



What Shamu Taught Me About Life, Love, and Marriage: Lessons for People from Animals and Their Trainers

Amy Sutherland

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While observing exotic animal trainers for her acclaimed book *Kicked, Bitten, and Scratched*, journalist Amy Sutherland had an epiphany: What if she used these training techniques with the human animals in her own life—namely her dear husband, Scott? In this lively and perceptive book, Sutherland tells how she took the trainers' lessons home.

The next time her forgetful husband stomped through the house in search of his mislaid car keys, she asked herself, "What would a dolphin trainer do?" The answer was: nothing. Trainers reward the behavior they want and, just as important, ignore the behavior they don't. Rather than appease her mate's rising temper by joining in the search, or fuel his temper by nagging him to keep better track of his things in the first place, Sutherland kept her mouth shut and her eyes on the dishes she was washing. In short order, Scott found his keys and regained his cool. "I felt like I should throw him a mackerel," she writes. In time, as she put more training principles into action, she noticed that she became more optimistic and less judgmental, and their twelve-year marriage was better than ever.

What started as a goofy experiment had such good results that Sutherland began using the training techniques with all the people in her life, including her mother, her friends, her students, even the clerk at the post office. In the end, the biggest lesson she learned is that the only animal you can truly change is yourself.

Full of fun facts, fascinating insights, hilarious anecdotes, and practical tips, *What Shamu Taught Me About Life, Love, and Marriage* describes Sutherland's Alice-in-Wonderland experience of stumbling into a world where cheetahs walk nicely on leashes and elephants paint with watercolors, and of leaving a new, improved Homo sapiens.

From the Hardcover edition.

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