**Dog Personalities**

Just like you and me, every dog has a unique personality.

Each and every dog you meet will have a personality of its own. Although each dog may exhibit and show more than one type, generally speaking, a dominant dog will typically show through more than others. Understanding the differences in these personality traits can help you better comprehend how dog’s function. Whether you’re trying to train your dog or trying to get a handle on problematic behaviours, we must treat each personality in a specific way.

In dogs there are on average five unique personalities found. However, these personality traits can become altered based on their breed (having breed-specific personalities) these can interact with their owner’s own personalities. I have listed below five traditional personalities found within the canine world. This list will help you better understand how dogs might view the world around it.

**The Confident Dog' Personality**

The confident dog is usually found to be a naturally born leader. These dogs will effortlessly control and take charge of any situation, although they like to be a team player among their peers. The confident dog may also display dominant behaviours on occasions. This confidence helps him lead the pack and can maintain the alpha status. Dominance is not always a sign of aggression. Reacting to dominance, aggressively or roughly trying to assert your own dominance to a confident dog, could result in mistrust and may result in aggression. Positive reinforcement training methods when dealing with a confident dog and watch him flourish when facing challenges.

**The Independent Dog' Personality**

This dog struggles with bonding to anyone they don’t see as a leader, especially as they tend to think, act, and live independently of others. They will typically bond most strongly to one specific person and often will be less enthusiastic with others. At times, they can come across as standoffish with people or other dogs, but it’s because they enjoy and thrive being on their own. Training can prove difficult with an Independent, especially without the right motivation. Some dogs can be food motivated, whereas others will only perform if they believe it’s in their best interest. More often than not, these dogs would much rather do what they want to do, thinking for themselves than listen to what you have to say. The independent dog doesn’t particularly enjoy social situations, and trying to force these behaviours with one may cause aggression to manifest. In human terms, it’s the equivalent of trying to get a person who is shy, recluse to be the centre of attention and life of the party.

**The Happy and Laid-Back Dog**

The happy dog will often come across as overly enthusiastic, especially when meeting new friends (whether canine or people). They are the stereotypical dog that would sooner lick an intruder to death than show aggression. Typically, these dogs get along with almost anyone, and anything. The downside to this personality is its excessive and bouncy nature. They tend to jump on people (thanks to their excitement at having another friend) and often accidentally scare children or seniors who aren’t used to their “larger than life” personality. These dogs will need plenty of training to teach them good manners, especially when greeting people and children. These dogs perform best when it comes to attention and food-based reinforcement, although play can be another strong motivator.

**An Adapting Dog's Personality**

These dogs have one goal in life, to make sure they please in almost any environment. They can keep their excitement and enthusiasm in check, especially if known it will please his owner. Unlike the Happy personality, these dogs are the perfect combination of easy-going dogs with a strong desire to please. They can make excellent therapy or working dogs due to their high levels of intelligence and training them is simple. Often, these dogs are the easiest to train because thrilling and satisfying their owner is more than any other reward you could offer. The adapting dog usually is quite loving and affectionate and can closely bond with several family members.

**The Scared or Timid Dog' Personality**

Dogs, like people, can be pretty timid and nervous when faced with new situations, people, or environments. What makes a timid dog spiral is being forced into new or uncomfortable situations, which may cause a negative response. If not properly managed, these new experiences can escalate into feelings of mistrust and fear or reaction. The shy dog will typically avoid loud or chaotic environments, becoming fearful, aggressive, reactivity without the proper reassurance. These dogs thrive on attention and comfort that they are safe and secure. Often, praise, encouragement, desensitization, and slow introductions prove to be the best training methods to avoid overwhelming the puppy. We can organize these personalities into groups, dependent on the common traits often found within breeds of dogs. If you can determine the dog’s breed, there’s a good chance you’ll have a solid understanding of the primary personality.

**Herding Dog Personalities**

These dogs are more often than not the ultimate family pet, which is precisely why they’re so popular among families and individuals equally. They are fast to learn and quick in obedience. Often their personalities give them confidence to carry themselves with confidence. The herding personality is an active breed, with many dogs requiring high levels of activity. They are incredibly devoted and will often stand against potential family threats to protect the ones they love. Because of their intelligence and herding instinct, they are able to think for themselves and problem solve situations. Without a job to do these dogs can become destructive. Although easy to train consistency and care in handling has to be the watch word. The herding dog can easily become obsessed with movement, shadows, light reflections, especially playing children. Noise sensitivity is a big trait in these dogs.

