



Listening to the Animals: Becoming The Supervet

Noel Fitzpatrick

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THE NO.1 SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER.

A powerful, heart-warming and inspiring memoir from the UK's most famous and beloved vet, Professor Noel Fitzpatrick - star of the Channel 4 series *The Supervet*.

Growing up on the family farm in Ballyfin, Ireland, Noel's childhood was spent tending to the cattle and sheep, the hay and silage, the tractors and land, his beloved sheepdog Pirate providing solace from the bullies that plagued him at school. It was this bond with Pirate, and a fateful night spent desperately trying to save a newborn lamb, that inspired Noel to enter the world of veterinary science - and set him on the path to becoming The Supervet.

Now, in this long-awaited memoir, Noel recounts this often-surprising journey that sees him leaving behind a farm animal practice in rural Ireland to set up Fitzpatrick Referrals in Surrey, one of the most advanced small animal specialist centres in the world. We meet the animals that paved the way, from calving cows and corralling bullocks to talkative parrots and bionic cats and dogs.

Noel has listened to the many lessons that the animals in his care have taught him, and especially the times he has shared with his beloved Keira, the scruffy Border Terrier who has been by Noel's side as he's dealt with the unbelievable highs and crushing lows of his extraordinary career.

As heart-warming and life-affirming as the TV show with which he made his name, *Listening to the Animals* is a story of love, hope and compassion, and about rejoicing in the bond between humans and animals that makes us the very best we can be.

Listening to the Animals: Becoming The Supervet Details

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AnnMarie Lucas says

Such a good book written by such a lovely man!

Misfits farm says

Noel. Where do I begin. Many of us have admired him since watching “Supervet” on the TV. I remember watching this first TV appearances as “The Bionic Vet” before he was so well known by the great British public. This is the story of his life, from his humble beginnings on a farm and how he tentatively and sometimes brutally(due to the conditions such as cold and wet) learned the beginnings of his skills which we today see as the eminent surgeon that he is through to having his dream of his practice and One medicine. The love for his parents and that his father never told him he was proud of him but that “he saw it in his eyes”. The bullying he endured at school being from the country and knowing very little (and handwriting that still hasn’t improved much- his own words!). He tells us as it is and explains in details some of the operations and his dreams. One Medicine- where human and animal medicine come together for the common good and instead of giving an animal a disease or “injury” use the veterinary world where this has happened for real to gain insight. Lives saved at both ends.

This man is an inspiration. Having been privileged to met him he is everything you see on TV and more. His love for animals and enthusiasm is infectious and if we can all just change one person to be kinder to animals, we will have changed the world for that one animal. Whether it’s not buying caged eggs (Please buy free range) or giving loose change to an animal charity, every little counts. For me as with many others and Noel himself, animals make the world go around and give us so very much it’s hard to put into words. They get some of us through very tough times and some would not be here if it wasn’t for an animal needing them. A hug, a lick, something to nuzzle into and know how we feel. Sentient beings whom we treasure like no other. Thank you Noel. You have brought our feelings to the masses and changed so many lives for the better both animal and human. One of my books of the year 5** and 10* if I could.

For more reviews please see my blog <http://nickibookblog.blogspot.co.uk/>

or follow me on Twitter @nickijmurphy1

Amazon Top 1000 reviewer.

Pete says

I really wanted to read and enjoy this book, having been given it as a Christmas present. However I found it rather disappointing, and strangely it read almost like three different books, each third (roughly) is written completely differently and each has its good and bad points.

But before I get on to the actual book, I have to say that I find the author's work, dedication, compassion and obvious intelligence truly inspirational and I love the 'Supervet' TV series which is completely unique and compelling.

But, back to the book, the first section is about Professor Fitzpatrick's childhood, school etc. and I actually found this quite depressing to read, as the emphasis was almost completely on the hardships and negatives

that he encountered, and although he does in passing mention some happy times, it is almost as though he is embarrassed to have had any pleasurable experiences.

The middle section covers vet school and his early days as a vet, and was for me the most enjoyable part of the book, with some amusing anecdotes to leaven the continuing negativity.

