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Book Hound

Dogs in Black & White

Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy Longer Life by Nancy Kay, Specialist, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine

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Posted on Oct 21, 2009
By Tanya Turgeon

REVIEW by Tanya Turgeon

Trafalgar Square Books
388 pages
\$19.90

The cover of "Speaking for Spot" instantly reminds me of another patient-friendly best seller from a few years back. "YOU: The Owners Manual" was written by Michael F. Roizen, M.D. and Mehmet C. Oz, M.D. (the latter you may recognize from his new television show). Although some of its popularity stemmed from an appearance on Oprah, "YOU: The Owners Manual" was such a success because doctors presented a guide to good health in an accessible, understandable, and generous way. In "Speaking for Spot," veterinarian Dr. Nancy Kay achieves those qualities by providing thorough, honest, and practical information so that we can make the best choices regarding our dogs' health.

Dr. Kay begins with tips on acquiring a new dog and choosing a veterinarian. It's notable that again we find this author recommending adoption from a shelter or rescue organization. How many of you reading this have actually seen inside your vet's surgery room? I, for one, have not. In "Chapter 3: Finding Dr. Wonderful and Your Mutt's Mayo Clinic" Dr. Kay lets us know not only is it your right, but our responsibility to check out the facility along with the credentials, experience, values and personality of the vet.

From there Dr. Kay moves on to tackle several more delicate issues including cost, cancer and euthanasia. I know from personal experience that when my dog received a frightening diagnosis the moments that followed were so emotional I forgot to ask important practical questions. If I would have had this book three months earlier I could have foregone a tremendous amount of anxiety and confusion. "Speaking for Spot" is there for us, starring Dr. Kay as the voice of reason. Every word in this book helps to prepare us for different potential health obstacles our dog may face, easing communication and stress. The logical advice peppered throughout, like "...when it comes to making decisions for your older dog, consider his functional, not chronological age," is priceless.

In the end it was no longer Dr. Nancy Kay I heard but my dog and all dogs who truly need us to thrive. It's one thing to challenge us to be better advocates for our dogs, quite another to empower us with the tools to do so. "Speaking for Spot" happily does both. Oprah, if you're reading this, get Dr. Nancy Kay and "Speaking for Spot" on your show, every dog owner needs to have this book, including you!

Find out more about this book [here](#).

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