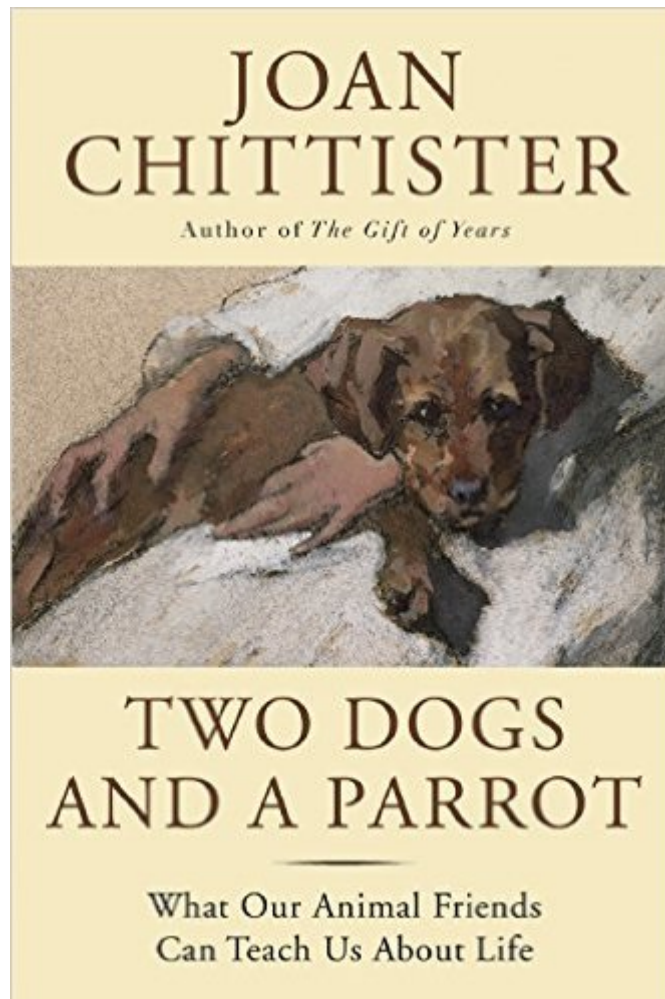


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# Two Dogs And A Parrot: What Our Animal Friends Can Teach Us About Life



## Synopsis

Joan Chittister, one of our leading inspirational writers, invites us to embrace and celebrate the deep bond between humans and animals. 'Two Dogs and a Parrot' offers both heart-warming stories and thought-provoking reflections about sharing life with an animal companion. The relationships we form with animals—with dogs, cats, horses, birds, rabbits, and other pets—are full of joys and rewards. Our companion animals draw us out of ourselves and show us what it truly means to be alive. They teach us to accept life's struggles and to cherish its pleasures and the importance of being able to accept ourselves and respect others. They help us to find purpose and meaning in what we do, and to overcome challenges and setbacks. In our treasured animals we observe varying degrees of excitement and play, of love and fear. And we realize their beautiful uniqueness, their sensitivities and strong sense of purpose. Whether we have an animal companion, long to have a pet or love someone who does, or cherish animals and nature, 'Two Dogs and a Parrot' will speak to us all. It illuminates the significance of sharing our lives with a pet and celebrates the great gift of animals in our world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Two Dogs and a Parrot, What Our Animal Friends Can Teach Us About Life is a new book from Joan Chittister, published by Blue Bridge and available at [www.bluebridgebooks.com](http://www.bluebridgebooks.com). Chittister is a Benedictine nun in Erie, PA. One of her books, The Gift of Years (2008) was very popular. Her book called Happiness is another I appreciated and reviewed on this blog in 2013. Since 2008, she has written at least ten more books! As busy as she is, who knew that Joan Chittister loves animals and often had a pet? In this book, she tells stories of two of her pets, an Irish Setter named Danny, a

Golden Retriever named Duffy, and a Parrot named Lady Hildegard or Lady as she was more popularly known. One at a time, each has seven mini-chapters for their stories to be shared. First came Danny, an Irish Setter described as "an absolute lexicon of lessons in life, the kind I was not expecting to learn. At least, not from a dog." They went to a dog show and she expected Danny to perform as the other dogs did. Instead, she learned from Danny that "life is not about becoming someone else. Life is a matter of coming to be the best of what we are and allowing ourselves to enjoy being it, at the same time." Next was Duffy, a Golden Retriever who was gentle, well-mannered, patient and quiet, also very large. Duffy was "a great, friendly bear of a dog." Love to Duffy "meant the willingness to do what he did not want to do, if it meant he could be with you." The nuns had their hands full with Duffy. When they went to the beach, he would not go into the water.

Author Joan Chittister invites readers to share her experiences with pets, especially dogs and a parrot, in this book detailing how animals can teach humans. The Judeo-Christian creation story, the author points out, pictures mankind given dominion over animals. But what if naming is, as we usually treat it, an act of relationship rather than dominion? Then the naming of animals puts relationship above dominion, and our whole worldview might change. Not only that, but our willingness to learn from our animal friends might result in lessons well-taught. *Two Dogs and a Parrot* isn't a theological treatise of course, though it has enough serious discussion to satisfy anyone who needs a religious edge. Rather it's the story, as the title says, of two dogs and a parrot, each taking their place in a community, each helping wounded humans, each in their own way. From an Irish setter's eager bounce to the nervous glance of a rejected show-dog, these pets reveal their own feelings and invite a human response. Meanwhile they teach "Life is not about becoming someone else, • real truth doesn't simply mask[] irritation with polite dishonesty, • and • the act of simply being present to pain may be at least as powerful a gift • as anything else we can offer, for example. • Each of us has been wounded by something on the way through life, • says the author. But woundedness isn't the same as broken; it can include an invitation to more, as these pets reveal. And so, building story upon story drawn from life, the author leads her humans as surely as she has been led by her pets, turning ends into beginnings, building hope that grows, and offering gently humorous vignettes of life with dog and parrot along the way.

Here is an antidote to the intrusive, histrionic background static pervasive in the media this summer!

Joan Chittister provides a refreshing respite from the rants with her new book, *Two Dogs and a Parrot: What Our Animal Friends Can Teach Us About Life*. This collection of light-hearted anecdotes is combined with passionate commentary about fear, love, relationships and the natural world around us. The author has carefully chosen her words to resonate with a deep wisdom for our topsy-turvy times. She has written parables centered around two dogs and a parrot to teach about the meaning of life, change, spirit and companionship. A veteran inspirational speaker and activist, Joan Chittister, pulls no punches. "Unless we begin to align ourselves with nature, nature will be endangered and our lives with it. Our own souls with it, in fact. We are here as part of creation, not as consumers of it. We are here to care for this planet, not to exploit it. We are here to find our proper place in it, to grow with it spiritually as well as physically... As top of the food chain, we would be the first to go." The view from the top-of-the-food chain is not a rosy picture these days. But Chittister's words inspire with stories devoted to the importance of our connection with nature—important for the survival of our own species. In these uplifting vignettes, animal companions are conduits for finding our spiritual lives. She recognizes that they are so much more as our teachers. As one who has never doubted the soulful nature of animals, I immersed myself in this book while outside the accumulation of pouring rain was breaking all previous records. For two weeks, a most unusual weather pattern inundated the state of Texas with historic flooding.

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