



EXCERPTS:

“Charlie”

She lifts her nose to catch a scent, darts to a tree where the sneaky gray squirrel is leaping from branch to branch, then relaxes to revel in the feel of squishy mud between her toes. She pauses to watch calmly as a skateboarder zooms by, then with one last hop in the mud she trots back to Dad. This is Charlie, a healthy, urban dog, enjoying her afternoon in a city park. It’s raining but she doesn't mind; she had a meaty bone for breakfast; and she enjoys getting a little dirty even though she was just groomed. Charlie is an urban dog whose dogginess is celebrated, embraced, and nurtured. She is given healthy food, lots of exercise, and opportunities to explore nature and to play with friends. Charlie is happy and well-behaved. Sadly, Charlie is the exception and not the norm.

With discomforting frequency, the urban dogs we encounter are decked out in designer dog gear and learning the top-trending cult training methods, but they are not happy, healthy or well-behaved. They are anxious or hyper or socially awkward or destructive or all of the above; basic requirements for health and happiness are missing. (Chapter 1: What's an Urban dog Anyway?)

Misconception: Barking Is Aggressive

The scenario: Last week they played like besties, this week Bella won't stop barking at Buddy. Frenemies? No, likely just friends.

Barks, like wags, have different meanings in different situations. One of the most frequently misinterpreted barks is the play bark. Parents must learn to become familiar with their dog's particular noises; barks for play sound different than barks for warning, begging, and aggression. Read the sounds together with body language like posturing, raised hair, and ear positioning, and you will quickly learn to understand the whole story. (Chapter 12: Dog Park Etiquette)

