easily distracted by the scent of a rabbit or a squirrel or other prey they are after. If the scent hound goes in an inappropriate spot, the owner must thoroughly clean the area or the scent hound will seek that spot and “accidentally” eliminate there again. Dogs in this class that are particularly hard to housebreak include the following:
  - American Foxhound
  - Bloodhound
  - Beagle
  - Bassett Hound
  - Dachshund
2. Sight Hounds have trouble with housebreaking because they are always chasing squirrels or rabbits and will even run after cars as they speed past. They include the following dogs:
  - Afghan Hound
  - Basenji
  - Borzoi
  - Irish Wolfhound
  - Norwegian Elkhound
  - Saluki
  - Whippet

3. Pointers and Setters have the same problems listed above, but only one dog in this class is harder to housebreak.
  - English Setter
4. Terriers can be difficult to house break because they exhibit marking behavior. They are also very smart and think they can get away with bad behavior. A consistent and firm hand is needed with these dogs:
  - Cairn Terrier
  - Norfolk Terrier
  - Norwich Terrier
  - Jack Russell Terrier
  - Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier
  - West Highland White Terrier
5. Toy Breeds can be particularly hard to housebreak mostly because of their owners. Their messes are easier to clean up and this may prompt some owners to let their little darlings get away with accidents. Again, a firm and consistent hand with housebreaking is needed with no allowance for “little accidents.” The grass also has to be kept low and cut because a toy dog can’t waddle through uncut grasses to relieve himself. The following dogs in this class which are harder to housebreak include:
  - Affenpinscher
  - Havanese
  - Italian greyhound
  - Maltese
  - Papillon
  - Pekingese
  - Pomeranian
  - Pug
  - Shih Tzu
  - Yorkshire Terrier
6. Late Maturing Dogs, which often include larger dogs, can be difficult to house train. For many of these dogs, it can take up to three years before they are completely accident free:
  - Chinese Shar-Pei
  - Great Dane
  - Irish Wolfhound
  - Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier
7. Other breeds who are more difficult and who often need a firmer hand in house breaking include the following:
  - Alaskan Malamute
  - Belgian Griffon
  - Bichon Frise
  - Boston Terrier

- Cocker Spaniel
- Lakeland Terrier
- Pitbull Terrier
- Rat Terrier
- Schipperke
- Siberian husky
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- Welsh Terrier

## **Service dogs, therapy dogs and emotional support dogs**

Service dogs are dogs who provide a service and do actual tasks to help their owner mitigate their disability. These dogs assist handicapped individuals, work with police in search and rescue, and help border guards in sniffing out drugs or illegal paraphernalia. A service dog has to have the perfect temperament and must be secure and centered on the handler. In addition the service dog must be relaxed, loyal, and gentle. He also needs to be super smart. To be legally disabled, the person in question must have an impairment in walking, hearing, seeing, thinking, or using their hands that prevents them from going about their daily business.

Service dogs for handicapped people include the following disabilities:

- Mobility issues;
- Visual impairment (blindness);
- Hearing impairment (deafness);
- Seizures, diabetes,;
- PTSD, autism;
- Epilepsy
- Multiple sclerosis (MS), and other physical disabilities.

Service dogs can pull wheelchairs, pick up items disabled individuals cannot, ring doorbells, help with balance problems, help deaf individuals by hearing noises that could put them in danger, guide visually impaired individuals on walking paths where obstacles might slow them down, and a whole array of other services. We have all seen movies that feature service dogs working for the police in search and rescue and to track villains and catch criminals. We also see movies of valiant rescues like the always brave Lassie who rescued his young charge, Timmy, and his family from all kinds of dangerous situations. What is important to note is that service dogs are both highly trained and professional dogs and not pets, although they may also offer great comfort to their owners.

