



PIGLET AND THE THREE SENSES



Piglet, the deaf blind pink puppy

Melissa Shapiro, DVM

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HI. I'M PIGLET, THE DEAF BLIND PINK PUPPY

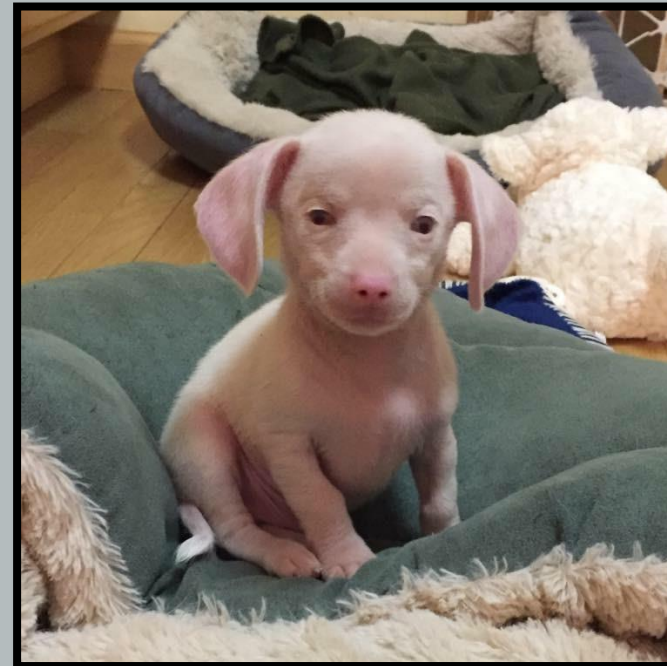


JUST AS A REMINDER...

I wasn't always such a happy guy. In fact, I was rescued from a hoarding situation in Georgia along with my mom, 3 littermates, and many of my relatives. I am a double dapple dachshund chihuahua mix which is why my haircoat is white and I was born with congenital ear and eye defects.

I am deaf and blind. When I was a tiny baby I was extremely anxious and screamed constantly. I was lucky to find a safe, supportive home with a family that showers me with unconditional love.

My situation was 100% preventable by spaying and neutering and NOT allowing two dapple colored dogs to breed. Placing special needs dogs like me is not easy. While some find great homes right away, many like me find themselves abandoned or in rescues and shelters.



A LOT OF PEOPLE ASK HOW I MANAGE WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SEE AND HEAR

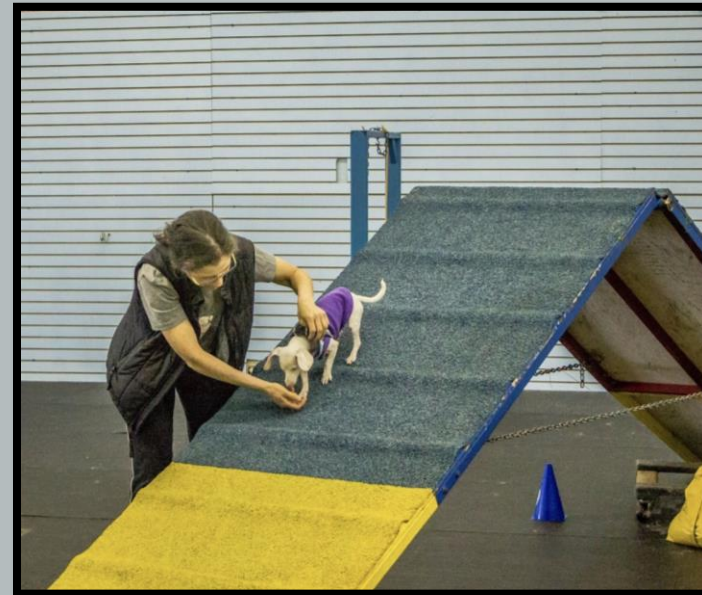


They want to know how I get around without two of the five senses. They don't understand how I can have a good quality of life without what they think are the two most important senses, hearing and eyesight (vision).

MY OUTLOOK ON MY SITUATION IS ACTUALLY VERY POSITIVE

Let's face it, I have over half of the five senses, which is a pretty good percentage! So, rather than focusing on the two senses that I don't have, I am thankful for the three senses that I do have.

Having three senses gives me the opportunity to have a surprisingly good quality of life.



LET'S QUICKLY REVIEW THE FIVE SENSES

- Hearing
- Sight/Vision
- Smell
- Touch
- Taste

I am missing the first two, hearing and sight.
But I do have a warm caring sense of touch, a
relentless sense of taste, and a keen sense of
smell.



