



## Be the Pack Leader: Use CESAR'S WAY to Transform Your Dog . . . and Your Life

*Cesar Millan , Melissa Jo Peltier*

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Melissa Jo Peltier

The *New York Times* bestseller!

*Be the Pack Leader* is Cesar Millan's guide for taking your relationship with your dog to a higher level. By developing the skills necessary to become the calm-assertive owner your dog needs in order for him to live a balanced, fulfilled life, you'll improve your dog's behavior and your own life as well.

*Be the Pack Leader* is filled with practical tips and techniques, including:

- How to use calm-assertive energy in relating to your dog—and to others around you
- The truth about behavioral tools, from leashes and harnesses to clickers and e-collars
- How to satisfy the needs of your dog's breed
- Success stories from Cesar's clients, viewers, and fans—including the Grogan family of Marley & Me fame
- A quick reference guide of specific, step-by-step procedures to tackling some of the most common dog behavior problems

"[Cesar] arrives amid chaos and leaves behind peace."  
—Malcolm Gladwell, *The New Yorker*

"[Millan is] serene and mesmerizing. . . . He deserves a cape and a mask."  
—*New York Times*

## **Be the Pack Leader: Use CESAR'S WAY to Transform Your Dog . . . and Your Life Details**

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## **From Reader Review Be the Pack Leader: Use CESAR'S WAY to Transform Your Dog . . . and Your Life for online ebook**

### **Ashleigh says**

Loved this. His ideas are based on experience. They are applicable, and they work. As I read this, dogs began to make more sense and so did people. Cesar really believes our "energy" matters. I am not sure I would call it energy, but yes, dogs, and other people I think, pick up on our energy. How can we expect to have a well-behaved dog and to be the dog's master if we are unstable?

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### **Claire says**

I watched one episode of this man's TV show and realised that I do not take in information through the TV very well, so I needed to read one of his books. Cesar has written several books on his experiences with dogs and I am currently having some dominance issues with my youngest dog, so I chose this one.

This is not a book about how to train your dog. If you want a book with instructions on teaching commands and such like then this is not it. This book goes some way to explaining how a dog's mind works and makes suggestions on how best for us humans to interact with them. It is fascinating and very useful, but not in the way that you would see immediate effects. This explanation of the reasons behind a dog's actions and reactions ought to get any dog owner thinking.

I want to be able to communicate with my dogs as best as I possibly can. They have already made a huge effort to understand me; they know several English words and will follow commands. So, it seems only polite for me to try to understand them a little better. It is not a "how to train your dog" book, probably because that would be as impossible to write as a "how to raise your kids" book. Every dog is different, and one dog could have seemingly similar behaviours to another dog, but for quite different reasons.

A lot of Cesar's interactions with dogs are intuitive. He has spent many years dealing with them. So, this limits the advice he can give through the medium of a book. He bases a lot of his suggestions around having calm-assertive energy. I appreciate what he is saying. But. One will be calm and assertive when one feels that one knows what he is doing with a pet, if one has no clue why their pet is behaving a certain way it is hard to be calm and assertive. After ten years working in financial trading it would be equally as useful for me to tell him to make a take a large speculative position by using his gut. That only works when you have practiced it for a while. I do take his point and I am doing my best, though. I am working on being calmer around the dogs and sending the positive energy. I do believe in that. On the whole, the book has provided me with some useful food for thought.

[click here to read the rest of my reviews](#)

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### **Jenna Fisher says**

Really insightful about how to work with dogs. A bit repetitive at times, but I was still fascinated. I'd recommend this to folks who have dogs.

## Drew says

We picked up this book from the library after Remy ate a chicken, hoping to learn how to break this habit without having to tie a dead chicken around her neck. Turned out the only time he mentioned the bad habit of chasing chickens he didn't really address how to stop it. We did learn some useful and interesting bits about how dogs think. I still remind Brittany that when she picks up the dog and holds her like a child it confuses the dog, but that doesn't seem to deter her. In the end, though, Remy stopped chasing chickens and now cohabitates well. Now we just need to figure out how to keep her from going into the coop and eating chicken feed until it makes her sick.

