



Being A Dog: Following the Dog Into a World of Smell Alexandra Horowitz, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator, Horowitz Dog Cognition Lab, Barnard College
Author, *Inside A Dog: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know*

Thursday, October 20, 2016, 7:00 PM
New Trier High School/Northfield, Cornog Auditorium, 7 Happ Rd., Northfield, IL 60093
Presented by Family Action Network (FAN)
Free and open to the public. Suitable for ages 10+. Info: familyactionnetwork.net

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: ALEXANDRA HOROWITZ, PH.D.

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Thursday, October 20, 2016, Being A Dog: Following the Dog Into a World of Smell, 7:00 PM, New Trier High School, Northfield Campus, Cornog Auditorium, 7 Happ Rd., Northfield, 60093. In her 2009 *New York Times* bestselling *Inside of a Dog*, Alexandra Horowitz, Ph.D., Principal Investigator at the **Horowitz Dog Cognition Lab** at **Barnard College**, revealed the often surprising evolutionary reasons behind why dogs behave the way they do; in her brand-new book, *Being A Dog: Following the Dog Into a World of Smell*, she explores what dogs know in even greater depth, following their lead to learn about the dog's spectacular nose and how we mere humans can improve our under-used sense of smell. The result is a revelation about the world that we share.

In *Being A Dog*, readers will learn how well a dog can smell versus how well a human can smell. We humans are what Dr. Horowitz and her fellow scientists call *microsmatic*, i.e., "poor smellers," compared to dogs. We have a mere six million olfactory receptor cells in our noses, whereas dogs have between 200 million and a billion, depending on the breed. Here's another comparison: Human beings have three receptor genes that allow us to see all the colors of the world. Dogs have some 800 receptor genes just for smell. In theory, they can smell *billions* of different odors.

So what, exactly, can dogs smell? Amyl acetate is the chemical that gives bananas their smell. Dogs can smell one drop of the chemical in a trillion drops of water. Dogs smell earthquakes before they happen, and rainstorms miles away. They have been trained to find explosives, land-mines, chemical accelerants, missing people, underwater cadavers, drugs of every type, counterfeit goods, illicit cell phones in prison and imported shark fins in suitcases, dry rot, termites, fire ants, bed bugs, truffles under the ground, and dairy cows in estrous. They smell what you had for breakfast and whether a cat touched your leg yesterday. They can smell cancer, both inside human beings and in lab samples. They can smell their way home, the time that has passed since a flower closed up, and the body under the rubble.

It is not that we humans can't smell; it's that we largely don't. Based on the biological facts alone, the major determining factor in whether we smell an odor or not seems to be just this: whether we bother to try and smell it.

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