I LOVE MY SENSE OF TOUCH

I love to be touched. And I love to touch. When I'm sitting on my dad's lap, or being held in his arms, or when I'm sleeping snuggled next to my mom, I am using my sense of touch. It is comforting for me to feel love through my sense of touch.

This was especially important for me when I was a tiny baby. This special form of communication, touch, was the first way I connected with my family and friends. And this gave me the confidence to explore and learn about the world around me.



MY MOM TEACHES ME TAP TOUCH SIGNALS

My mom has taught me tap touch signals for sit, wait, come, no, go pee, and a number of other important words. My sense of touch allows others to communicate with me.



MY FEET TOUCH THE GROUND SO I KNOW WHERE I AM

When my feet touch the ground, they feel different textures. This allows me to recognize where I am. My sense of touch helps me to find the back steps, my water dish, the door to the vet hospital, and my way on my walks.

Floor and ground textures are an important part of mapping indoor and outdoor areas for blind dogs.



MY SENSE OF TASTE IS ALWAYS ON MY MIND

I love to eat. And when I eat, I am using my sense of taste. I pretty much taste my way through the day!

I love my meals. I eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plus snacks.

My mom uses treats rewards for me when we are working on my tricks. I will do pretty much anything for a treat. The tastier the better!

I also get treats from my friend Monica when I go to work with my mom!



TASTING MY WAY THROUGH THE DAY

I also use my sense of taste to learn about my environment. Most puppies chew toys, shoes, chair legs... I did the same. Especially when I was a tiny baby, everything went into my mouth.



MY SENSE OF SMELL IS FINELY TUNED

Everyone knows that a dog's sense of smell is highly developed. Mine is as fine tuned as can be.

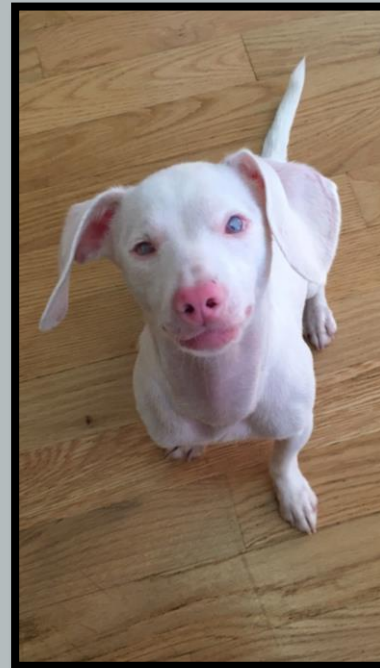
I use my sense of smell to recognize friends by sniffing their nose and mouth when I meet them.



I DON'T MISS A THING

I can smell when my mom is preparing my food even when I'm asleep in another room! I lift my head up, put my nose up in the air, and let everyone know that I know it's time to eat!

I also use my nose to find treats in my mom's pocket when we are working on my tricks. My friends at the vet hospital always have treats in their pockets so I can go "Pocket Diving" when I visit them.



MY NOSE IS PROBABLY GOOD ENOUGH TO BE USED FOR TRACKING AND NOSE WORK

I use my nose to recognize familiar places and learn about new places. I know where I am when we get into the car at home, when we get back into the car at the vet hospital, and when we are taking walks in our neighborhood. I use my nose to follow our other dogs on our walks. I can even tell if there's a new dog walking past us on the other side of the street. Then I bark, which apparently no one appreciates.



THERE ARE ACTUALLY TWO OTHER SENSES THAT I JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT

Everyone knows about the good old 5 senses. But, there are actually two more senses, and I definitely have both of them.

One is called proprioception, which is our sense of balance and orientation in space. This is what allows us to know whether we are upright without opening our eyes. It helps us keep our feet planted correctly on the ground.

I have great balance and even without being able to see and hear, I have a good idea where I am in my environment.



I'M A COMMON SENSE KIND OF GUY

The other sense is common sense. It is the sense by which we perceive and act on the unseen world around us. As I've grown up, I've learned to be sensible when I react to new people, places, and other pets. I'm figuring out how to manage my disabilities in logical ways. Even without being able to see and hear, I think I have a very good idea about what is going on around me and how to manage.



THERE ARE ALSO SOME ADVANTAGES TO WHAT I DON'T HAVE!

