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Oh Puppy: Giving the *Gift* of Canine Companionship

Article by Carol Caridad

A familiar TV scene is a child eagerly waiting to open a big bowed present when suddenly the box begins to move and out jumps an adorable puppy ready to lick the face of their new best friend.

What the camera forgets to depict is the ten to fifteen years of responsibility that follows. While dogs can make a wonderful present, giving a dog to an unprepared or unsuspecting owner is also the reason many are surrendered to shelters and often euthanized.

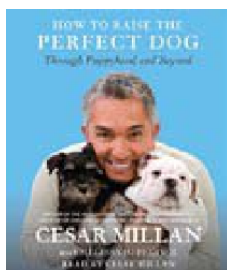
Gift givers should always evaluate if the gift recipient is truly prepared to become a pet parent, as owning a dog can be as challenging as it is rewarding. It is easy and fun to gift someone with a pet, but the novelty of receiving a new animal quickly wears off. In order to spare headaches and help ensure happily ever after, consider the following when selecting a dog or puppy as a gift:

- 1 How large will the puppy get? Is there a weight limit where the dog will live?
- 2 What are its daily grooming needs?
- 3 What breed will match the lifestyle, energy level and personality of the gift recipient?
- 4 Is the gift receiver willing to spend the significant start up cost associated with a new dog such as food, dishes, toys, brushes, leash, collar, ID tags, crate and a dog bed?
- 5 Training is very important when a new puppy arrives. There are local group and individual classes that can also be considered as part of the gift or even a book on techniques.
- 6 Will the puppy already have all vaccinations and be spayed/ neutered or will the financial responsibility of initial (and ongoing) vet care fall on the gift recipient?

Working with experienced animal rescue volunteers can help gift-givers make better decisions about which dog may be the best fit. *Paws 4 You Rescue* offers a Pet Promise Program. Through the program a Pet Promise Certificate is issued, promising the recipient the chance to adopt a pet from our rescue. Receiving an "IOU" allows the gift-recipient to take their time in selecting a new pet. Pet Promise Certificates also allow gift givers to "wrap" the necessary startup pet-care items into the cost of adopting a rescue.

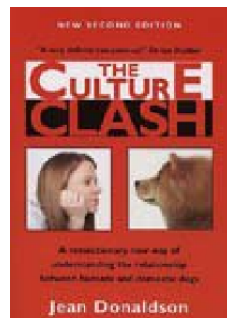
For more information on the Pet Promise Program please email petpromise@paws4you.org.

Books for new (and old!) dog owners:



Courtesy Photo

How to Raise the Perfect Dog
by Cesar Millan



Courtesy Photo

The Culture Clash
by Jean Donaldson



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The Power of Positive Dog
Training by Pat Miller