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## Pam says

This is a very helpful book. I adopted a dog about a year ago, and he came with some issues that my husband and I have been struggling with (separation anxiety, dominance, obsessive/fixated behavior towards my 3 cats, etc.). Thanks in part to the advice and examples in this book, my dog and I are making huge strides.

When I first got my dog (rat terrier mix), his separation anxiety was so severe, he would mess in the house if I was just in another room for too long (like when I took showers). We tried crate training him, but he destroyed two metal crates, bloodied his paws, and managed to break out of one of them several times (collapsed it one time, pulled a Houdini another time and I STILL can't figure out how he got free). Once, he even broke the welds holding the bars across the bottom of the crate and managed to pull the broken metal bars into the crate. He also was able to SHATTER the hard plastic tray that came with the crate. My husband and I were so concerned that he would hurt himself because of his anxiety that we spoke to our vet about anti-anxiety meds. A regular dose had no impact, so for months, he was taking a double dose.

Then I started reading this book (and Cesar's Way) and watching The Dog Whisperer on tv. I learned a LOT about both my dog and my interactions with him. I can happily say that the crate is no longer needed, he can be left alone in the house with the cats for several hours, we now come home to a calm, happy dog, and best of all, NO MORE MESSES! We have begun weening him off of the anti-anx. meds, and while he does still have a couple dominance issues, he is a MUCH better dog for all of the information I got from this book. I can't stress that point enough.

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## Amy says

I don't have a dog, but I picked this book up because I wanted to read about Millan's calm-assertive methods. I figure they are good leadership methods in general.

As Millan says (quoting Boyatzis and McKee) "the limbic system in the brain is an 'open-loop' system; that is, it depends on sources outside the body to manage itself. In other words, we rely on connections with other people for our own emotional stability. In this way, we are exactly like other social animals -- especially dogs. We mirror each other's emotional signals whereby one person can transmit signals that can alter hormone levels, cardiovascular function, sleep rhythms, and even immune function inside the body of another." That may sound like an exaggeration, but I can tell you from first-hand experience that it's not.

This book was a good reminder, but I actually felt that Monty Roberts' book "The Man Who Listens to Horses" explained things in more depth. However, Millan's story was still interesting and helpful. Millan talks about the concept in terms of energy, and Roberts calls it body language. Either way, it requires leadership and centeredness, and I believe it often works with people too. Not perfectly, and not all the time, but I think it has kept me from falling apart over the last year or so as I deal with someone who tends, like many of Millan's clients, to be "emotional, easily upset and frustrated, panicky, weak, or angry."

This book was my attempt to remind myself that I am attempting to "recognize [my] emotion and redirect it before it becomes the energy [I am] spreading on to others."

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## Andre says

If *Cesar's Way* was, as some folks complained, short on concretes, it was ample on theory, the whys and wherefores of Cesar's philosophy were explained in depth...for some too much so. *Be The Pack Leader* will please those who want more "a, b, c" application along with their theory. Co-authored with Melissa Jo Peltier the book's prose is a bit more polished than *Cesar's Way* which, I think, is reflective of Cesar's growth since the first book as he has continued his journey into the world of practical dog psychology.

Exercise, Discipline and Affection; clear Rules, Boundaries and Limitations; understanding that dogs are animals first, dogs next, breed third and their "name" last; and calm assertive energy are still the backbone of Cesar's philosophy and approach. He has however, explored further into the realms of psychology and behavioral science, both human and canine, in an effort to better understand the role of dogs and Man and how they interrelate. This is important because the more Cesar explores the equation of "problem dog" issues and instability, the more he has come face to face with the human factor and how that side of the relationship, and the ghosts that rattle about in the human closet, inform the situation. The book therefore is divided into three parts: "Balancing Your Dog"; "Balancing Ourselves" and the "Appendix: A Quick Reference Guide to Becoming a Better Pack Leader".

Be warned however, if you are looking for a book that deals with dog training, I.E. how to teach your animal to sit, down, stay, heel, etc. this is **not** the book for you. It will certainly help you understand your dog better, but it is not a training manual.

