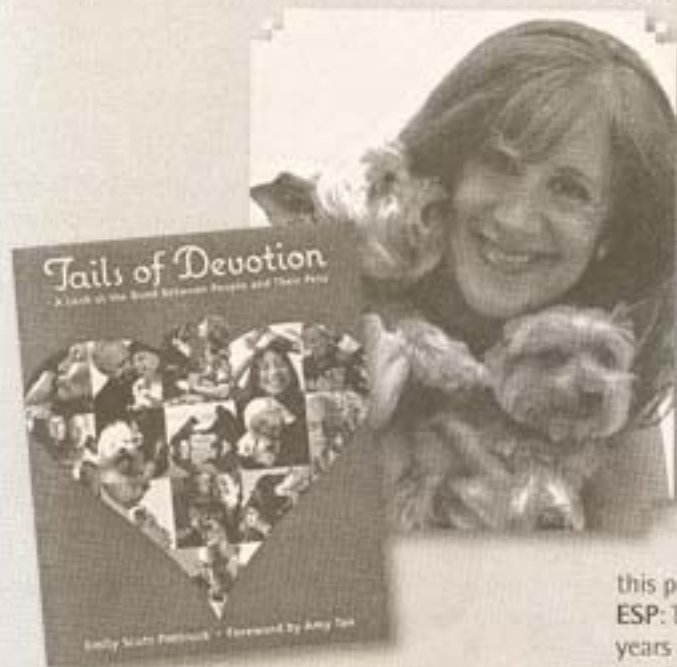


# AUTHOR'S CORNER

By Lauren Lewis



When Emily Scott Pottruck set out to create *Tails of Devotion* she wanted to honor the relationship between guardians and their pets. If your pet could write you a letter, what would he say? Or vice-versa, what would you say to your pet? That was the premise. What Pottruck learned, however, is that the bond between animals and their people, as well as the bond among all pet guardians, can cross all kinds of divides. It turns out, the powerful effect that animals have on our lives promotes our own welfare as well as theirs.

*Tails of Devotion* is a collection of letters and photographs exploring the relationship between 58 Bay Area families and their pets. Award-winning author Amy Tan contributed the foreword as well as an original poem to the project, and celebrities such as Robin Williams make an appearance alongside their beloved animals. Additionally, Pottruck has pledged to donate 100 percent of the proceeds to five humane organizations which are featured within the book. Taking time out of her busy tour schedule, Pottruck spared a moment to chat with us about *Tails of Devotion* and what it has meant for her.

**Tails:** Tell us about your relationship with your two dogs.

**Emily Scott Pottruck:** Andy and Boomer? They literally changed my life. I think that when you allow trust and purity and unconditional love into your life you have to respond in kind, and it's a ripple effect. Now I'm kinder, less judgmental, more forgiving...I take my role of guardian more seriously.

**Tails:** What was your motivation for creating this project?

**ESP:** Two things. One is that when Andy was attacked 6 years ago and almost died, the pet community came to us with such support, both emotionally and medically, I was shocked. We had vets going out of their way to help us. I really valued that respect. The fact that the people on the Yorkie chat board responded to me from all over the world—it was the one time I could say they absolutely know how I feel. That's why the subtitle is "A Look at the Bond Between People and Their Pets." I wanted to honor that. The second reason is that I really, really wanted to give back to organizations so others don't have to make a choice when it comes to providing medical attention for pets. That's why every penny goes to charity...I'm not recouping a penny, this is my gift to the world.

**Tails:** How did you come up with the idea that families would share their own stories in *Tails of Devotion*?

**ESP:** When I get home I say: "Andy! Boomer! What did you do today?" My husband said, "What will you do if Andy talks back one day?" I said, "He does talk back to me!" This whole book is about emotion. The letters had to speak as much as the photos did. With the photos, I really wanted it to be authentic. [At the photo sessions] I was surprised at how people with lizards, snakes, etc. feel exactly the same way we do with our pets. It's the same sentiment. That was a real "aha" moment for me.

**Tails:** How did you choose the 58 families featured in the book?

**ESP:** It was very important to have diversity of animals, diversity of people, and diversity of families. I went through some of the non-profits, I went on Craigslist, and one by one everybody just sort of fell into place.

**Tails:** In your introduction to the book you say, "I set out on a journey to meet other animal devotees to prove to my husband that I am not as uniquely crazy as he thinks I am." Is he convinced now?

**ESP:** He is convinced now, and I've actually said to him now, I'm not crazy at all! That word is stricken from our house.

**Tails:** What did you learn from putting together *Tails of Devotion*?

**ESP:** One, how much I don't know. This is one of those, I put my toe in the water and now it's an ocean—the learning curve has just begun. Two, when you do something you have passion for you just figure it out and move forward. Three, when it's not about you...this book, for me, honors a relationship others have.

**Tails:** Do you have plans for anymore books dedicated to dogs—maybe take *Tails of Devotion* cross country?

**ESP:** Never say never. But I have a very big goal with this book. ☺