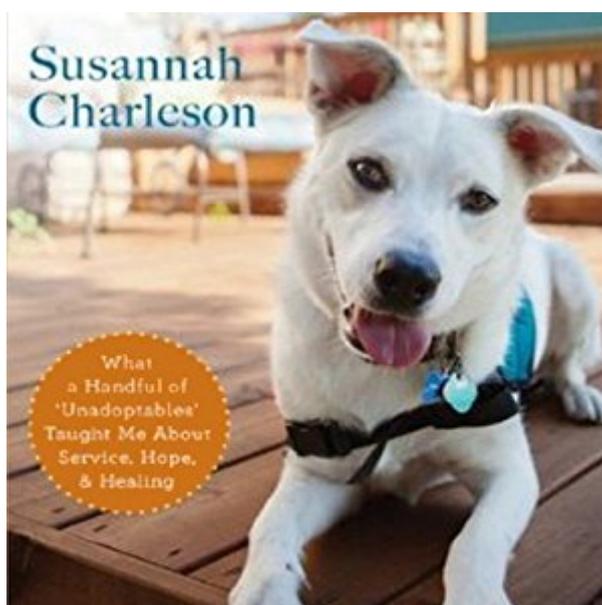


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# The Possibility Dogs: What A Handful Of 'Unadoptables' Taught Me About Service, Hope, And Healing



## Synopsis

From the author of the critically acclaimed bestseller, *Scent of the Missing*, comes a heartwarming and inspiring story that shows how dogs can be rescued and can rescue in return. For her first book, Susannah Charleson was praised for her unique insight into the kinship between humans and dogs, as revealed through canine search and rescue. In *The Possibility Dogs* Charleson chronicles her journey into the world of psychiatric-service and therapy dogs trained to serve the human mind, a journey that began as a personal one. After a particularly grisly search led to a struggle with PTSD, Charleson credits healing to her partnership with search dog Puzzle. Inspired by that experience and having met dogs formally trained to assist in such crises, Charleson learns to identify abandoned dogs with service potential, often plucking them from shelters at the last minute, and to train them for work beside hurting partners, to whom these second-chance dogs bring intelligence, comfort, and hope. From black Lab puppy Merlin, once cast away in a garbage bag, who stabilizes his partner's panic attacks to Ollie, the blind and deaf terrier who soothes anxious children, to Jake Piper, the starving pit bull mix who goes from abandoned to irreplaceable, *The Possibility Dogs* illuminates a whole new world of canine potential.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This was a wonderful read! As a person who requires a Psychiatric Service Dog it was beneficial to understand the beginning of the awareness and for the need them. I gained valuable knowledge dogs, their thought processes and to the responsibilities we have in handling people's responses to

the dogs in a positive and educational way. My dog has had his GCG training and is working on his task specific duties. With the help of a trainer we will finish this training with him ourselves. Sadly dogs that are "handler ready" are cost prohibitive. \$15,000 - \$20,000 is out of possibility for most people that would need a Psychiatric Service Dog. From my experience society assumes that dogs for PTSD are for veterans only and there are groups that fundraiser for the costs. Reality is there are many, many, many men and women that have PTSD that did not serve in the military. Many are only disability so with that minimal income there is almost no possibility of acquiring a dog that would have such a therapeutic and positive impact on their lives. This book showcases the process of adopting shelter dogs or dogs that need to be placed in a new home. The author shows some processes for task specific training. For me, it has been empowering that I can be part of my guys training. In these moments some of my debilitating symptoms are "at bay". I appreciate that this book for its view to the the handler training possibilities.

Possibility Dogs is well-written, important, useful, popular, and well-received by critics. It is just the kind of book that I wouldn't bother reviewing because what's the point in adding one more positive review to all the other positive reviews. In this case, I felt like adding my own two cents worth because I felt like it was written just for me, as a gift. While I don't (yet) require a service dog, I work with dogs daily in search and rescue. One of the things I enjoyed so much about this book was getting to know the dogs. Even when their behavior is inexplicable, as in the case of the twirling poms, the descriptions of their behavior brings the reader into their world. I also enjoyed Ms. Charleson's descriptions of training failures, such as Jake Piper's misses with the home command. Jake might have died, or he might have lived an ordinary or mean life, if not for Susannah. With her, he has become the embodiment of goodness. Jake is not an obedient automaton. Susannah has brought out the goodness that was always in him. Jake wants to be good and helpful. Jake had been abandoned, thrown away, deemed useless. Now he is a contributing member of society and a shining example to us all. How many millions of good Jakes are being thrown away, abused, neglected, and killed, when they could become wonderful, useful, intelligent, kind companions? Two of my dogs came from shelters, one was found tied to a tree, starving, and one was found running around the freeway. All four dogs are wonderful companions and three of them are working dogs. I am sure this book will reach a wide audience, and I hope it will inspire others to consider how humans and dogs can associate in mutualistic relationships. It is, after all, how we came to be here in the first place. We would still be insignificant primates swinging in trees if not for the association of humans and dogs 30,000 years ago. Throughout history, dogs have

helped us hunt and farm, they have protected us from danger and guided us home. Our relationship with dogs took us to corners of the globe where we would not have survived alone. Now that their work is largely over in those realms, having been replaced by machines, it is fitting that dogs can once again help us as psychiatric service dogs. It is a relationship that rewards the dog and the human, leading each to a better life than would be possible apart. I bought this book in Kindle format and also as an Audible book. While it is a great book either way, I highly recommend the audiobook. Ms. Charleson is a pleasure to spend time with. She feels like a friend, and her voice is so soft, smooth, and clear, with the slightest Texas accent at times. Also, she vocalizes the odd sounds of her dogs, which you should not miss. Get in your car with your dogs for a road trip to anywhere, and take this audiobook with you. You will fall in love with Susannah and Jake and all the others.

I was drawn into this book after the first few paragraphs. I have had 3 boxers over the span of my adult life and the enrichment, support and pleasure they have brought to my life is beyond words. I am well aware of the unique bond that's shared between a person and their dog. However, even being a dog person I had never heard of some of the ways dogs have been able to assist people with psychological needs. This book has inspired me to research local programs in my area to find ways to support their efforts. The book was also just an enjoyable read. Susannah's writing style is very appealing and like her wit and sense of humor. I highly recommend this book.

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