Many people wonder if their well-behaved pet could be a service dog. Chances are they could not and do not have the qualities to be a service dog. Service Dogs have to

exceptionally obedient and the majority of pets, even those who are exceptionally well-behaved and super friendly, are not well suited to be service dogs. Service dogs typically train between 18-24 months with exceptions. A hearing dog, for example, who the owner does not use outside the home, can be trained in as little as six months. Training all depends on the disability or service involved. A service dog must obey simple commands 90% of the time, including come, stay, sit, down, and heel the first time they are ordered to do so. There must be no aggression or inappropriate barking, and absolutely no needless growling or snapping. The dog is trained with a series of distractions called “proofing,” where distractions such as food, toys and noises are used in order to train the dog to ignore them and focus only on the task at hand. Likewise, service dogs are taken on controlled walks in public places such as restaurants and busy intersections to train the dog to be 100% focused on the handler so he can effectively mitigate their disability. In addition, the service dog should not jump on strangers or sniff inappropriately. The dog must be able to perform tasks the handler cannot do because of his disability. For example, opening doors if a handler is unable to use his hands, picking up keys for a physically disabled person, or warning a PTSD victim if he is about to venture out in dangerous traffic. If the dog does not perform “actual” tasks, it is not a service dog.

Since the ADA, the American Disabilities Act of 1990, service dogs are allowed any place the disabled person needs or chooses to go including all public transport like buses and taxis, all public buildings like a library, a museum or a grocery store, and any business that provides services.

Good service dogs can be any breed who is trained, but most often include the following dogs who are identified by wearing a special harness or a vest:

- German Shepherd: Known as “the ultimate service dog,” they were first widely used as “seeing eye dogs” for the blind or visually impaired, but German Shepherds are also excellent search and rescue dogs as they can detect scents in the air (unlike a bloodhound), which is called “airscenting” and can lead the police to the source of the problem. German Shepherds also frequently serve as therapy dogs because they are intelligent and easy to train. They do need a firm hand with training, however, as they are dominant dogs with alpha personalities.
- Belgian Malinois: An alpha dog used in search and rescue, needs a strong hand with training as it tends to be very dominant.
- Labrador Retriever: Quite simply, one of the dog champions who is super smart and is easily trained to do almost any task.
- Bloodhound: Their sense of smell is a 1000 times higher than that of a human; when a bloodhound smells an item, they make a “smell memory” of the item and can then ignore other all smells to track the victim or lost child.



Bloodhounds can track a scent for up to 130 miles on a trail 300 hours old, even across water.

- Beagle: An excellent hunting dog, can detect drugs, bombs, or illegal agricultural products.
- Rottweiler: Excellent for individuals with mobility problems due to its strong hearty countenance; he can easily support a human with bad hips or knees, can physically support a person and break a fall or prevent an accident. They can also be taught to turn on lights and open doors.
- Golden Retriever: A dog champion who is super smart and obedient. This dog is also very smart and loves people.

Fire dogs:

\*Dalmatians: The history of these dogs goes back a century when these brave dogs used to run beside the horse-drawn fire trucks and calm the horses.

US Customs and Border Control Dogs:

\*Sporting dogs: The Spaniels, the Pointers, the Retrievers, the Weimaraner, the Vizla

\*Labrador Retriever: Once again it is important to extol the many virtues of this near perfect dog. They are hardy, super intelligent, and easy to train.

Military Dogs:

\*Dutch and German Shepherds

\*Belgian Malinois

Search and Rescue Dogs:

\*Labrador Retriever: Number One SAR dog,

\*Border Collie: Like the German Shepherd, can perform "airscenting" to find their prey. This is dog who needs a job to do and thrives with constant activity.

\*German Shepherd

\*Bloodhound

Hearing Impaired Dogs:

\*Golden Retriever

\*Labrador Retriever

\*German Shepherds

\*Poodles

\*Cocker Spaniels

\*Llasa Apsos

\*Shih Tzus

\*Chihuahuas

#### Seizure Alert Dogs:

- \*Golden Retrievers
- \*Setter Mixes
- \* Samoyed Crosses
- \*Border Collie Crosses
- \*German Shepherd

#### Physical Assistance Dogs:

- \*Labrador Retriever
- \*Golden Retriever

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#### What breeds make good particularly good hearing dogs?

