

ADOPTING A PUPPY VS. AN ADULT DOG

There are many things to think about when you adopt a pet for your family. I hear people say "We want a puppy so it will grow up with the kids and we can train it and mold it into what we want it to be." There is merit in this position. On the plus side your pet will grow up with children and there is a good chance it will not be afraid of or intimidated by young children. The kids will have a lot of fun playing with the puppy.

While training the puppy you will need to train your children as well so they do not hurt the puppy. If you have several young children, the puppy will not serve as a distraction and baby sitter for the kids; most likely it will feel like you have another child. (as in more work).

The best indicator of your puppy's temperament will be determined by who it's parents were. If you get a rescue puppy there is a very good chance you won't know who the father was and many times you won't even know who the mother was. A puppy's temperament is determined during the 4th week in utero (the gestation period for puppies is approximately eight weeks).

Human mother's that have given birth to more than one child might say that one child is so active in the womb that they feel the walls of their stomach are being kicked out. By contrast another baby is so quiet they wonder if it is alive. Some qualities are determined by DNA. Temperament is one of those qualities.

Some puppies will be easier to train than others because of their temperament. For instance, Labs tend to be people pleasers, Border Collies like to herd, Pitbulls are very people friendly and more independent than Labs, Shar-peis are strong willed and want to do things their way.

I am not building a case for or against adopting a puppy, just making suggestions to help you make a good choice depending on what you want for your life. When there is a good match there is nothing better than the human/canine bond. When there is not a good match life can be stressful.

The flip side of the coin is adopting an adult dog. Some pluses are that you can pretty much know who the dog is. You can certainly train adult dogs. I took one of my dogs to training at nine years old. She was the star in the class. Just as people often go back to school in their 30's, 40's, 50's and even 60's, dogs can learn at older ages too.

Adopting an adult dog may not require quite as much of your time and attention. They most likely will not be into something every minute of the day. You can leave them home alone for periods of time. Just as you wouldn't leave your baby at home alone, but might leave your teenager home alone for awhile.

I have seen many happy adoptions of puppies and adult dogs. It's up to you. There is no one answer that fits all situations. I wish for everyone the wondrous experience that I have had with my dogs and my cats. There is nothing better.

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