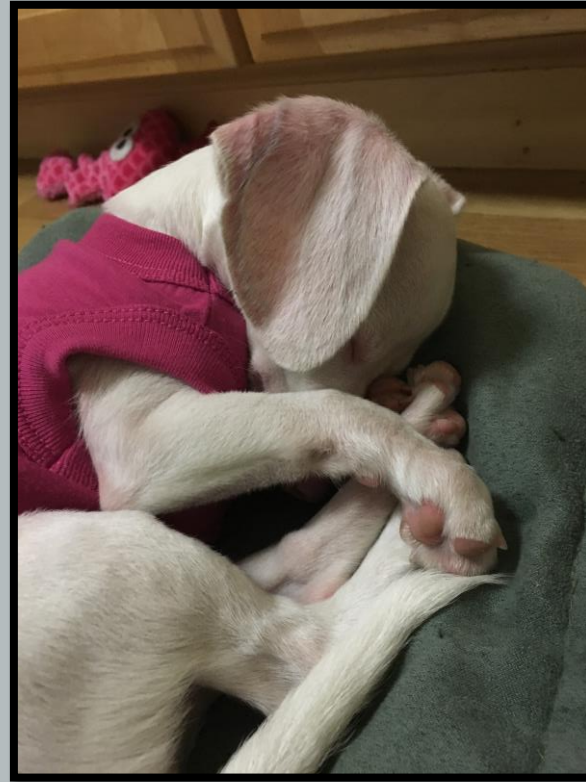
I've learned how to optimize the way I use my other senses in order to make up for my lack of hearing and sight. It's not that I have a better nose than other dogs. I just use mine in a different way. I'm more aware of different scents in my environment because that's how I know where I am, who I'm with, and what's going on.



WHAT AM I REALLY MISSING?

Since I can't hear, I get an amazingly good night sleep. Nothing disturbs me. In fact, when I'm napping, anyone can walk into the house and I usually don't wake up. Of course, there are times that my nose continues to work even when I'm sleeping so I can tell right away if my Favorite Dad comes into the room or when my dinner is being prepared.

I can't hear thunder, fireworks, or other scary sounds, so I don't have to feel afraid.

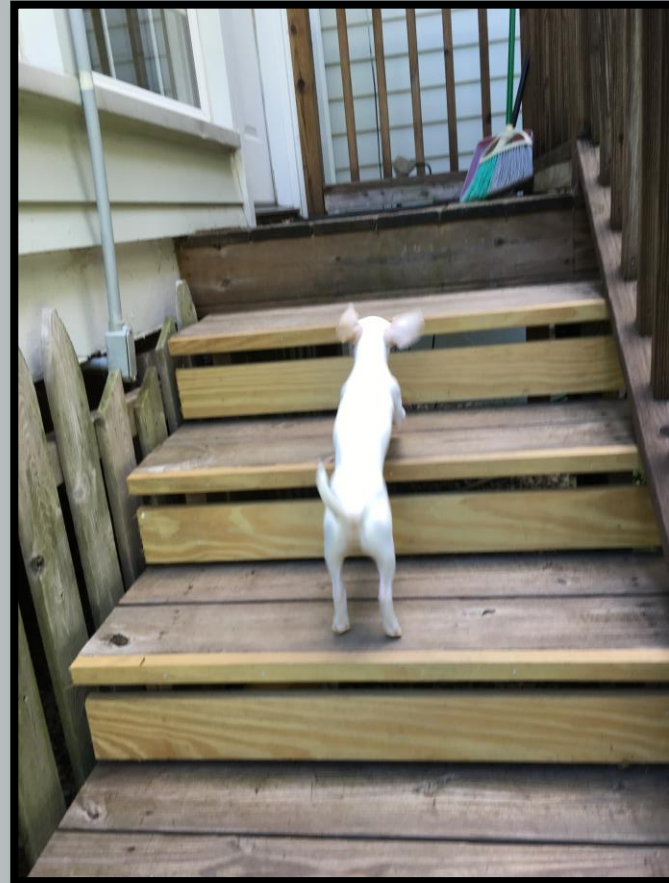


I HAVE A GREAT IMAGINATION

Since I can't see, I get to use my imagination in all sorts of creative ways.

When I'm going up the back steps, I feel like I'm climbing the Empire State building. When I step down into our side room or off a curb into the street, I feel like I'm sky diving off a mountainside.

And doing these simple things gives me a great feeling of accomplishment.



HOW DOES MY FAMILY KEEP ME SAFE?