**Balancing Your Dog** addresses how to identify a dog's instability and features one of America's best known dog families, the Gorgons who owned, and were owned by, the beloved Marley of *Marley and Me* fame, as a sample case for the rest of the chapters in this portion of the book. In this section Cesar deals with the issues of rewards and punishment and talks about various tools one may use when working with a dog: collars, leds, etc.. He treats each of the major areas of dog issues: Aggression, Hyperactivity, Anxiety and Separation Anxiety, Obsessions/Fixations, Phobias and Low Self-esteem & Timidity. Cesar also offers practical suggestions for fulfilling the special needs of a specific breed and how answering those needs leads a dog into a more happily balanced calm-submissive state.

As I said above, those who complained that *Cesar's Way* was not specific enough will like part one of the book. Be warned however, Cesar does not let any owner off the hook concerning Exercise, Discipline and Affection. His idea of at least 45 minutes to an hour of active walking twice a day as a primal activity that brings dog and pack leader closer together is paramount. It is amazing how many folks balk at this requirement and can own a dog they have never taken for a walk. A large back yard is nothing but a larger kennel; dogs need to migrate with the pack leader. They need to get out. Please note: that's the owner taking the dog for a walk, not the other way around. The pack leader leads, the dog follows. I personally have been employing this technique and my walks with Callista are becoming more and more a joy. She doesn't pull,

plunge or charge. She's at my side, going where I want her to go, happy as a clam.

The **Balancing Ourselves** section is a bit more hard hitting and some may find it a bit threatening. In fact the first chapter of the book highlights the experience of a powerful business man who just couldn't wrap his mind around the fact that his two dog's aggression toward each other was a reflection of his own "I've got to be the best" attitude, his tendency to see his employees, and anyone else for that matter, as resources rather than human beings and humanizing his dogs to the point of favoring one over the other and blaming the one out of favor for all the faults and foibles of his favorite. The dogs sensed this imbalance in their master and acted accordingly in aggression toward each other. It wasn't until the guy faced himself and admitted to his attitude that his dogs could follow suit. It needs to be noted that Cesar makes it clear he is not a human psychologist, but he does indicate that he sees what is obvious and calls it like he sees it. If you ever get a chance to watch an episode of *The Dog Whisperer* on the National Geographic Channel you'll see this in action. I don't know how many times, now that I know what to look for, that I can clearly see the owners hand in a dogs behavior simply from the looks on their faces and their body language. If I can see it from the distance of television, a dog with hyper-senses surely can.

I liked this section of the book the most for a lot of reasons. One in particular was the chapter on how to create positive energy that dogs can read and respond to. There's nothing mystical about it. Dogs watch us closely seeking clues as to our attitudes, our emotional state. They can pick it up as easily as we can identify the letters in this sentence. Our self-perception is translated into energy: the way we look, carry ourselves and think. Dogs sense this and act accordingly. They want balance and if we are out of balance with low energy, self-esteem, sad, angry, depressed, impatient, etc. dogs respond by trying to right the scales of balance through taking over, acting out or responding negatively: peeing on the carpet, nipping the mailman or hiding in the corner when company comes. They are our mirrors. To restore balance, the owner needs to address their own negative energy and, in most cases, the dogs remarkably follow suit, not necessarily automatically or without therapy, and eventually return to balance.

There are some seriously amusing observations and anecdotes in this section too. The one I appreciated the most was when Cesar pointed out that, "...only humans promote, follow and praise instability. Only humans have leaders who can lie and get away with it" and then observed that if anyone took time to notice, they'd see that when a president of the United States steps off or onto Air Force One, from Reagan to Bush, the dog is either the first one off or resisting all the way with the president trying to maintain control! Who the pack leader is seems clear. He also pointed out that not since JFK has there been a "powerful" breed in the White House, such as a mastiff, Rhodesian ridgeback or Rottweiler for obvious reasons.

**The Appendix** is very helpful and will again please those who need clear direction. It is divided into subjects such as, "Meeting a Dog for the First Time" or "Mastering the Walk" and offers solid advice and suggestions on how to proceed and what to do in various circumstances.