While Golden Retriever, Labrador Retrievers, German Shepherds and Poodles are often used for hearing impaired individuals, historically, many hearing dog programs have acquired dogs from shelters, and consequently small or medium-sized breeds constitute the most popular hearing dogs. Many are Sheltie sized or smaller. These dogs must have outstanding personalities and be extremely people oriented, ready to hear a sound the moment it occurs and alert their owner of danger. Some hearing breeds include Cocker Spaniels, Chihuahuas, Poodles, Lhasa Apsos, and terrier mixes. A Toy Fox terrier, who can understand words and sounds, is often an excellent companion for hearing impaired person.

#### Psychiatric Service Dogs:

Not to be confused with emotional support dogs. These dogs are certified as service dogs and help PTSD and seizure disorder patients by performing tasks those patients cannot do. For example the service dog might do room checks, or keep their owner from enacting self-destructive or impulsive behaviors. These service dogs perform specific tasks in an official category.

#### **A Therapy Dog:**

A therapy dog is used for emotional support for a variety of conditions including anxiety disorders. The distinction between therapy dogs and emotional support dogs is that the former have no special privileges to travel wherever the owner goes. Hence, these dogs must get special permission to go to places of business. Therapy dogs and their owners, who are usually not emotionally handicapped, travel to children's hospitals, nursing homes, special needs centers and other facilities where a friendly dog would be welcome and would greatly cheer and support the citizens being served. The therapy dog can be any type of dog who has a good temperament and is friendly. People may pet, brush, or watch the dog in the comfort of their environments.

Therapy dogs are not certified like service dogs or nearly as highly trained, but there some general rules for therapy dogs: One is that they be at least one-year old; second, that they really love people, all people, not just their owners as these dogs are socialized to be friendly to strangers. Next, therapy dogs must be super clean (as they are often in sterile

environments); and finally, therapy dogs must be very docile as the patients will often be in bed and can't have dogs jumping on them. Volunteer dog owners, who travel with therapy dogs from location to location, do not take any payment for the good deeds they do. Some of the emotional disabilities therapy and emotional support dogs mitigate include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bipolar/mood disorders
- Panic Attacks

Some good therapy dogs are the following: German Shepherds, Labrador retrievers, Greyhounds, Rottweilers, and Beagles.

### **An Emotional Support Dog:**

This dog resides with an individual and is used for emotional support. They do not undergo specialized training and do not have the rights service dogs have to go to all public places with their owner. In addition, these dogs do not perform specific tasks but provide well-being and calm to their owners. Unlike therapy dogs, these dogs do not visit other facilities, but reside only with their owner, so they are not trained to be widely socialized to be petted and handled by anyone other than the owner. The emotional support dog is often prescribed by a doctor or a psychiatrist by means of a formal letter. The owner of an emotional support dog can take their dog in a apartment building with a "no pets" policy, and can travel on an airline with their owner as long as they have a letter stating their disability.

One growing problem with emotional support dogs is that many people take advantage of the laws in place and take their non-emotional support pets anywhere they please, much to the frustration of the general public. You can now obtain a doctor's letter in multiple places, especially online meaning an individual can easily procure an emotional support dog certification whether the dog serves that purpose or not. It is possible that stricter laws need to be enforced so only those people with genuine emotional support issues be allowed to carry their dog with them in public, and not just everyone with a beloved pet who wants to take their dog wherever they go.

## **Adopting Rescue Dogs**

My search to find the perfect rescue dog, fifteen years experience, three dogs:

I picked out my first rescue in the year 2000 in Los Angeles, CA at a no kill shelter. I went several times, determined to find the right dog, and started out by walking many dogs and getting to know their histories and how long they had been at the shelter. Many of the dogs had been abandoned by their owners because of cost, new family members, or illness. A shelter with all those unwanted dogs was a sobering place and I wanted to take all the dogs home, buy a big farm and let them run free. But I only had the room to

choose one. The dogs were in pens and the only exercise they got was when prospective adopters came and took them for a walk. There were also volunteers who came and walked some of the dogs and gave additional information, but they were few unfortunately.

The barking from so many dogs was fierce and very irritating, but I understood it and felt deeply for all those dogs caged up. They all wanted attention so badly and many had had very hard lives, abandoned or mistreated. The first time I rescued a dog, I had no experience. I had not grown up with dogs and didn't know one breed from the other. I also had not done a lot of studying on different breeds and thought I would just know when the right dog came along, that we would make a connection.