The last part of the book deals with his struggles to get his wonderful current practice set up and also with some very in depth details of his philosophy, aims and the charity he has set up to promote his 'One Medicine' dream. I actually found this provoked a strange mixture of admiration for what he has achieved (and sacrificed) but also quite hard going as it delves into some very deep and important issues, this wasn't helped by the writing which I found quite inaccessible and difficult to understand and certain concepts were repeated almost verbatim several times, maybe this was done deliberately to provide emphasis, but I found it a bit irritating.

So, I shall continue to be in awe of what the author has achieved, and rather sad that he has sacrificed so much to achieve it, but I'm afraid that I won't be reading any more books by him. Sorry.

Nicola Clough says

I love watching the supervet so much and couldn't wait to read this book. I have never laughed and cried so much at the same time the book is simply brilliant and tells the story of Noel from childhood through to adulthood and how he had to work to become a vet but also shows how he had a hard life with the bullies but how determined he was to get what he wanted. He's an amazing guy and his book is simply brilliant from the first page and lovely to hear of his early life and what he has achieved. It's great to hear about the animals that helped him paved the way for his journey and how he has had highs and lows. Simply fantastic and worth far more than five stars so grateful he wrote this book.

Pamela says

I have always enjoyed watching Noel Fitzpatrick's TV programme *The Supervet* and so was delighted to be given this memoir. From his early years on a farm in Ireland to his creation of a state-of-the-art Referrals Centre in Surrey, this is a heartwarming and enjoyable story.

I guess many readers come to biographies looking to learn more about the subject's personal life, and Noel Fitzpatrick does share stories of his childhood and his romantic relationships. However, these chapters are rather stilted and Fitzpatrick seems much less comfortable dealing with these subjects than when he writes about the animals he cares for and about a life dedicated to pushing the boundaries of veterinary medicine.

Fortunately I was much more interested in Noel's scientific advances than his friends and lovers, and enjoyed his enthusiasm for his life's work and his compassion and warmth towards the animals he treats and their families. I found the technical detail of how he creates his innovative prostheses fascinating, and he also offers a compelling vision of a potential future where scientific and technological advances can come to replace the requirement for medical experiments on live animals.

Very enjoyable insight into the challenges and successes of this popular TV personality, nice Christmas reading.

Zara says

I absolutely love Noel Fitzpatrick and his TV series 'The Supervet' so I was extremely excited when I heard he had a book coming out. His book doesn't disappoint, and is extremely inspiring - he has led an interesting life, has had his ups and downs, experienced bullying at school, sadly puts himself down even now (why, Noel, why??), but as his TV series shows, he has come out the other side shining and successful - there's one up to those bullies! Well done, Noel!

Sara says

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Noel Fitzpatrick is perhaps best known in the UK for his tv programme 'The Supervet', which centres around his small animal practice treating exceptionally difficult cases with a certain degree of innovation and passion. His book looks deeper into this passion for his work, as well as expanding on Noel's life growing up in rural Ireland, and his difficult route to the so called 'field of dreams'.

I have so much respect of Noel. He has a wonderful work, and life, ethic - believing that you can achieve anything if you work hard enough for it. And he has shown that himself from the large amount of time and effort he's put into his profession, advancing veterinary medicine to the benefit of thousands of animals.

Reading about Noel's upbringing on a rural Irish farm, there's a vulnerability to his writing that makes him instantly endearing. It really feels like he's writing from the heart and you can feel his passion and warmth. He writes honestly about his struggles with bullies and the isolation he felt, and growing up with the beloved farm dog Pirate, who was his only confidante. At times I was truly brought close to tears.

I particularly enjoyed the later chapters, as we join Noel on his quest to secure his own practice and improve the veterinary medicine specialisms of orthopaedics and neurosurgery. I have a dachshund myself, and I know that in the future we may have back problems in Monty that 10 years ago would have meant he would have been put down. Now, thanks to Noel, there's a hope within the field that he could undergo procedures that could lead to a long and healthy life. That's all down to Noel and his absolute belief in what he does. Thank you Noel. If only more people had the compassion you show for our four legged family members.

If anything, I would have liked to have read more tales from the various practices he 'locumed' for, as I think he spent a greater amount of time describing his experiences on farm animal cases (which I still really enjoyed - especially the story about the drunk lads and the cow caesarean!). But, honestly, I really enjoyed this. A must read for any animal lover, told with no end of enthusiasm and love.