It's obvious I enjoyed the book very much. Some might consider me a Cesar fan and I guess I am, but I'd like to think that more than that, I am a fan of a good idea and a solid philosophy, techniques that work and strategies that have results I can see. Cesar offers this and I "see" results in the behavior of my dog. As a matter of fact, my wife claims she has also seen a positive change in yours truly as well :-T, my attitudes and energy. Is Callista perfect? Well, no...but neither am I, not by a long shot; on a bad day, I'm still a pessimist, cynical at heart and more than willing to, "hope for the best but expect the worst" in situations and people. I've got a long way to go, so does she, but we're working on it together and using Cesar's techniques, as well as other resources, we're making progress. Who was it that said, "It's not about the destination; it's all about the journey"? I agree.

## Marre says

3,5

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## Lisa Kindberg says

Solid advice. Whether you're raising dogs or children the philosophy works. Dogs (and kids) need to have a calmly assertive person in their lives who cares for them enough to teach them the basics for survival.

Heel - stay by my side, don't go running off into the woods (traffic) I can protect you easier.

Sit - there are times when you need to be quiet and attentive.

Stay - now is NOT the time to go wandering on your own.

No - and no means NO. Fortunately dogs (and kids) are easily distracted and an attentive owner (parent) can easily find something else to grab the dog's (child's) attention.

OK - this is a good thing, to quickly transition from a NO to an OK! For example - neither a dog or a child should get out of a car until the OK is given :)

Children and dogs need to know that someone has control of any given situation. If a parent (or dog owner) is unable to be calm, firm, and consistent in teaching (training) the dog (or child) will think it's their duty to have control. Be the pack leader (parent")

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## Suzanne says

I bought this on CD and was glad I did. I don't think I would have stuck with it had I actually had to sit and read the book - at least I could get other things done while it played. I was disappointed at how it seemed to scrape the surface of being a pack leader without any real clear directions on how to do so. It was an interesting book if you enjoy listening to stories by Cesar of his experiences but I was looking for more examples I could actually apply to my dog. I have other books of his which I will try as I think it was my own fault of not thoroughly researching what this particular book covered.

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## T says

Some dog psychology can be extrapolated to human psychology. One's relationship with animals can be a reflection of self.

-Humans are capable of having these parts: intellectual, emotional, spiritual, instinctual.

-As humans, we create symbols and label things. We rationalize and use logic to understand things. Can we have ignored instinct along the way?

-Rules, boundaries, and limitations are part of the discipline needed to have a balanced life. It doesn't kill the spirit, it gives structure and stability to allow exploration and growth.

-Pride in the animal world is self-confidence, self-esteem, energy level, and assertiveness/dominance.

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-By talking to yourself first, you change your brain, your body, your emotions, your energy.

-Feeling badly and feeling sorry are weak energy. The kindest thing we can do is to help move forward with confidence.

-You may not be able to change feelings immediately but you can change thoughts. Intention leads to creation.

-Intent is similar to prayer plus energy. Ego (attachment) can be a hindrance to moving forward.

-When people undergo trauma and are unable to attain relief from stress, anxiety, grief, sadness, frustration, that negative energy has to go somewhere. It can manifest physically.

-Exposure is reinforcement.

-When we engage in a habitual behavior in response to something we fear, we reinforce that fear. Solution: confront it.

-Teaching to wait increases psychological stamina. Can do this with a dog by teaching eye contact.

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### **Theresa says**

What I pretty much got out of this book was to work on yourself and your own insecurities and anxieties. If you are "calm and assertive" in your everyday life then your dog will respect you as the alpha you need to be in order to train him. That's great advice and all but what I really wanted was a step by step plan to get my Chihuahua to stop jumping on and trying to french kiss everyone. only about 10% of this book was Do and Do Not. I skimmed through a lot of it. There were some great tips and useful information but I basically wanted the book to read "This is what you do. Do this and it will work every time."

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### **John says**

In my family, there are three factors that go into deciding what gift to bestow upon someone. 1) What hobby/activity are they participating in currently? 2) Do I think they'll like it? 3) I like it, so maybe they'll give it a chance and if not, maybe they'll give it to me.