Not being able to see and hear, my family does have to take extra steps and precautions to keep me safe. As long as my environment is familiar and predictable, I get around quite well. When it isn't familiar I am careful to map out where I am so I can feel comfortable in a new place.

These are different safety measures that keep me safe:

- Leash and Harness
- Gates
- Fencing
- Supervision



KEEPING PIGLET SAFE

My family guides me when I'm out and about. I wear a comfortable harness and a very light leash. I trust the person on the other end of the leash to help me up and down curbs when we are taking a walk. I also know that I will be helped into stores, the vet hospital, and other places I visit. I don't like to bump into things.

At home, I am not allowed to go down stairs, or sit on the couch alone. I'm just too small to jump down. But I do go up the stairs and I have learned to climb up onto my mom and dad's laps to sit on the couch with them.



I HAVE A VERY GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE

Despite my disabilities, I lead a very active, productive life. Anyone who meets me knows that I am happy. I prance around with my head up and tail wagging. I bark enthusiastically for my treats, and when I want to play with one of my dog siblings or my people.

I have friends, I travel, I play, and I have fun. I wiggle and wag when I get to visit with my BFFs.

I help educate children and adults about spay and neuter, animal rescue, and special needs pups like me.

My Piglet Mindset Educational Outreach Program teaches students about facing challenges with a positive attitude, acceptance, inclusion, empathy, and kindness.

And I make people smile.



PIGLET'S MISSION

- Advocate for and support rescued animals through education and fundraising.
- Inspire and motivate others to adopt pets with disabilities and special needs.
- Facilitate Piglet Mindset Educational Outreach to teachers, students, and others in the community.
- Encourage Acceptance, Inclusion, Empathy, and Kindness through the example of Piglet's Inclusion Pack (Piglet's pack of 6 rescued dogs).
- Put a smile on faces all around the world.

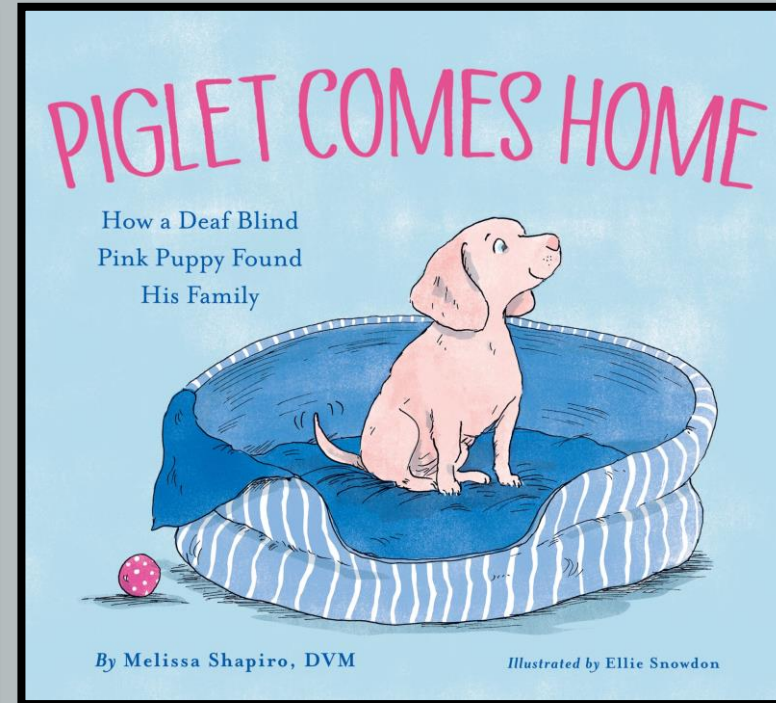
THE PIGLET BOOK

Hardcover, E-Book, Audiobook,
Paperback (July, 2022)



PIGLET COMES HOME

A Picture Book for Children June 2022



Signed copies, and signed bookplates available.
Visit PigletMindset.org for details.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

E-mail: pinkpigletpuppy@gmail.com

Facebook: [Piglet, the deaf blind pink puppy](#)

Website: PigletMindset.org

Instagram: [@pinkpigletpuppy](#)

YouTube: [Piglet, the deaf blind pink puppy](#)

People Magazine [Online Article](#)

The Dodo videos:

[Piglet's video](#) [Impact video](#) [Little but Fierce](#)

[Piglet Mindset Visit to 3rd Grade Class in Massachusetts](#)

Info about double dapple & double merle dogs:

<https://www.doublemerles.info>

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THE END

