



Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself: A Man and His Dog's Struggle to Find Salvation

Zachary Anderegg , Pete Nelson (With)

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While hiking on a solo vacation in a remote, uninhabitable region of Arizona, Zachary Anderegg happened upon Riley, an emaciated puppy clinging to life, at the bottom of a 350-foot canyon. In a daring act of humanity that trumped the deliberate savagery behind Riley's presence in such a place, Zak single-handedly orchestrated a delicate rescue. What didn't come out in the initial burst of publicity this story received is that Zak and Riley's destinies were intertwined long before they improbably found each other. For much of Zak's childhood, he was at the bottom of a veritable canyon himself—a canyon whose imprisoning depth and darkness was created by bullies who just wouldn't quit and parents who weren't capable of love. From the age of five, Zak was everyone's favorite target. When Zak came upon Riley, the puppy's condition bespoke his abusers' handiwork—three shotgun pellets embedded beneath his skin, teeth turned permanently black from malnutrition. The meeting was one of a man and a dog singularly suited to save each other. As a former US Marine sergeant, Zak was one of only a few people with the mettle and physical wherewithal to get Riley out. And in rescuing him, Zak was also attempting to save himself, conquering the currents of cruelty that swelled beneath his early life and always threatened to drown him.

Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself: A Man and His Dog's Struggle to Find Salvation Details

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From Reader Review Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself: A Man and His Dog's Struggle to Find Salvation for online ebook

Desiree Smolin says

An direct, open, unusually well-written book that reveals the deep suffering and long-lasting effects that severe bullying can have on its victims. Through the rescue of a severely malnourished and dehydrated dog senselessly left to die in a remote wilderness spot from which there is no hope of escape, the author is reminded of, recounts, and begins to come to terms with his own childhood--a childhood in which he was emotionally abandoned by adult caregivers while being severely bullied and treated as an outcast by those his own age. The child is indeed the father of the man. When a child is profoundly alone in suffering and interpreting ongoing social, emotional, physical, and relational cruelty, the child inevitably learns and relearns the lessons his own life is teaching him--lessons about himself, his worth, life, and the untrustworthiness of others. A masterfully constructed window into the world of a bullied child become adult. Lest anyone think this book is simply a depressing downer, it isn't. It has has a happy ending for both man and dog. And leaves the reader not depressed, but richer. Hope and change, this book says, is possible. And begins with us, wherever and whoever we are, as we contemplate truths that this book so eloquently demonstrates.

Delyse Richards says

Acts of cruelty to animals by lowlife humanity is so sickening. A chance discovery by Zachary Andregg of a starving dehydrated young dog that had been left at the bottom of a canyon to die, and the subsequent rescue and care he gave the poor animal makes a heartwarming story. Woven into the story is Zachary's own experience of being constantly bullied as a young boy, and the damage bullying does to the victim.

Amy says

An interesting story about a man who rescues a dog from a canyon. What makes the story into a book is how Anderegg weaves his personal story of being neglected and bullied into the story of the rescue and the puppy. Enjoyed reading it, but not for right before sleep!

Marisa says

He went off the rails with the lengthy yacht discussion. I liked the premise and the story (the saving of the dog, and how it related to/reflected on Anderegg's upbringing). But holy crap, this book needed a good editor.

Carolyn Vandine west says

I am such an animal lover that this book really hit home. But also the "real" story of the author's own trauma

of being bullied as a child and the lack of support from his parents. I hope everyone who reads this book will come away with how they can help someone else in life especially if they see signs of bullying in a young person.

Don't miss out on this encouraging book.

Carolyn Pullman says

I've wanted to read this book for a couple of years. I first read about Riley on the Canyon Puppy site. It left me wanting more. Kind of like in "Wild" there is a back story that ties in with the main one. In this case it's about being bullied as a kid. As the book progresses, he identifies behaviours and family actions that contribute to being victimized. He learns coping mechanisms, and ultimately how to get out of the vicious cycle. At the end he confronts his tormenters, and finds peace with himself. Meanwhile there's a daring rescue of Riley from the bottom of a slot canyon in Arizona. I enjoyed the rock climbing part of "Into the Wild", and this book features that in detail too. Lastly it's about the love of a man and his dog. Well worth reading.

Rita Allen says

Get the tissues ready!

I absolutely loved this book. It's not necessary to be an animal lover as am but I'm sure you'll feel the rush to read this book as soon as reading the description before purchasing. And regarding the bullying, it disturbed me deeply. Parents - try and get your kids to read book. Even if they aren't bullies themselves, they will have more compassion for those on the receiving end.

GREAT BOOK!!?

Melanie Neale says

Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself is an adventure story on the surface, but it digs much more deeply into the narrator's psyche than most adventure stories do. This is what makes it true to the memoir genre. Author and co-author have done a marvelous job of taking the story of the abandoned dog's rescue, which is amazing in itself, and tying it together with the backstory of the author's own childhood traumas and disappointments and abandonments. It's never easy to tie two stories together, and the way it's done in this book works well. I recommend this for animal lovers and for human lovers—for anyone who has ever been bullied or bullied someone else—two things that are not mutually exclusive.