The first one is certainly the most used. As an example, a few years ago I baked some sort of Germanic dessert bar for a potluck at work, then I made it again and brought it to Thanksgiving. To my family this automatically means that I am super into cooking and therefore have no other needs/desires than those related to the culinary arts. The effect of this cause – for Christmas I received a set of Pyrex and a set of French Corningware (I think that's what it's called). While appreciated and certainly practical gifts, I could have used other things, like money. The Pyrex definitely gets used and I think I only recently took the Corningware out of its box, because I ran out of Tupperware and needed something to mix my Tuna salad in. I'm still not sure what its intended use is, some sort of baking maybe?

To the point of this review, this past summer I turned the tiresome age of 30 - a momentous occasion, which passed with very little fanfare and a noticeable lack of streamers. A short three weeks prior, I made the insidious decision to adopt a dog. What birthday gifts did I receive you might ask? Well, let's just say it

would make an outsider wonder whose birthday it actually was, mine or my newly purchased best friend? One of the gifts that I suppose was for me was Cesar Millan's book, *Be the Pack Leader: Use CESAR'S WAY to Transform Your Dog . . . and Your Life*. I think only Alan from the Hangover would constitute a man and a dog as a pack though. Perhaps, if we included my roommate's 25lb cat Brian and his much slighter sister Echo. Anyway, I read the book in one sitting and it was an easy read in regard to language and topic. However, I have no idea how I am supposed to be Calm-Assertive.

When it comes to me – there are very few people that are calmer than I am, which leads me to believe that I am not assertive. I won't argue that point, but if the dog is supposed to sense my calm-assertiveness and I calmly and assertively (to the best of my ability) tell him to stop eating tissues out of the garbage and to quit taking the bunch of bananas off the counter and he doesn't do it – what's my problem? I'll tell you my problem; it's the a-hole of a best friend I paid too much for.

The only thing I really learned from this book is that I should not have adopted my dog. He is a high energy dog that has two gears - amped and sleeping. Meanwhile, I am a mid to low energy kind of guy. That combination is like Pig and Elephant DNA, they just don't mix. If I were a John Deere riding lawnmower, my speeds would be a turtle and a turtle on energy drinks.

This book should be given to people who are considering adopting a dog. It could save them a lot of heartache and hair pulling. While I'm in the mood for shifting blame, where the hell were my family and friends when I showed them pictures and told them about the dog? Why didn't any of them say, "But John, you've always wanted a big, fat, lazy dog." Then I could have said, "You're right. I will wait until I find a big, fat, lazy dog with a slight limp to come along." That's my future best friend. In closing, anyone want a Lab-Greyhound mix with an affinity for used Kleenex, paper towels, and cornbread muffins?

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### **Jessyca505 says**

"Discipline isn't about showing a dog who's boss; it's about taking responsibility for a living creature you have brought into your world. ~Millan

Some good points in here. Animal first. Dog second. Good ideas about getting out the energy and putting the dog to work. I like that he connected to human energy and emotional intelligence.

Calm assertiveness.

Truth be told, that's a great classroom management strategy too!

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### **Cynthia says**

This book wasn't what I expected. I thought it would be a serious book about obedience training, using fairly heavy-handed methods. Instead it was mostly about "energy" and how I needed to have the right kind of energy in order to mesh with my dog's energy (I think). Oh, and walk for several hours a day. Excuse me, that should have been "migrate."

I actually found some of it to be more interesting and useful than I expected. But most of it seemed quite unhelpful, even if you agree with his methods, whatever they are. We don't know, actually, because mostly he says things like, "walk with your dog for at least an hour a day. Make sure the dog walks next to you or

behind you." (How??? This is never made clear.) Then there's a little pie chart showing how the hour is to be split up. You don't let the dog pee until you've migrated for a while. Really? The dog wants to pee but you drag her down the street? If that's what's necessary to have a successful relationship with a dog, then count me out.

Perhaps if I were rehabbing a bully dog that had been given up because of aggression issues, some of this might be useful to me. But it seems unnecessary in most contexts -- kind of like civilians driving humvees.

On to the next dog training book.

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