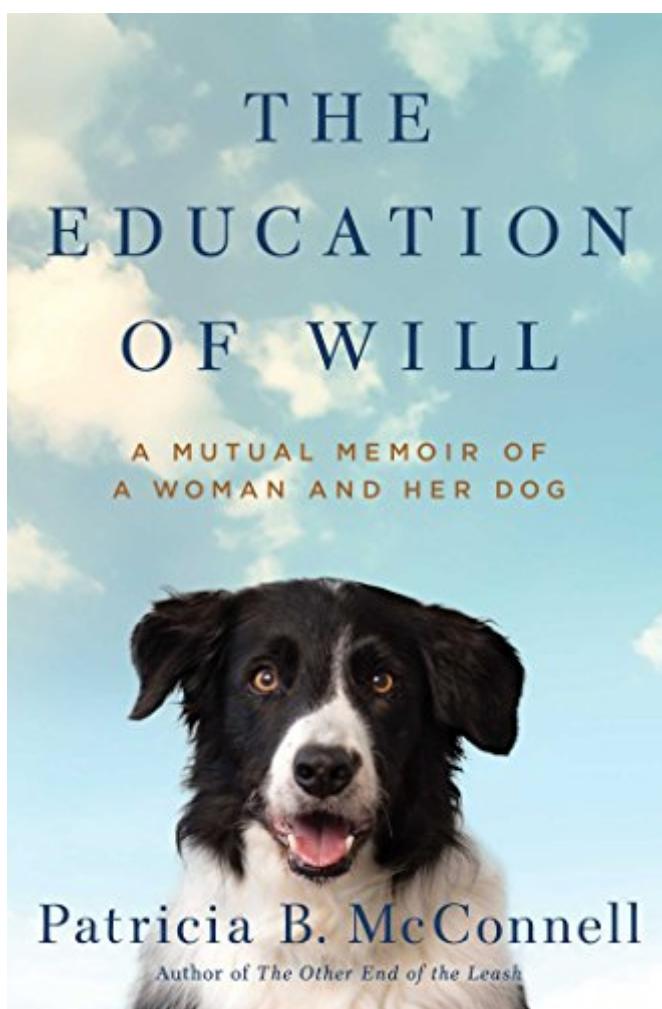


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# The Education Of Will: Healing A Dog, Facing My Fears, Reclaiming My Life



## **Synopsis**

In this powerful, soul-searching memoir, beautifully written in the vein of *A Pack of Two and Wild*, animal behaviorist Dr. Patricia McConnell recounts for the first time the compelling story of her dark past, memories of which are triggered by a troubled dog named Will. World-renowned as a source of science and soul, Patricia McConnell combines brilliant insights into canine behavior "gained from her work with aggressive and fearful dogs" with heartwarming stories of her own dogs and their life on the farm. Now, she reveals that it wasn't just the dogs who had serious problems. For decades Dr. McConnell secretly grappled with her own guilt and fear, which were rooted in the harrowing traumas of her youth. Patricia is forced to face her past by her love for a young Border Collie named Will, whose frequent, unpredictable outbreaks of fear and fury shake Patricia to her core. In order to save Will from this dangerous behavior, she must find her own will to heal, and along the way learn that will power by itself is not enough. Interweaving enlightening stories of her clients' dogs with tales of her deepening bond with Will, Patricia recounts her fight to reclaim her life. Hopeful and inspiring, the redemptive message of her journey is that, while trauma changes our brains and the past casts a long shadow, healing, for both people and dogs, is possible through hard work, compassion, and mutual devotion.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

I read all but 20 pages in one night! It was a late night but still... Patricia McConnell is very good at relaying information in an organized, easy to read but informative way. This book tells a personal story about trauma and dealing with the aftermath ... or the consequences of not dealing with it. She also still finds a way to inter-weave educational information about animal behavior, as well. I was lucky to attend a reading of this book by the author this past Saturday and she's as awesome in person as she is in print.