And then on about my sixth visit, I saw him, a two-year old adorable Cocker Spaniel, white colored (with brown spots and freckles), who just sat quietly in his cage and gazed into my eyes with his big brown ones. He was the only dog not barking and he seemed to be saying, "pick me, please pick me." So I chose him and it was one of best decisions of my life.

He had to be neutered before he could leave the shelter and after his surgery, my two-year-old Cocker was introduced to his new home. To my relief, he seemed right at home immediately and jumped on the couch to get comfy-I was very grateful. I named him Shake after William Shakespeare and he was the best dog I could have imagined. He was house broken, but like all rescues I have heard of or owned, he had a few accidents; the house was big and he had to figure everything out, but he did. I taught him all the basic commands, sit, stay, roll over, sleep, and paw for Shake because his name was Shake. He was eager to learn and mastered all the commands (complete with tasty treats) very quickly. He was easy on the leash (not like the feisty Cocker rescue I recently acquired!) and loved walks. My husband took him for a morning walk every day before work and sometimes we went together and Shake was friendly with other dogs and people.

I don't have any great moral to this story except to say sometimes you just get lucky, and with three rescue dogs; I have been lucky twice. Shake lived with us for fourteen and half years until he died of cancer and was the best dog you could possibly imagine; yes, he was spoiled, but we spoil our dogs after we teach them discipline. He slept in the bed the first night and every other night with my thirteen year-old daughter who adored him and petted and stroked him until he was in virtual Heaven. We all adored him.

We took Shake everywhere with us, on vacation up and down the California coast, and to the beach, where he got sand in every orifice and had to be bathed completely once we got home. However, he was always patient with all our ministrations and always seemed to having fun. We had three scary periods with Shake; one when he had fleas so bad, we had to give him flea baths three times a day just to keep him comfortable. That condition passed when we moved to Massachusetts when he was nine, a completely different climate than sunny LA. Shake adjusted accordingly and seemed to thrive. The problem we had in Massachusetts was ticks. Shake was want to get ticks in the sticky woods so we had to be constantly vigilant. One tick almost killed him and he had to go to the hospital and get intravenous fluids and a entire course of antibiotics, but they saved him and we had our dog back.

At age 12, Shake developed an irregular heartbeat and had to be on meds for life, but he was still healthy and loved his daily walks I took him on for 45 minutes every afternoon (except when it was frigid, I have a 14 degree rule-if it is below 14, no walk that day). When he got cancer at age 16 and half, we knew we had little time left with him so we treasured it and spoiled him even more if that was possible. He always slept on the bed, his entire 14 and a half years with us, always received treats (my daughter's logic was he shouldn't have to eat the same food every day, we don't) and he was always well loved and gave us more love back. He was perfectly housetrained and would even wade through large snowdrifts (we always shoveled him a path) in order to go.

Shake's devotion was most notable when any of us happened to be sick. Shake would stay at our bedside, even when he had a more fun place to play. Shake did that with all of us-he was an equal opportunity lover, and he was 100% devoted to us. Since Shake was my first dog, I had never had a dog put to sleep, but we had to do that to Shake as his cancer made him miserable and he started losing touch with reality-it was fast and we kept his ashes. I proudly display his urn and one of his last pictures in my living room. I will never get over him and I know many of you feel the same about pets who have passed away. They become a part of your hearts forever. I was lucky; we were all lucky to have Shake. It was a mutual admiration society and we all won.

After Shake was put to sleep, I looked for another dog with my husband. We went to the humane society and the only type of dogs there were mean looking boxers and after a gentle Cocker Spaniel, we were not in the mood for a boxer although I know they make great dogs as my best friend adores hers. I simply did not make a connection with any of those dogs. Then we found a shelter online and applied and the owner of the shelter immediately sent us a picture of an 18-pound dog advertised as a Spaniel (we did his genetics after we got him, he turned out he was a mixture of bulldog and Pomeranian). The owner of the shelter said this 18 month-old dog, who we thought was super cute, was docile and housetrained. He was neither and it was our mistake for not waiting and looking at a lot of different dogs and getting to know the owner of the shelter. We paid dearly for that mistake as we obtained a dog who was very difficult to train. I do not know all of the reasons why. Maybe it was a combination of the breed (Pomeranians can be difficult to train) and a basic bad temperament after going to foster home after foster home and never being chosen for adoption.

