



Puppy Chow is Better Than Prozac: The True Story of a Man and the Dog Who Saved His Life

Bruce Goldstein

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To Bruce Goldstein—an edgy, twenty-something New Yorker trying to make his mark in advertising—just waking up in the morning was an ordeal. Underemployed and recently dumped, he was well into the downward spiral of bipolar disorder. Even with therapy, lithium, Paxil, Wellbutrin, and Prozac, he could not shake his rapid mood swings, his fear of dying, or the voice of Satan, who first visited him one sunny day in Central Park. Then came Ozzy, a black Labrador pup (named after metal's "Prince of Darkness") who leads Bruce toward recovery through complete, canine dependence. From the depths of his despair to a life remade, Bruce shows how learning to care for, train, and love the hilariously loyal Ozzy provided him with the structure and focus he needed to heal.

Puppy Chow is Better Than Prozac: The True Story of a Man and the Dog Who Saved His Life Details

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From Reader Review Puppy Chow is Better Than Prozac: The True Story of a Man and the Dog Who Saved His Life for online ebook

Beth says

One of the best 'Doggie nonfiction' books out there, in my opinion. The first part paints a picture of a manic-depressive man and gives you a detailed, and often scary look into his psyche. The rest introduces you to the world of puppies and shows how such a creature can save your life. It also has some nice little training tips that he imbeds in there without throwing them into your face (Thank you, for Nature's Miracle Spray!).

Kendra says

I was excited to read this book because I love to read about mental illness and I am also a big fan of animal-assisted therapy. However, while the book wasn't bad by any means, I wasn't blown away either. It was just okay. The author goes through more than half of the book talking about his bipolar disorder before he gets to the part where he gets Ozzy. Though I am glad that the author found a healthy way to cope with his bipolar disorder and I can relate to the healing power that pets can have.

Nicole says

I really enjoyed reading this book. It probably has something to do with the fact that I'm a fairly new puppy mom myself. I got my little mutt just a few months ago because I NEEDED a dog. That's right, not wanted, I needed a dog. After the death of my cat a couple years ago, I needed to fill the void left by a furry creature. And I just hadn't been very happy with where I was right now in life (job, city, friends, etc.) And so enters my puppy.

This book reinforced my views that pets really are great therapy. I also realized that as hard as things get for me some days, things aren't nearly as bad as they could be.

Cheryl says

I loved this book when I read it a couple of years ago. The narrator of the book suffers from severe depression. He is often unable to get up and perform basic tasks and has extreme social anxiety. After getting a puppy, he realizes that he needs to take responsibility not only for himself, but for another life as well. A puppy who loves and relies on him. With the help of medical treatment and hard work, the narrator is able to meet new people and come out of the darkness due to the human/ animal bond. Loved it.

Teresa says

This book is a trip! I use this word because nowadays everyone is taking a "journey". It is compelling in that

anyone that has had or been through any level of depression can see the world through Bruce's eyes and to some degree what he was going through. I have this feeling that his journals were a detrimental (sp?) part of the beginning chapters. Setting the stage up to the point in time when Ozzy came into Bruce's life.

I don't recommend this book to everyone, only in that some people have never been there, depressed that is. That perhaps

it may be too MUCH reality to think that there are people out there that are having this type of extreme difficulty coping. People that have no idea what depression can or is like. I'm rambling, but I felt a tad overwhelmed at the extent of Bruce's depression and anxiety, but at the same time couldn't wait to get to the part where everything comes together.

Also, in a way, I feel connected to the Bruce. My dogs were and have been an integral part of my own survival. Leading me to love and enjoying life in a way I never knew was possible.

Peace ~ Out
Teresa

Katie Postlethwaite says

There are a lot of things I really liked about this book, and some things I really disliked.

Bruce Goldstein does a good job of explaining one man's experience living with bipolar disorder, and a great job explaining what it was like for him to adopt Ozzy, a friendly happy go lucky lab pup. One of the best things about this book is the fact that Goldstein does not pretend, even for a minute, that Ozzy was an easy adjustment. He describes the growing pains and his fear and frustration while adjusting to raising a puppy. Ozzy was not a "quick fix" but a catalyst for change. While suffering from crippling debilitating depression, and sometimes hectic heart pumping mania and occasionally hallucinations, Goldstein is forced constantly to pull himself together in whatever way possible to meet the needs of his growing puppy.

Ozzy is a loveable and understated hero. He is described in loving detail from nose to tail, with a liberal dose of mystic contemplation about the nature of his soul. He is definitely the star of this show.