**Sporting Dog's Personality**

Traditionally known for their hunting capabilities, these dogs are highly trainable and make excellent companion animals. They love to play and exercise, thriving on mental and physical stimulation. Their devotion and loyalty are often a major plus and draw for many families, which is why they are incredibly popular with children. Most sporting dogs have a strong level of focus and determination, especially when attempting new activities. They are fun-loving and affectionate but are not always the type to remain underfoot, there sight is what affects these dogs most. Recall is a particular problem when they pick up movement. Different breed standard and traits need to be looked at before training,

**Hound Personality Traits**

Often hounds are big personality into a small body, making these dogs exceptionally popular. Known for being happy and loving, the hound will always try to entertain their family. They are brave and loyal but also have a strong desire to hunt. Their smell and prey drive can prove a bit distracting. These dogs enjoy and thrive being with families and other dogs, making them social and affectionate. They can be a bit stubborn when trying to train them, especially if you can’t convince them that your request is to their benefit. Recall is always the hound’s big drawback; time should be taken to train the recall.

**Non-Sporting Dog's Personality**

Often known as stubborn, extremely determined, and occasionally a bit silly, these dogs are fantastic family dogs known for being friendly and playful. Some breeds in this breed line can be lazy, primarily when they’re also known for their bulky and short stature. The majority of these dogs are highly trainable, although their very high level of stubbornness can make some breeds challenging, the more challenging the dog is the more you’re going to have to convince your dog to follow through on training. Some of these dogs are moderately athletic, although most wouldn’t turn down a nap on the couch either.

**Terrier Dog's Personality**. While these dogs can be pretty stubborn, they’re exceptionally skilled at athletics, hunting, and overall excellent family dogs. They can often become protective of the home and their family, making them a powerful addition to any house. Little dogs with big personalities. These dogs do well with children if raised with them from a young age and adapt an easy-going personality overall. This breed is typically a versatile breed that can fluctuate based on the owner’s needs. Terriers need training from a early age due to the stubborn nature, training can be hard and fraught with problems, these dogs do best with gentle but firm handling.

**Working Dog's Personality**

Known for being dependable, these dogs thrive when giving a job to do. They are often seen as powerful, with many thriving as guard dogs (although their size is more of a deterrent than their aggression). Working dogs are known for being more docile and having a friendly nature. They can be protective and can occasionally get nervous around new people outside of their family unit. Training can be fun, but care should be taken not to rear the guarding instinct.

**Toy Dog's Personality**

Known as the smallest dogs with the largest personalities, these dogs are full of spunk. Toy breeds can be stubborn, spoiled, and often quite sassy. These dogs love being in charge. They can be loyal and affectionate with an easy-going personality overall. These dogs are pretty small in size and should be watched closely with children. Some of the breeds are not acceptable of children and don’t make great family pets. Many of these toy dogs bond beautifully with their human owners, although they can occasionally get aggressive around food, toys, and possessions. This typically occurs when an owner coddles and spoils the dog.

**How do owners influence their dog’s behaviour?**

Whether you intend to or not, every interaction you have with your dog teaches them the key and critical pieces of personality. That means if you’re rewarding your dog for barking (by petting him and telling him to stop, for example), you’re teaching him acceptable behaviours within the home. In fact, many studies have proven a dog will typically adapt and adopt their owners’ behaviours over time. This includes aggression, fear, calm behaviours, reactionary behaviour, and more.

**How Do I Influence My Dog’s Personality?**

One of the easiest ways for an owner to influence a dog’s personality is through training, discipline, and lifestyle choices. An owner who chooses to use physical punishment may teach their dog to mistrust. The dog will do the basics in training but for each exercise the dog learns, the mistrust and fear get more intense and begins to mistrust all humans (even those within the family unit). Likewise, an owner that often spoils the dog with food and treats without working for it are teaching the dog that he doesn’t have to work for rewards. Finally, more often than not, owners of little dogs (typically found in the toy breed personality) will pamper to their dogs, regardless of their size. Because of this pampering, the dog may become spoiled and nip out with other people many of these dogs have resource guarding issues. They can forget how to socialize with other dogs and people properly. Studies have shown that those owners who rated themselves as agreeable and positive also reported their dogs as less fearful. Their dogs are less aggressive towards people or other animals. While this doesn’t tell us its owners fully influences a dog’s personality, it does set the motion that dogs are receptive and look to the owner for leadership in their human companion. In other words, dogs will develop a personality to match or mimic their owner based on what they see and feel.

**What Are the Earliest Personality Traits a Dog Can Learn from Its Owner?**

The early personality traits do not begin with the owner but begins with the breeder. As early as 4 weeks once weaning begins the breeder begins to influence the puppy’s personality. Once the new owner takes the puppy home, within a few days their training directly affects a dog's personality traits like fear, aggression, mistrust, and anxiety. If the dog has learnt to mistrust his new owner through cause-and-effect, there is a more substantial likelihood that he will continue to mistrust humans and avoid socializing with them in the future. Exposing a dog to a wide variety of socialization situations with a positive experience, the overall beneficial experiences will likely help them remain trusting. They will be social, friendly, and loving toward their human family and other humans moving forward.