Louise says

The book starts with Noel Fitzpatrick recalling how he used to get up at two o'clock in the morning as a ten year old to go off into the fields during lambing time. It was 1978 at his family's farm in Ballyfin, Republic of Ireland. He tells of his fathers' fiercely strong work ethic and how he educated him in every aspect of

farming.

Noel remembers extreme bullying at school and how incredibly hard he had to work to qualify as a vet. Later chapters reflect on his total dedication to veterinary medicine, masterminding pioneering surgical techniques and a belief that there should be one medicine for both humans and animals.

The Supervet is a humble, compassionate and immensely endearing man. His story shows that with grit and determination anything can be achieved. We, as pet owners, are so lucky to have someone with a heart and brain the size of Noels and many, many animals are alive today because he never gave up on them.

ms daisy mcinnes says

If you have ever had your heart taken by an animal this book is for you

If you have ever been lucky to feel the unconditional love of an animal, and the pain that comes when you finally have to part, the book will inspire, uplift, and make you cry all in equal measure, if this man's love, compassion, ambition, drive and sheer selfishness could be bottled the world would be a much greater place. Here's to the man who not only talks to the animals he listens to them too. He has dedicated and in turn sacrificed so much not just for the love of animals, but also for the lessons we all need to know for humanity's sake. I hope his sacrifice is not all in vain, and he finds someone to share his life with, as he deserves human love, not just animal love, although he has shown just how equal animal love can be. More power too this man's elbow. Not only is he a supervet, but a superman. He instills inspiration that is beyond words.

Julie says

It is always interesting to read a book like this, about someone who has had a lifelong passion for what they do. Noel Fitzpatrick was a bit of a lonely boy growing up on a rural Irish farm, who develops an persona of Vetman - someone who protects and looks after all animals. He has gone on to specialize in Neuro and Ortho cases, to develop new procedures and new prosthetics for animals, lecture in the UK and US and open his own hospital, as well as appearing in The Supervet on television.

As I've got older I can't watch many shows about animals being in pain, but have watched a couple of his shows and you have to admire his dedication to trying to do the best for the dogs and cats and people he looks after. I didn't realize until I had read the book that he is trying to integrate the sharing of information and techniques between human and animal medicine.

Alayne Emmett says

That was an interesting book to read. I admire Noel Fitzpatrick and what he does to help animals so reading

this was quite an eye-opener as he has had a big struggle in his life to get to where he is today. Some of it was a bit technical but I got through it .

Rebecca If Only I Could Read Faster says

I have watched Noel Fitzpatrick on television since his days on the BBC as The Bionic Vet. Of course, now he is better known as The Supervet, star of the Channel Four programme that has been shown on prime time tv for years.

From what I have seen about Noel, he really is someone very special, his dedication is clearly evident, as is his genuine love of animals, and the fact that he loves hugs.

I have often wondered about who he is, the man behind the vet. What drives him to work more hours in the day than is healthy? There has never been any mention of relationships or even friends outside the vet practice, but surely there must be some life outside of it? And why does he hug pretty much everyone that he meets?

Listening To The Animals answers all of those questions. Growing up on an Irish farm was clearly tough and taught Noel some valuable lessons about hard work, although I think that most people will agree that the hours that he puts in are not healthy. The bullying that he suffered was heartbreaking to read, how lonely and isolated he felt as a little boy with only a farm dog to talk to about his worries. I loved how he knew from so early on that he wanted to be a vet and my goodness I'm not sure that I've ever heard of anyone working harder than he did to reach his goal. Serious respect to the man, whatever you may think of him, he is someone that will not be beaten and if one way of reaching his goal doesn't work then he will find another way. Some of his stories were hilarious and had me chuckling away as I read.

I enjoyed reading about some of his hobbies that he loved and learnt from, although all fell to the wayside as work took over his life. And we also heard about relationships, here he was very honest with us, I'm not sure that I really needed to know how old he was when he lost his virginity, but it was an interesting chapter.

I also had no idea what went into building his practice, both in sweat and tears, but also money and debt. I told someone that I had read the book and the only thing that they said was 'He must be so rich.' I may have thought the same, but now I know better. He is not in the job for the money, it really is all about the animals.

