BORN FOR GREATNESS
YOU ME AND THE DALAI LAMA

BY BOUNCY THE PEOPLE TRAINER

Written by Alice Ray
Illustrated by Monica Roberts
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For the children of today who will need greatness beyond measure to lead a world we haven’t yet imagined.
There’s this guy I’ve heard about . . .
His name is the Dalai Lama.
For a long time I thought it was Dolly, the llama.
But I was wrong. He’s a two-legged person.
Many people think he’s the world’s best teacher.
I haven’t really met him.  
But I feel like I know him, 
because it seems like we’re a lot alike.  
I mean he has two legs and I have three.  
And he’s bald and I have plenty of fur.  
But on the big stuff we’re kind of the same.  

We both think it’s important  
to study hard and to be really nice  
and to help people who need it.  
We both wear a kind of uniform  
that reminds us that we were  
born to help others . . .  
But I’m getting ahead of myself.
Where Dalai (that’s what I call him) was born the older people try to find a child who could grow up to be their true leader. They watch for clues to tell them where to look. When they find the right kid, they tell his parents, “Your child was born for greatness!”

This time, the clues told them to look in a certain village, and be sure to check the cow shed. That’s where they found the little boy who they knew at once was meant to be their great leader.
They said, “This little kid is born for greatness.”
Then they gave him a new name: Dalai, which means ocean, and Lama, which means great teacher. They expected him to be an ocean of great teaching. But Dalai wasn’t so sure.
You see the Dalai Lama had two problems! He had a hard time controlling his behavior—he really didn’t like to sit still. And he would rather play than study.

How do you become a teacher when you don’t like to study? This little guy would need special training for his body, feelings and mind before he could be ready to help his people through hard times.
Remember, the Dalai Lama was born in a cow shed, because his parents were very poor.
I was born in a tool shed, because the people in my mom’s house were poor.
The Dalai Lama had a few behavior problems.
I had behavior problems myself.
Neither of us liked to sit still.
Do you see a pattern?
Being poor and having behavior problems isn’t what people usually connect with greatness. But some of the greatest people in the world came from poor families and some of the smartest ones have had a hard time with behavior.

And that goes for dogs too, which brings us back to me.
Where I lived, people didn’t go searching for a dog to be their leader. In fact, most of them just wanted a dog to love. But a few wanted a dog to kick around. Bad news. First, I got chosen by one of them.

In that first house a mean man made fun of my missing leg and kicked and hurt me pretty bad. So then I got sent back to the shelter. (Definitely not like the Dalai Lama.)
So for a while I was not just poor, but hurting and feeling really down.

At the shelter, a volunteer named Mr. Lew came to see me sometimes. He had a wheelchair and a service dog named Delphy. They cheered me up a lot. I got sad when they had to go.
Then one day they came with a leash and new collar. Mr. Lew said, “We think you’re born to be a great dog. You bounce back even when things are hard. So your new name will be Bouncy. If you come home with us, we can start your training for a new life.”

See! That’s like the Dalai Lama too.
So I did go home with them that day. And Delphy the service dog started my training. Soon she could tell that I was BORN FOR GREATNESS too. Yep! Just like the Dalai Lama! She said because of that, I needed even more special training.
Delphy taught me how to sit still for a long time and how to pay attention, even when I wanted to play. I didn’t learn right away, but he made me keep trying—and it worked! Then he showed me how to read people. That’s right, read them like a book, because that’s what service dogs do.

Delphy said I may be the best People Reader he ever met. I could read when a person is sad, or glad, or mad, or scared. He said I should use that gift to help find the kids who could be the next great leaders and give them special training so they can help the world through hard times.
And that's where you come in.

You see, I've been looking for leaders and now I've found you. You were born for greatness, just like the Dalai Lama and just like me.

Because you're born for greatness you need to really train your body and your feelings and your mind.

That's where I come in. Some people train dogs; I'm a dog who trains people - to be strong and smart and kind. They call me Bouncy the People Trainer.

Want me to help with your training? Let's go.
Hi! My name is Bonnie. Kinda sounds like Bouncy, doesn’t it? Well, my life has been very much like Bouncy’s. When I was a kid, I often felt really small, alone, and not very important. My dad left us before I was born. My mom didn’t have much money to support our family. A mean man did some bad things to me. Also, my right leg never grew with the rest of my body. So when I was 5 years old the doctors cut it off and now I wear an artificial leg.

I always felt different. But just like Bouncy, I had to learn that I was born for greatness. I learned that even though I make mistakes, I have to keep trying. Once I realized that, nothing could stop me. When I learned to ski, I fell down a lot—so I became a good “getter-upper.” I made it all the way to win Olympic medals in the Paralympics as the second fastest one-legged woman skier in the world. I studied hard in school and went to Harvard and Oxford. I even got to work in the White House with the President of the United States!

Just like Bouncy, I look up to the Dalai Lama as a wise teacher. I had the honor of meeting him recently in India. He really liked my metal leg and gave me a big hug.

My life is proof that you can learn to be strong and succeed even when things are really hard. Maybe that’s why they chose me to be the voice of Bouncy. I think it’s quite an honor—right up there with meeting the Dalai Lama!

And I look forward to meeting you someday too.

Bonnie St. John

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Ray is a long time child advocate who has developed videos, films, television shows, public service announcements, training software, and curricula to prevent child injury and promote child health, safety, and school success. These efforts have earned her 8 regional Emmys, more than a dozen national film awards, 29 software awards, and leadership awards from groups as diverse as business schools at the Universities of Washington and California at Berkeley, the National Association of Women Business Owners, and the Federal Association of Investigators. She is the CEO of Ripple Effects (www.rippleeffects.com), a company devoted to providing personal guidance software, assessment tools, web resources, live training, technical support, and consultation to develop social-emotional competencies and remediate social-emotional deficits.
Friends and parents,

Your child can start training with Bouncy today! Simply download the FREE app, Bouncy the People Trainer’s You Can Learn from the iTunes store.

If you love this book, but want the touch and feel of the hard copy version, you can get it at Bouncy’s website, bouncykids.net, or from the publisher, Research Press.

To learn more about Bouncy the People Trainer, the research behind it, and cool things for kids to do, check out Bouncy’s website. Kids can leave questions about Bouncy there and watch for their answers to be posted.

To get early notice of release of the next book in the Bouncy series and the next Bouncy app, (Training your Puppy MInd), adults can join our mailing list by sending an email to bouncy@rippleeffects.com (Please don’t send email addresses of young children.)