Patricia McConnell's books have helped me develop better and better understanding of my dogs and better and better ability to help them with the reactivity and fearfulness they - we, really - struggled with. This book took it to the next level. I have used her training methods for many years. I credit her with saving my first dog who had so many fear and separation issues. Getting a look at how she persevered with her own highly reactive dog - her honesty about moments of frustration and fatigue - will help me persevere with my next reactive, fearful dog. Her compassion and understanding extends beyond the dogs who have been her life's work - it goes out to all the humans who love and worry about their four-legged companions and/or who struggle with the emotional fallout of trauma in their own lives. Anyone who has been affected by trauma, or who loves someone who has, will find understanding and encouragement from her honest and insightful telling of her own personal story. She has been a hero of mine since I read her first book and found the positive and compassionate approach to helping my dog that I was looking for. The Education of Will just strengthens that and her warm, wise words will be with me to the great benefit of my next dog and all the ones after that.

Not only is she an insightful dog behaviorist, but Patricia McConnell is also a hell of a writer. In addition to the story of a reactive border collie, this is also a memoir of her own life, which she uses to draw parallels to dog behavior. I had a similar relationship with a reactive German shepherd, so that part of the book spoke to me. Some quotes that resonated: "I had become so tightly wired that I was the one who jumped first at the slightest noise." "I managed him obsessively, especially around other dogs. Good owners of reactive dogs behave like the security guards of celebrities, continually scanning the environment for potential threats." "But fear wasnÂ¢Â™t the only emotion (a client)

was experiencing. She also felt guilty. And ashamed. And embarrassed. Guilty that her dog had a serious behavior problem she couldn't manage. Ashamed because she felt she'd failed as a responsible dog owner. Embarrassed because being hauled like a hay wagon in front of the neighbors was humiliating."

If you have a troubled dog in your life, this book is for you. If you don't have a troubled dog in your life, but you want to read a moving memoir of a woman whose healing from traumas is paralleled by her loving but fearful and aggressive dog's rehabilitation, then you will love this book as well. It's a real page turner -- I read most of it in one sitting. I liked the other books she has written, but this one is truly special to me having had similar feelings and experiences when it comes to helping a troubled dog while dealing simultaneously with my own troubles. I also took away some tips as far as helping my dog goes. An amazing book.

I finished this book last night. I could not put it down. I applaud the author for her vulnerability, honesty, depth of looking at herself, skill, and so much more. This book will assist many, I know that. It is an extremely powerful and deep memoir, well researched, a book about women, sexual abuse and assault and the fall out of those, about healing and the work of healing as well as the commitment, about growing up in silence, often dissociated, and yes, about dogs. I wept often as I read. I paused often as I let in the reality she shared. I am a licensed clinical psychotherapist and grief/bereavement working primarily with women and very often with survivors of sexual abuse and assault.... again I thank Patricia and applaud her for the courage it took and the skill/vulnerability used to share her story. I have the book and also the audio. The reader was outstanding. A must read for all women and hopefully all men. And yes, I learned a lot about dogs and dog training especially valuable with my new puppy.

Beautifully written, weaving together stories of troubled or misunderstood dogs and their people with her own horrific traumas and how her knowledge of dogs helped her get the help she needed to overcome the painful episodes in her past. Not just a dog story, but since so many of us share our lives with dogs we can relate to her story because of its connection to Will and to dogs she has helped in her professional life. A very touching memoir which makes me appreciate all I have learned from Trisha even more. She is a remarkable woman.

Patricia McConnell is an internationally recognized animal behavior expert. She holds a PhD in

Zoology and is a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist. For over twenty-five years, companion animal lovers have benefitted from her wisdom and humor, and her game-changing book, *The Other End of the Leash: Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs*, remains a timeless classic. But this is only part of her story. *The Education of Will: A Mutual Memoir of a Woman and Her Dog* invites us into her private life, one that includes early-life traumas and a road to recovery. Her path also includes a fearful puppy as well as her extensive work with dogs who display fear and aggression. The book is real, empowering, raw, and beautifully written. 'The Education of Will' left me both in tears, but also smiling wide. McConnell pours buckets of compassion and understanding into areas often misunderstood and pushed aside. As another reviewer wrote, *It's her willingness to share her own experiences that makes her writing so effective.* Thank you for this most recent contribution!

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