Here is my advice for using an online shelter that is out of town, always, always form a good relationship with the owner of a shelter and make it last several weeks if not months. Since more and more shelters and dog organizations are online now, a good relationship with the handlers is vital. If you can't meet the dog, then ask for pictures and more important videos of the dog in action. Let the owner get to know you and exactly what qualities you want in a pet. We didn't do the first time and got Malcolm, an aggressive, growling biter who we had for three months until we gave him to an ex-marine who said he would whip him into shape. Malcolm could be sweet, but those times were few and far between and we even employed professional dog training. Malcolm promptly bit the trainer twice until she finally insisted we get a muzzle to train him. But with no treats, there wasn't much training. Our Vet didn't like him either which was rare, and she also employed a muzzle even for the most basic checkups and

shots. The trainer ended up giving us some of our money back as Malcolm failed to thrive. Should we have worked longer with him? Hired a new trainer? I don't know; Malcolm refused to be house broken and bit my son-in-law on the leg and finally that was it for me. Luckily we found an alpha male for him who will hopefully be a good dog owner.

The third time I rescued a dog was again a charm (like the first). This time I knew I wanted another Cocker Spaniel because I like the breed; they train easily I know them well. I connected with an online shelter close by and they immediately approved my application. But this time, I was slow and methodical in my approach. I told them about our long relationship with Shake and the disastrous situation with Malcolm, and the owner took time to figure out my personality and decide what I wanted in a dog. Be wary of an owner who, like with Malcolm, wants to place you with a dog right away, there could be a reason why. At Abandoned Angels, a Cocker Spaniel rescue organization which serves all states in the northeast, the owner took her time with me and was only interested in the best placement for every dog she had in her shelter or foster home. We had countless discussions, talking by phone twice a day, and she introduced me to about ten dogs by picture and recorded visual encounters with them (playing or walking) which she sent to me, free of charge, from her iphone. She assessed my personality, my history with dogs, and asked me what personality traits were the most important for me in a dog. I said affection and a dog who was easily trained, and after really getting to know me, she said she had just the dog for me. He was eight, had been abandoned, and had the sweetest personality on earth. But I had to be sure and asked for extra videos, which she gladly sent me; they showed a lot about his personality and I fell in love again.

After about two months of visiting with Delores at Abandoned Angels, I decided on a Angel, the aforementioned eight-year old male Cocker Spaniel. The shelter brought him to my home for a trial run only-to be a foster parent first. But Angel and I got on like a house on fire from the first day on. Like I said, sometimes you get lucky with dogs. On the first night, still unsure of the rules, I got into bed and invited him up; he was so grateful he licked me all over and settled into what has become his spot on his side of the bed ever since. Angel has been a delight and my pastor thinks my late husband sent him for me and I have a feeling she is right. Angel is not perfect of course, no dog is; he pulls on the leash because he loves walks so much he just goes nuts-I just try to keep up. Maybe Angel is spoiled; he gets 3-4 lap snuggle sessions a day, each at least a half hour at a time, but I don't care; he gives me so much love in return. I trained him to sit, come when he is called, and to stay and fetch, all successfully although he has trouble staying; he just gets too excited. We are working on that one. When he is on my lap, I can make him so comfortable that he revels in the attention; it is great to give a dog you love so much pleasure and it lowers my blood pressure as well and I swear it truly heals me. If you don't want a shedder, don't get a Cocker Spaniel. Angel sheds like crazy, just like Shake did but worse, but I don't mind cleaning up the fur. He loves car rides and is friendly to all new people; he is a total doll and I am as devoted to him as he is to me.