I dislike the title "Puppy Chow is Better than Prozac" for several reasons. My main complaint is that while I fully appreciate and even practice the "puppy chow technique" myself, I do not for one minute think it is advisable to dump the meds and go full fur, which is what the title seems to recommend - even tho it is NOT what Goldstein does. Another complaint I have is that the author's main medication is Lithium, a completely different drug. Maybe I am nitpicking.

All in all, it is a good read. At times it is crude, and other times bluntly harshly realistic - but both of these tools serve to make the reader understand the depth of Goldstein's experience - both with his illness, and his dog.

There are parts of this story that are very very similar to my own, and that is what drew me to the book in the first place. Would I recommend it for everyone? Definitely not, but for the adventurous spirit with a basic understanding of the bond between dog and owner and a willingness to embrace a gritty look at the harsher sides of living with manic depression, it is a treat.

Lynnea says

I didn't appreciate the language in parts but really enjoyed the story - learning about bipolar and being reaffirmed in how wonderful pets can be for us psychologically

Nate says

I almost gave this book 3 stars, because I did like it. It is part bipolar-memoir and part raising-a-puppy-memoir. The bipolar parts particularly were interesting in their similarities (and differences, for that matter) to my experiences. It is a hard subject to explain to people who haven't experienced it, so I like to see how other people attempt to explain things.

The raising a puppy parts of the book were ok, not super exciting. There is a lot of focus on the puppy pissing and shitting on things, and I'm not sure I needed to go through that. He did have a couple of anecdotes that I really related to, and I love my puppy too.

The big problem with this book is the writing style, plot inconsistencies (how can a true story have plot inconsistencies?), and, once again, writing style. It really made me re-think my sometime-future plan to get my MFA and teach creative writing. The book is full of puns and alliteration, and prolific use of uninteresting adjectives. (There is a green tree out in front of his tan brick building, no lie.)

I did like it overall.

Peg says

An interesting read. Shows the reader what it is like to live with bipolar disorder. The protagonist is a single man in his 20s that feels lonely and invisible to the world while he suffers with his ailments (bipolar and Crohns--I am certain there is a link although it is never mentioned in the book--or with doctors treating similar pts today). He seems so alone in his world of disease until he gets a puppy. The dog opens up his world--he has someone other than himself to think about, and people approach him to converse about the dog--this helps him (along with medications) to become a more mainstream functional individual. Written in a humble, vulnerable voice that reeks of honesty.

E says

A roller coaster ride with a puppy-produced happy ending. If you love dogs or transformation stories, you'll like this one. It was also informative in the sense that I understand bipolar and manic depression a lot better than if I had just read a non-fiction book about it.

A couple of things: One, the pun-filled, light-hearted tone felt extremely out of place in many of the

passages. If the author is having a full-on meltdown where he is hallucinating about the devil and his knives beckoning him into the kitchen to kill himself, it's jarring to have it discussed in a kind of jokey manner. Two, I wish he had at least mentioned the fact that, in 99% of cases, a dog from a shelter or rescue group will be a wonderful, just-right companion. I was actively cringing during the scenes where he went into pet stores. PUPPY MILL PUPPY BORN IN CONDITIONS OF APPALLING CRUELTY, COMING RIGHT UP! Really?!

Beth says

An enjoyable read -- the personal story of a young, self-absorbed, bipolar man living in New York City whose life gets turned around by an intelligent, loving black lab puppy. Great dog descriptions.

Ksgpd says

Amazing! This story is moving, funny, scary and just amazing. I couldn't read it fast enough. If you know someone or are someone who struggles with mental illness, or are firm believer in the important role that dogs play in our lives; you'll love this book.

Jayne(the ghost reader) says

I really liked this book. The book was easy to get into and I felt I knew the author and what he was going through. I know how it is to go through having a dog and raising it. I felt Ozzie was like my dog Lady. She was the first dog I ever raised.

Eva says

a great book, from someone who is also crazy and has a new puppy.

Foxglove says

A first rate novel, told in the most humorous and intelligent way possible. Goldstein has a knack for discussing some of the most sad experiences with a level of wit and wisdom which leaves you feeling like you are talking to a dear friend. In fact, Goldstein humanizes mental illness in an incredibly sensitive way that does not allow for shame or self pity. Although bipolar disorder is a hard issue, Goldstein makes his book a safe place where it's okay to admit you're weird and need help, without wallowing in hopelessness.

Very fast paced, I read it in a single night because I simply could not put it down. Goldstein has incredible writing ability, combining honesty with a zest for life. If you read this book, you will be severely tempted to get a dog! Ozzy is not shown as the perfect dog, but as the dog Goldstein needed. In the best tradition of man and dog, the two bond and become a team against the sadness in the world, finding their way towards the

joy.

I look forward to seeing more from this excellent author.

MUST READ.
