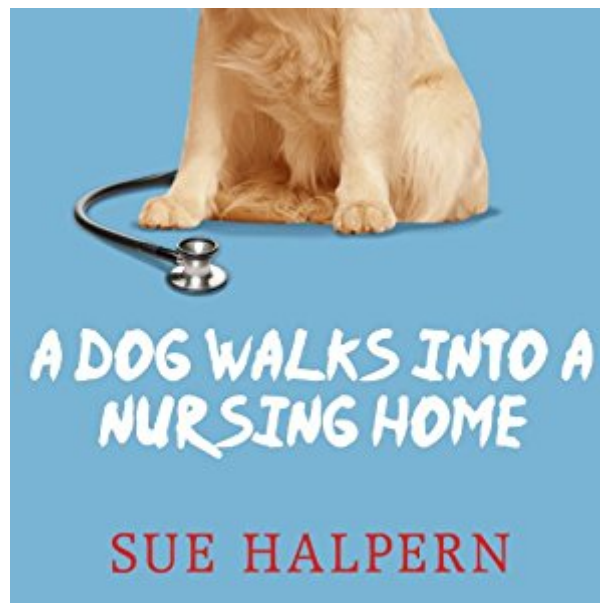




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# A Dog Walks Into A Nursing Home: Lessons In The Good Life From An Unlikely Teacher



## Synopsis

At loose ends with her daughter leaving home and her husband on the road, Sue Halpern decided to give herself and Pransky, her under-occupied Labradoodle, a new leash - er, lease - on life by getting the two of them certified as a therapy dog team. Smart, spirited, and instinctively compassionate, Pransky turned out to be not only a terrific therapist but an unerring moral compass. In the unlikely sounding arena of a public nursing home, she led her teammate into a series of encounters with the residents that revealed depths of warmth, humor, and insight Halpern hadn't expected. And little by little, their adventures expanded and illuminated Halpern's sense of what virtue is and does - how acts of kindness transform the giver as well as the given-to. Funny, moving, and profound, *A Dog Walks into a Nursing Home* is the story of how one faithful, charitable, loving, and sometimes prudent mutt - showing great hope, fortitude, and restraint along the way (the occasional begged or stolen treat notwithstanding) - taught a well-meaning woman the true nature and pleasures of the good life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This compassionate book about a woman and her newly-minted therapy dog provides a clear-eyed view of how life is lived (to the end) in what may be a typical county nursing home. Loved the author's humorous account of training her dog for this role. Despite comments to the contrary, I enjoyed the structure she gave her book with the 7 virtues - you can take it or leave it, and still enjoy the progression through personal stories of the people she meets, loves and loses. Her realization

of the blessings and harsh realities of the stage of life that brings residents to this place mirrors my own when I've visited relatives at nursing and rehabilitation centers (for briefer times). She accepts it all and they become devoted weekly visitors. A very insightful book that can draw you in quickly. P.S. the dog doesn't die in the end, as in so many dog-based books!

I am surprised to read so many odd/negative reviews of this wonderful book, and I surely don't understand how somebody could find this book too philosophical, 'not about the dog', and too deep. It is a lovely story of the work done by a thoughtful woman and her ever-so-pleasing canine companion as they embark on a journey that leads them to a more satisfied life (for both) and provides many a pleasurable moment to the people they interact with in a nursing home atmosphere. I'm quite certain that because Sue Halpern is a gifted, witty, and intelligent writer it is not surprising that she's able to tie all of this together with great wisdom from the ages with the words of Aristotle and the like thrown in for good measure. One reviewer said she wanted more dog stories: Did you read this book? It's all about the dog, really. Pransky (the dog) helps her owner find meaning to her life, helps those she interacts with find meaning, and provides a few funny (and philosophical) moments for the reader to enjoy along the way. Often, that 'meaning' is invisible to those petting Pransky's soft head or loving paws, but it's there, and provides a lift to the heart that clearly evokes the 'therapy' part of this kind of work. Just by existing, Pransky brings an unknowing joy and peace to those he interacts with. Really all quite clever and touching. If you're looking for a story about a dog and nothing more, this is not your book. If you want a story about a dog and his owner and the people they interact with while doing their volunteer animal therapy work, this is it. It's not a "how-to" (although, there are some great tips to be found throughout the book, if you want to read this as great 'therapy dog experience' book) and it's not 'cut and dried'; it's so much more than that. It brought me to tears a number of times, and it made me laugh out loud quite a few more. As the owner of a 9 month old puppy who will be entering the world of therapy dog work when she's old enough, I enjoyed this book so much. Sue Halpern's incredible writing style brings warmth, wit, joy and sadness to the human life we live, and ties in all into the sparkling eyes of a loving dog. You won't regret this journey.

Since the book is about, basically, an assisted living facility, and I live in an independent living facility, connected to an assisted living facility, I found the book to be depressing. I walk through the assisted living part often and there are people who stare blankly, or are obviously angry at the deal that fate has lent them but I see as many, if not more, who, against odds, are happy and welcoming

to anyone who passes through their isle. They even learn our names and actually cheer us up with their greetings. I loved the part about the doggie, which was most of the book, but left me with no hope for the patients. Adding the philosophy of Socrates, for one, was clever, but didn't help to cheer me up. My new friends in this place are very busy with many activities and our dining room is full of laughter, from one table or another, every evening. However, a visit from a doggie would be most welcome any time.

Great story about the experience of training and enjoying a therapy dog. It is really amazing the innate knowledge that animals have about people and their challenges as we age. I would recommend this book to anyone in the medical field especially, but it is a heartwarming story for anyone to enjoy. Anyone who wants to can make a difference!

Who doesn't love a good dog story? Dogs have a remarkable way of tugging on our heart strings. But those who find themselves no longer independent and living in an assisted living facility may have to leave their furry friends behind. Sue's book depicts the amazing love and compassion that therapy dogs can give to those living in a LTC setting. It's an eye-opening tour that gives us a small glimpse into the lives of those who live on the other side of the doors at a nursing home/rehab center and the difference a therapy dog can make. She also details the hard work and effort that goes into what makes a great therapy dog and the commitment on behalf of the volunteer/dog owner. God bless therapy dogs and owners everywhere!

I absolutely loved the story, not only about the author and her wonderful dog, but the stories of the patients Sue and Pransky became close to and helped in so many ways. And to see that in giving to others is an absolute gift to ourselves. The insights and understanding Sue came to in her inter-actions with the people were beautiful. And, the absolute un-conditional love Pransky had for ALL is a deep lesson for all of us. I especially found this book helpful because I want my next dog to be a therapy dog that I can take into convalescent homes and hospitals. For myself, I can't think of a more meaningful work. Sue and Pransky, thank you for your story, your insights and your love. We could all learn a lot from both of you.

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