So before you get a rescue first assess what your strengths and limitations are, and what personality traits in a dog you are looking for. For example if you can't walk your

dog, don't get a high energy, high maintenance dog like a Border Collie. Most dogs need daily walks, but some need much longer walks and lots of exercise. Know your breeds!! I have a friend who rescued a Golden Retriever but she is handicapped and can't walk him. To make up for her disability, she takes him to doggie daycare once or twice a week so he can run around and play with other dogs; hence she makes arrangements for his total care. If you can't walk a dog, however, go for one of the easy to maintain dogs outlined in the next section in this book; dogs that are also easy to train. The dog my friend has, a beautiful Golden Retriever doesn't resent her for not walking him and is luckily low energy and easy to mind (unless she leaves the top loose on the kitchen trash can)- Golden's are a dream though and everyone seems to like them. She did the same thing I did with Angel. She took her time, visited the Humane society many times and really came to know the people running the place, and over a three-month period was in constant contact with them and many online shelters as well. She took the time and waited until she made a connection with a dog, either in person or by videos online. She wanted a retriever, as she had had a Golden before, and she got lucky. That said, I just love dogs. Even the surly Malcolm, who we had for such a short time; I cared a lot for that dog and I hope he has found a good home after being passed around so much, probably in his case, because of his surly temperament. If you love dogs, please consider giving a rescue dog a home, they are grateful, sweet, gracious and make the best companions in my opinion.

## Low maintenance dogs who are easy to train:

There are a lot of people who need and desire a low maintenance dog because they either are couch potatoes themselves, or live in an apartment or a small living environment where a small, easy to train dog is ideal. We will break down, from large to small dogs which dogs are both low maintenance and easy to train. All of the following dogs are low energy and easy to train. Some of them will surprise you!

Small dogs who are low maintenance:

1. Chihuahua (long hair or short hair): This small dog rarely requires grooming, enjoy lots of lap time, and are relatively easy to train, they are perfect for apartments. Even with the long haired variety, they just need a good brushing every once in a while, they are super small, so it won't take long.
2. Havanese: You do have to groom the Havanese, but they are friendly, cheerful and adapt well to any living environment, especially in an apartment. Likewise they are not "yappy" dogs and are pleasant to be around. They just need a short daily walk and they will be happy inside. They are easy to train.
3. Dachshund (smooth coat) Many pet owners will disagree because of the inherent back problems many doxies have, but generally they are friendly, easily trainable, fit well in a small living environment, and just require a short walk a day.
4. Miniature Pinscher: This friendly, trainable dog has a short coat, which is easy to care for, and he only requires an occasional bath and a daily walk. They don't eat much so they are easy on the pocketbook as well.
5. Toy Fox Terrier: A delightful dog, requiring little maintenance, easy to train and

- thought by many to be cleaner than a cat, but with no litter box.
6. Russell Terrier: A popular dog and a fun dog to own, easily trainable, easy to groom and adaptable to a small living environment.
  7. Pekinese: This delightful affectionate small dog is from China, and serves as a quiet and adaptable pet. They are perfect apartment dogs and are fine sleeping all day while you are at work. They are also excellent watchdogs because of their attention to new sounds.
  8. Bolognese: A popular companion dog and a good trainable apartment dog. He is smart, playful, gets along well with kids and other dogs and is a delight to own.
  9. The Japanese Chin: Descended from Japanese royalty, super friendly, easy to train, doesn't need much exercise except a short walk occasionally, gets along well with children and adults, Hard to housetrain in the first few months.
  10. Puggle: A mix between a Pug and a Beagle. An excellent housedog, a lapdog, super friendly, relaxed, and easy to train. The Puggle doesn't require much exercise other than a daily short walk to work off the Beagle energy in them. Because of their shorter nasal cavity, they tire easily, so a long walk is not advised.
  11. Rat Terrier: A delightful little dog, sometimes also known as the American Hairless Terrier. They were bred to control rats, and are super amiable dogs that get along with children, strangers, other dogs and cats. Easy to train and loves to learn new tricks. They only require occasional exercise, a short walk or playing in the yard; they have a coat that is smooth and sheds very little.
  12. Boston terrier: A quiet friendly dog with short hair that sheds little and is easy to train. This dog only requires a little exercise and is perfect for an apartment or for small living spaces.
  13. Yorkshire Terrier (Yorkie): A petite dog who needs a monthly trim, but is easily trainable, needs little space, and is friendly and affectionate.
  14. Maltese: Although this breed has long hair and it must be combed, the Maltese is a super friendly dog who is easy to train. The Maltese needs moderate exercise and is perfect in apartments.
  15. Bichon Frise: A fluffy dog that needs to be brushed daily but sheds little. Easily trained and doesn't need much room, happy in an apartment.
  16. Shih Tzu: A toy breed that is very popular; a friendly dog who is quick to learn and perfect for apartment living. A short daily walk is all that is needed for this cheerful breed.

