

From Pamela McCall, Director of Communication, Beacon Press

When scholar Deni Elliott was diagnosed as legally blind, she was director of the campus-wide ethics center at the University of Montana. Suddenly she felt like a living example from one of her lectures on deception. She had long kept her visual limitations private while clinging to her identity as a successful professional woman who was not really disabled. She even had a driver's license that she kept secret from her doctors, occasionally driving herself to work. "I knew that my justifications for driving," she writes, "were as murky as my vision."

As Elliott faced a reckoning with disability and independence, her lifelong love of dogs became her salvation. In "[Catching Sight: How a Guide Dog Helped Me See Myself](#)," (6/16) written with veteran guide dog instructor Graham Buck, she recounts the steep learning curve she went through before being permanently matched with her first formally trained guide dog, a yellow lab named Alberta. Beginning with Alberta's birth in a litter bred for guiding eye work, Elliott traces the extraordinary training, interspecies communication, and mutual leadership that goes into every successful guide dog partnership.

Throughout, Elliott shares her deep affection for the many dogs who have been part of her life, while being frank (and funny) about the humans who have disappointed her. Early on, when a potential romantic partner says he couldn't stand to have a blind wife, she says no problem, "I couldn't stand to have an asshole for a husband." She writes, too, about the fallout from her increasing identity as a disabled person, including the relationship breakdown with her husband. "I hold her hand because I want to," he tells her regarding his preference for his new girlfriend. "Not because I have to."

*Catching Sight* offers a moving look at the often-transformative relationship between people and dogs, while offering a fresh perspective on disability and identity. If you're interested in an interview or other coverage, Beacon Press would be happy to send a digital and/or bound copy of the book.