To write an honest memoir, you have to be willing to let the world see you at your most pathetic and most human. Zak had absolutely no training in this: no writing workshops, no classes. And he managed, with Pete's guidance, to write a brilliant memoir. I applaud him for being brave enough to let the world see him at his worst when the temptation surely would have been there to only show him at his best.

This is also a good book for parents to read, because it makes you think deeply about how much the things you do and say, that may seem small to you at the time, can impact a child. The lesson at the end is loud and clear—love, empathy and compassion are stronger forces than any pain that we inflict on one another.

Michelle Anderegg says

I was given the opportunity to read the advance reader's copy. I'm so glad that I did. This book is not only about a heroic dog rescue but also about a life journey and the long term effects bullying and the mistreatment of children can have on the adults they become. I think a lot of people will be able to relate to the struggles that Zak has had as an adult from their own pasts. There is so much to be learned from our beloved dogs. Riley (the rescued puppy) is such a good example of "letting go" of the past and learning to trust people again.

I hope you enjoy reading the book as much as I did.

Jan says

My heart still feels like it has been prodded by a sharp stick. I found this nonfiction book so touching and powerful, I know it will linger with me for a long time. The story begins when Zak Anderegg, a young vet in his 30's, is climbing and rappelling through a slot canyon outside of Page, Arizona. He is an expert climber and has a passion for it. As he descends this particular slot canyon he finds a pit at the bottom in which is huddled a black puppy, near death.

It is clear that the puppy could not have ended up in that pit on its own; someone intentionally placed the pup there and then left him to die a slow and horrible death. Zak attempts to rescue the little dog and in so doing opens up an emotional torrent relating to the bullying he suffered as a child.

This is why I read books--to be touched by the struggles and victories people face; how adversity sometimes can launch us into new realms of possibilities and can free us from the weight of sorrow that we carry. Its success has to do with the size of the fight in the dog, just like the little black dog trapped 350 deep down in a pit.

Karen says

Feeling and Healing

If you're looking for a funny, laugh out loud book, you've chosen the wrong one. This is a heartfelt story of a dog that was abused, the man who tried to rescue it and the realization that their existence was more alike than when they first came in contact with each other.

When I first saw this story on Facebook, I was so sad that someone would do such a horrible thing as to abandon a vulnerable animal in a place where no one would find it, depriving it of food and water, to die a horrible death, well, it was unimaginable. I have a deep love of all creatures and the thought of someone doing that to that puppy made me cry.

Then I found out the author had a story to tell that was parallel to what Riley, the puppy, endured. I must applaud Zach Anderegg's strength and courage in retelling the story of his life. it certainly made me look at bullying in a much clearer light. I have never been bullied nor have I bullied anyone else but I didn't fully

recognize the deep, long-lasting effects bullying has on a young person's sense of self.

His personal story was painful to read about and appeared to be told with a "no holes barred" attitude that flowed very smoothly with his reenactment of Riley's rescue. I'm so happy they found each other. The fact that Zach has learned so much from Riley is a testimony to the human race's ability to change what has been ingrained in our minds and souls to make us a better version of ourselves. Congratulations to him.

I will continue to shout to anyone I know about reading this book and how it's not just a story about saving an animal. It's a story of feeling and healing.

Maggie says

Rating 2.5. This book purports to be about a dog rescue with side parallels to the life of the rescuer who was bullied. In actuality it's a book about the rescuer with a side of dog rescue. Not what I expected or wanted to read. The dog rescue was interesting. The bullying wore thin very, very quickly. It was all about poorrrr Zak. Clearly he was terribly affected by these incidences and has never been able to let go of his anger. I personally think that gives the power to the abuser. I have refused to allow them to have the power. The things they did to me was on them, not on me. I learned to fight back, stop the abuse, and hold myself apart thereafter. I have forgiven, but never forgot. It made me the winner. I think that's what Riley did. Zak should take a page from his book.

Carla says

For the most part, I liked this book.

From the start, though, it frustrated me how people can be so cruel to each other and animals. I'm glad Riley was found and rescued by Zak and Zak is on his way to recovering from his past.
BE NICE.

Sandra M Pennoyer says

Great book

I loved this book. My heart broke for Zach because of his childhood experience and I will pray that his road to emotional healing will now be smoothed out and I have faith that he will be the one that stops the cycle of abuse in his family. His children will be loved and nurtured and will be able to pass it down to their kids. What a wonderful man who is blessed by an awesome wife. They share their love for each other with their pets. Now that's living the "life of Riley"! I pray that they are successful in all of their future endeavors.

Shirley Eiswerth says

The author and the dog were just at my store doing a book signing, so I met Riley and he is a sweetheart!! Looking forward to reading this, and I even got it signed! :)

