

Speaking for Spot – will speak to you

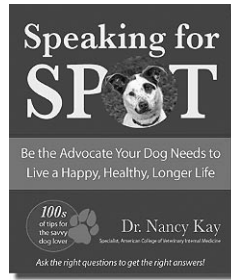
Author: Dr. Nancy Kay

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By Kathie Meier



There's a new paw on the shelf in the dog book world – Dr. Nancy Kay's *Speaking for Spot*, published earlier this year. Dr. Kay's mission in writing the book is to teach dog owners how to be effective advocates for their four-legged friends as they traverse the world of both routine and emergency veterinary care with their pet.

The author brings a wealth of knowledge to her subject. A graduate of Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Kay completed her residency in small animal internal medicine at the University of California, Davis. She is a board-certified specialist in internal medicine and the staff internist/owner of a 24-hour emergency/specialty care center. As a practicing veterinarian she saw the need to support emotionally owners of critically ill pets. She responded by establishing Animal Care Center Pet Support Group. Her experience in this context is evident throughout the chapters of this book.

Speaking for Spot covers the entire spectrum of caring for our pets with topics that include finding the right veterinarian, the vaccination debate, questions for your vet and for you, surgical and other treatment options, diagnostic testing and new technologies, when to see a specialist, financial concerns, pet health insurance and selecting a carrier, dealing with a cancer diagnosis and ending with a very compassionate and thought-provoking discussion on the end-of-life process, including euthanasia.

Dr. Kay cared for my Gretl for four years, most recently during her final illness with malignant histiocytosis. I was privileged to read a pre-release copy of the book and regretted as I read that I had not had this book to consult during my previous 29 years with Berners. The author addresses so many of the questions and issues that I, and I'm sure many Berner owners, struggle with in seeking veterinary care.

There are many books available on dog health care. Some are in the category of veterinary textbooks of medicine, good as a reference when we need to look up something specific. Others focus on a single disease or a few related areas of dog health care (e.g., reproduction and neonatal care). While all these books have their places, I don't think that you will find a more thorough, understandable and go-to-it-often reference than *Speaking for Spot*.

If you are curious, you can read excerpts from several chapters on the book's website www.speakingforspot.com, as well as a number of interesting reviews, including this one by Amy Tan, author of *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Kitchen God's Wife*. Tan writes, "This is the book I wish I had when dogs first entered my life. . . . It's the other best friend you need when making routine veterinary decisions for your dog or potentially heart-breaking ones."

While you are browsing the website, take a look at the section entitled "Advocacy Aids." There is a terrific selection of downloadable health forms and templates that will help you organize your dog's health care and medications. This is typical of the level of information and support that you will find in the book.

It isn't often that I read a book and want to tell the world about it – but this is definitely one in that category. It is that good! And for me – the timing is perfect. After all, it is time to think about holiday shopping!



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