



Carol Lea Benjamin is well known to dog lovers everywhere as an expert dog trainer and writer of outstanding training books, which have earned her numerous awards, including the Dog Writers' Association American Writer of the Year award. Ms. Benjamin also won the Shamus Award from the Private Eye Writers of America for her marvelous mystery series featuring detective Rachel Alexander and her lovable pit bull Dashiell. Ms.

Benjamin's years of advice to dog owners have focused on understanding the dog's psyche, forming a bond and relationship with your dog, and molding training techniques to reflect the dog's expectations – providing humane, effective, and low-stress training for both human and dog.

*Ms. Benjamin, how long have you had dogs in your life?*

*CLB - Forever. The second favorite story my family told to anyone who would listen was the story of how our dog, Snowflake, taught me to walk. I've been walking with dogs ever since.*

*How has your life been positively impacted by dogs?*

*CLB - An old boss of mine once told me about her aunt who was a bird watcher. "She has bird eyes," she told me. "If there's a bird anywhere nearby, she'll see it even if no one else does." That's when I realized I had dog eyes or that I see the world through dog-colored glasses. They've always been the most exciting thing in my life, my companions, mentors, confidants and partners. When I became a dog trainer, I named my business Oliver and Me, after my Golden Retriever, Oliver. Sometimes the mail would be addressed to him or callers would ask for him. I've always played second fiddle to my dog and it's as it should be. My writing began with dog training books, moved on to mysteries with a dog as the detective's partner and now I am back to writing about dogs without having to bump someone off. See Spot Sit, 101 Illustrated Tips for Training the Dog You Love reflects the way things are for me, a dog there to educate, love and spend time with and the illustrations which show how healthy it is and how much fun it is to hang out with dogs. They really give us much more than they get.*

*Is there one special memory you'd like to share?*

*CLB - Years ago I adopted a mixed breed pup from the ASPCA. He was so tiny when I adopted him that I used to carry him around in my jacket and I think our hearts started beating in sync. When he grew up, he began to help me with pain from a chronic illness and he became my first service dog. I am with my fourth service dog now, a Border Collie named Sky. She's a high energy, active little girl and so I have to get out a lot, toss the ball and take long walks. We keep each other in good shape and when I need more than companionship, she's always there for me.*

*What's your best advice for someone thinking of getting a dog for the first time?*

*CLB - Be realistic and find a dog whose energy level and personality fit well with yours.*

*Any tips for getting fit with your Fido? (What specific things have you learned about living a healthy life through your relationship with your dogs?)*

*CLB - I'll give you Tip #3 from See Spot Sit. "Dogs need exercise, outside, every single day, rain or shine." And if you are doing that with your dog, you'll both feel great.*

*Anything you'd like to add?*

*CLB - Yes, to one and all, have a great dog!*

You can read more about Ms. Benjamin and get her great advice at:

<http://www.carolleabenjamin.com/>. And be sure to check out her newest book, *See Spot Sit, 101 Illustrated Tips for Training the Dog You Love*.