He talked a lot about his love of Kiera, a little dog that he shares with a vet nurse because he is aware that his lifestyle is not one that would be fair for a dog. The relationship between man and their dog is a complex one, one that I think is often dismissed by people who have never had a dog and even some who have, but what makes Noel such an amazing vet is that he totally understands this. In fact, I think that he has a better understanding of that love and connection and how important it is than most people. I have a dog and I've been lucky enough to have had two other dogs who sadly died from old age, all three were part of my family but I am sure that I could not articulate the depth of the feeling that I have or have had for my dogs as well as Noel has.

At the time of writing the book, it appeared that Noel was single, I've always had a bit of a 'thing' for him, so if you're reading this Noel and fancy meeting up then do get in touch!

Thank you to Trapeze Books for a copy of Listening To The Animals: Becoming The Supervet by Noel

Fitzpatrick. I was under no obligation to review the book and all thoughts are my own.

Julie says

I don't usually read biographies, but made an exception for this person, seeing as they have a Border Terrier. And I am very fond of Border Terrier's, since Impi joined our family in 2006. The story, which in effect it is, is well written and engaging. In fact it reminded me somewhat of Graham Norton's book 'A Keeper' in the way that it was written.

There are technical veterinary terms in the book, but these are explained, sometimes with other technical terms in brackets, to expand the information being given. It is relevant to the story, so nothing to be alarmed by. Noel keeps the level very appropriate to anyone reading as a lay person. His tone is chatty and he regales the reader with his childhood antics set in Ballyfin and continues on into his adulthood with trials and tribulations as he works out what he wants from, and to be, in life.

I could not find anything to dislike about the book and took pleasure in reading it. His views on the human relationship with animals is on a par with my own and it was good to read someone else's opinions corresponding so well with mine. I can wholeheartedly recommend that you read this book.

‘everything’s impossible until it happens!’

I received an e-ARC of this novel through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and honest review. NetGalley does not allow for paid reviews.

Julie Haigh says

Supervet - Super book!

James Herriot's books were among the first memoirs I read many years ago. Since then I've read a few more of this type of book, and recently 3 on the trot. Noel Fitzpatrick's book was wonderful and certainly lived up to all expectations.

He relates his family story, and circumstances which made him desire to become a vet. The book starts with his childhood in Ireland. At the age of 10, he's already dealing with lambing. He lives on a farm, it's the norm. Farming was in the family-his father, his father's father, etc. Even at this early age, he's an old hand at this sort of thing. He's been dealing with birthing since about two years previous. Oh my, already my emotions were involved. The first chapter left me breathless.

This was so well written. Lovely anecdotes from his early life, told with warmth and humour. Some of it is very hard circumstances; farm life, the inevitability of things for the cows and sheep. Filled with both happy memories, and hard times. From those hard beginnings in Ireland, how far he has come. He hadn't been a top of the class student-far from it, things didn't come easy for him. But work, work, work he did.

I've only seen Noel Fitzpatrick in brief spats on TV, in between work etc. My mum watches him and has quite a soft spot for him. So I was coming to his book not really knowing much about him. I absolutely loved it! A wonderful read.

Michelle says

I truly enjoy *The Supervet*, a TV show about love and hope. In *Listening to the Animals*, Noel takes the reader back to his childhood on a farm in Ireland, where his vet dreams once began. The first 100 pages cover his life on the farm, childhood fantasies and anecdotes that shaped him. Other themes are the prominence of religion in 1970s rural Ireland, childhood bullying and self-doubt. I had mixed feelings about this part of the book - I found some of it interesting and some not. In many ways, *Listening to the Animals* is an ode to Noel's parents.

Noel gives himself wholeheartedly in this book. We learn about his ambitious journey from taking care of sheep and cows to dogs and cats and the hard work behind. Noel continuously pushes the boundaries for innovative solutions in an evolving field, including custom implants and bionic limbs. He recounts the animals and people he has met along the way and the impact they have had on his life, and the difficult decisions that often have to be made and the ethics behind it.

I took away two key messages - Firstly, work hard and there is no stopping you. However, the flip side in Noel's case has been zero work-life balance and failed relationships. I feel anxious just reading about his hectic lifestyle operating seven days per week, studying, lecturing, setting up a charity and taking part in a TV show. The second key message is that human medicine has a lot to learn from animal medicine and vice versa, sharing knowledge and learning. All in all a good read provoking some insightful discussion around the future of veterinary (and human) medicine.