**Can you Reverse Learnt Behaviours And a Dog's Personality**

In short, yes. Through exposure, positive experiences, praise, and socialization, most dogs can undo the negative personality traits. The older dog will of course be more challenging, dogs that have been abandoned in rescue centres or street dogs, will typically be more difficult in changing their personality, but it can happen with persistence. Using positive reinforcement and exposure can significantly impact a dog’s outlook.  It would help if you let your dog adapt and grow through difficult situations. They can learn to overcome any negative personality traits this way.

**Dog personality tests are used by breeders, rescue organizations, and trainers to help determine the dog’s general temperament towards both people and other animals.**

**What Is a Dog Personality Test (Temperament Test)?**

Similar to the show test breeds would receive at a registered dog show by the judge or steward, the official dog personality test, sometimes referred to as dogs’ temperament test. should be conducted by a Professional Canine Trainer or Behaviourist through a credited organization.

The dog being tested will be taken on a brief walk through the neighbourhood or a designated park by the owner. The examiner will be looking for specific behaviours linked to your dog’s reactions to **visual**, **auditory**, and**touch situations**. The dog tester will also be noting if your pet can distinguish between threatening and non-threatening situations and they will be “graded” on how they respond (i.e., if the dog demonstrates unprovoked aggression, panic without recovery, stress, fear, or strong avoidance). To different situations wile on the brief walk and to the examiner or steward.

The dog will also be evaluated on:

* Level of aggression
* Prey Drive
* Confidence
* Stability
* Protectiveness
* Friendliness

The dog must be **at least 7 months old** and can be either a purebred or mixed breed. Mixed breeds may still be tested; however, they will receive a mixed breed personality test certificate that will last for one year. The test generally takes **from 30 to 60 minutes to complete** and will require a six-foot lead, and collar, and the testing fee (usually about £45). Note, also, that handlers will not speak to the dogs or give them commands during the testing period, this helps gauge the animal’s natural temperament, tendencies, and reactions. Although pet owners are allowed to perform the test with their canine at the designated location, those that do not have the experience in dog training may want to enlist the help of a 3rd party because your dog will notice if you are unsure, nervous which could lead to a false “test score.”

**Requirements for a Dog Personality Test**

The Examiner looks for the below traits and skills in all the dogs they test. Interested dog owners can practice most of these “drills” with their pets before they are officially tested.

**1. Stranger Behaviour**, **Requires**: 1 Neutral Stranger & 1 Friendly Stranger (neither familiar with the dog). **Part 1,** The neutral stranger approaches the handler and shakes hands while ignoring the dog. The objective is to determine the dog’s level of protectiveness and/or possessiveness. **Part 2**, Friendly stranger approaches quickly and happily, then pets the dog. The objective is to gauge the animal’s active social skills. **Marks out of 40**

**2. Auditory Stimulations, Hidden Noise Response**. **Requires**: Hidden Assistant, Metal Bucket, Metal Pan. **Part 1,**The hidden person bangs the object. He/she then places it ahead of the dog. **Part 2,** Once the pet comes upon the bucket, it is allowed to investigate it. The objective is to test the animal’s level of curiosity and alertness. **Marks out of 40**

**Requires**: Assistant and a pea whistle. **Part 2:** The second part of the Auditory Stimuli test should only be conducted by a professional as some dogs do not react well. The assistant will blow the whistle approximately 6 to 8 feet from the dog and behind three times. The objective is to see how long it takes the dog to recover. **Marks out of 20**

**3. Visual Stimulus Test**, **Requires**: Assistant, Umbrella, Chair. **Directions:**The assistant sits in a chair holding a closed umbrella at a 90-degree angle. The handler approaches with the dog. When the team is about five feet from the umbrella, the assistant opens it on cue, the dog may be allowed to investigate the object. The objective is to test the dog’s response to sudden visual stimulation. **Marks out of 20**

**4, Touch Test.** This should only be done by a qualified person, as it can course reaction with the dog. **Part 1,** the tester should run their hand over the dogs back, from neck to tail. **Part 2,** the tester should cheque the dogs’ teeth. **Part 3,** the tester should run the hand under the dog’s tail. **Part 4,** the tester should examine a dog’s foot. Either front or back. The Objective is to test any reaction the dog may have to being examined. Small or toy breeds should be asked to be put on a table for these tests. The surface should be rubber. **Marks out of 80**

**Total Marks 200. To achieve the Temperament Test Certificate the Dog has to achieve a minimum of 150 marks across all tests. The test can be taken again after a minimum of 8 weeks has elapsed.**