These medium sized dogs are easy to train and low maintenance:

1. Ibizan Hound: This rare hound is easy to care for and easy to train; he requires only the most basic grooming and has few vet visits.
2. The Bulldog or French Bulldog: Needs an air-conditioned apartment, but are couch potatoes and quite comfy in small spaces; they are also relatively easy to train and don't require much exercise. The Bulldog is friendly, easy to get along with and very loving.



3. Bassett Hound: Are quite comfy in apartments and enjoy a place to relax. Are relatively easy (experts differ on this dog, some think the Bassett is easy, some hard) to train and as long as there are toys and treats around, A Bassett Hound will be happy dog.
4. Glen of Imaal Terrier: Does well in apartments and small yards (tends to dig so must be watched), is very smart and easy to train, needs only short walks, super friendly to kids, does not shed very much.
5. Japanese Spitz: Super friendly, grooming needs are not high, very trainable, needs a short daily walk.
6. Aspin: They are very friendly and easy to train. They shed little and require only a daily walk.
7. Boxer, very loyal, doesn't shed, trains easily, needs moderate exercise and little space to thrive.

#### Large Dogs that are low maintenance and easy to train:

1. Greyhounds: A surprising choice, but these dogs tend to like a sedentary lifestyle and are very adaptable and social. They are often referred to "canine couch potatoes," take them for a daily short walk and they will be happy.
2. Labrador Retrievers: They are the king of dogs, friendly to everyone, easy to groom and easy to train. You have to keep their ears clean, but otherwise maintenance is low.
3. Great Dane: Another surprising choice, but these docile, friendly dogs are great for apartments although they may vie with you for a plumb spot on a comfy couch. They are calm and easy to train..
4. Dalmatian: Easy to maintain with a nice short coat that just needs some regular brushing and an occasional bath; these dogs are easy to train and friendly, known as official firehouse dogs.
5. Bullmastiff, very affectionate, needs and wants plenty of love, is super large and quite low maintenance, even lazy, enjoys laying on the couch. Can be a challenge to walk because they are so large and can pull on the leash, short coat and doesn't shed much, relatively easy to train.

#### The Hardest dogs to train and the reasons why:

1. The Afghan Hound: Beautiful with long flowing hair, but tends to ignore commands and not take training seriously; these dogs are often compared to cats in that they tend to do what they want.
2. Bassett Hound: They are such scent hounds, they can totally concentrate on what they are smelling and ignore what they are being told to do. The research disagrees on Bassett Hounds; some critics say the Bassett Hound is easy to train, others disagree.
3. Basenji: Also described as cat-like in that they like to do what they want. They are undoubtedly a very independent breed.
4. Mastiff: They often weigh up to 150 pounds and can be poor listeners; they are

- sensitive and a soft touch must be used to train this breed.
5. Bulldog: Is a self-possessed dog in that they go their own way; they are trainable, but they might just require more effort.
  6. Pekinese: For such a small dog, they like to be dominant and to be the boss; a strong consistent hand is needed for discipline.
  7. Chow-Chow: Loves to snuggle with you on the couch or your favorite easy chair, but very resistant to training. The Chow Chow can be a very jealous breed and needs constant attention.
  8. Bloodhound: These dogs can be hard to train because they are very scent oriented and may not pay attention to commands. They are used widely as search and rescue dogs and are obviously, with a firm hand, able to be trained.
  9. Russian Wolfhound: Is purported to be in love with itself and to being very self-possessed. This dog often doesn't like to take orders.
  10. Beagle: Because this is another scent dog like the bloodhound, they can ignore commands because they are so interested in what they are smelling.
  11. Dalmatian, super smart, and according to some, very trainable, but others liken his frenetic energy to that of a child with ADD; in short the Dalmatian learns and is trainable, but he may present a challenge.
  12. Pug: Many think the pug is one of the most stubborn dogs and slow to learn; others have little trouble.
  13. Pomeranian: A very officious dog, can be haughty and stubborn and very hard to train. I have personal experience with a Pomeranian mix and he was very quite difficult to train and did not take commands easily.

