

My Friend Charlie: A Book for Young Readers and Dog Lovers

Scott MacDonald

Charlie MacDonald

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The cheerful picture book My Friend Charlie features a delightful canine guide who shares instructions for leading a happy, friendly life.

In Scott MacDonald's instructive picture book *My Friend Charlie*, a dog becomes a guide for living a fulfilling life.

Charlie is a charming dog who demonstrates life lessons for young people. On every other page of the book, he shares a single, sage bit of advice, as with his encouragements to "enjoy today," "be curious," and "accept change is it happens." There are cartoon illustrations of dogs who demonstrate these ideas; photographs of Charlie run alongside these lessons with additional explanations of the advice. Charlie's specific contributions to these lessons, though, are otherwise somewhat vague.

Additionally, the book's presentation is a bit misleading: the alluded-to coverage of Charlie's relationships with others is missing from most of the text; only a few pages depict him with his people and their relatives. A larger sense of the people's unique bond with Charlie is absent. Further, while the back cover text describes Charlie, where he lives, his relationship with his people, and the activities that he enjoys, it shares little information about the book's ultimate themes.

The book concludes with a positive affirmation that aligns with the ideals shared in its previous pages. However, this is followed by several dog-themed cartoons that, while humorous, are also superfluous. This interruptive material does not contribute to, or complement, the book's overall messages about how people might act to lead fulfilling lives.

A demonstration of living a happy, friendly life, the fun picture book *My Friend Charlie* features a delightful canine guide.

GAIL HOFFER-LOIBL (June 6, 2023)

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