## **Conclusion:**

Dogs are magical creatures, and that fact is true regardless of whether they are enjoyed as pets, service, therapy or emotional support dogs. Dogs are very insightful and they really get to know us, our habits and our preferences, and they try to fit in. Dogs are cheerful companions and bring us joy instinctively. Simply put, dogs are there for us; they have our back. Dogs serve so many functions: they keep us company when we are lonely or moody; they guard our house against intruders, and they are driving buddies, walking buddies, hiking buddies and camping buddies. On a farm, they do important work like herding sheep or cattle. For hunters, they are unmatched for catching or retrieving prey. They have a fun, innate sense of play, and brighten our lives immeasurably by bringing back a tossed Frisbee on the beach or fetching a favorite ball. They sense our moods and act accordingly, giving us support unflinching in any situation with a wiggly butt, a wagging tail, and kisses galore. Yes, all dogs require maintenance and training, but for dog lovers this care and training brings pleasure too. I have never known a dog owner who doesn't delight in teaching their dog a new trick, finding their dog a new toy, or providing him with a juicy bone. Dogs are just pleasure-givers, plain and simple. And dog owners relish in making their furry pets happy. Though it may be hard at times to make a human being happy, you can always give pleasure to a dog, just by rubbing his eager belly, involving him in a game of fetch or a nice walk, or a loving scratch behind his furry ears. Whatever you do for a dog, his pleasure is evident on his cheerful, furry face. Loving and being loved by a dog is one of

things that makes life worth living and every pet owner knows and appreciates that fact. In short, loving a dog helps us love and live life more fully and who doesn't want that!

### **Summary:**

This book has addressed the easiest dogs to train and for what purpose. We have also covered the most difficult dogs to train, both generally and in regards to housetraining. The three dogs that appear over and over in all the research as highly trainable in all areas are the Labrador Retriever, the Golden Retriever, and the German Shepherd. These three dogs are enjoyed as family pets as well as serving widely as service dogs and therapy dogs. These three dogs are the most popular breeds as well. However, there are many other dogs who are easily trainable and make excellent pets. The Poodles and the Terriers are easily trained and have cheerful personalities. The Bolognese and the Cocker Spaniel also excel as easily trainable dogs and make excellent pets. The harder dogs to train include the Afghan hound, the Bulldog, and the Pug, among others. The most difficult dogs to housebreak are those dogs who are easily excitable by scents or sounds such as the Bloodhound and the Borzoi. The terriers and the toy Breeds can be a challenge to housebreak because they are closer to the ground and owners can become lax because their messes are easier to clean. The hardest dogs to house train include the Pomeranian and the Maltese. Excellent service dogs, serving in search and rescue missions, to dogs who help their owners with hearing impairment, include the three champion breeds, the Golden Retriever, the Labrador Retriever and the German Shepherd and they are the top three therapy dogs as well. Emotional service dogs tend to be smaller dogs and dogs which are already favorite pets that are easy to train and are covered in our small, easy to train dogs. The dogs who are the easiest to maintain are also usually the smaller dogs who do not shed and are comfortable in small places including the Chihuahua and the Dachshund as well as the Havenese and the poodle breeds. Larger dogs who fit this criterion are Greyhounds and Great Danes, both dogs who are easy to train and like to relax. All dogs are trainable, and with consistency, and a firm but gentle hand, even the most stubborn dog can please its owner with basic commands, tricks, and ease in housebreaking. For a new or older dog owner, size preference can be as important as how easy the dog is to train. Luckily, the dedicated dog owner can have both, be it a cute, easily trained toy poodle to a friendly and easy to train Golden Retriever, and more than a hundred dogs in-between. We have tried to make the choice of a good dog easier. We hope you can find the dog you desire and he or she will be easy to train and well behaved! Dogs will enrich your life in every way if you choose carefully and train your dog with consistency and love.

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