



## Paw Prints

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Columnist

### What is your dog's personality?

Is your dog really playful, or more laid-back? Does your furry friend easily get along with other dogs, or does he run away from new situations?

Your dog was born with a set of instinctive behaviors that he inherited from his parents. These behaviors can be grouped into three broad categories — prey, pack, and defense — called “drives.” How many behaviors your dog has in each category, or drive, will determine his temperament, his personality and how he perceives the world.

But your dog's personality doesn't spring completely from genetics or inherited behaviors. Just like people,

dogs are affected by their experiences and their environment — and their personalities can change over time.

Personality is the combination of characteristics or set of attributes such as sociability, aggressiveness, and willingness to please, that come together to form the social behavior of a species. Understanding who your dog is, based on his personality type, can help you figure out why he acts in a certain way and defines his behavior characteristics as an individual. Each dog has their own personality and just like people, dogs fall into different personality types.

We all know someone who's the life of the party, someone who is quiet and reserved, or someone who will do whatever it takes to get ahead.

Knowing your furry friend can help avoid potential behavior issues before they get out of control, when you understand how he may behave in certain situations.

The Confident Dog is a natural-born leader of the pack. He's dominant, self-assured, and can be provoked to bite. But he's a team player and responds best to a pet parent that is determined and decisive and has the potential to be a fine

working or show dog. He can easily fit into a household provided his family knows what they are doing when it comes to training. This dog feels secure in his surroundings, and has a self-assuredness that shows in his body language.

The Independent Dog tends to be uninterested in people. This independent personality is perfectly happy being away from the crowd. Some breeds are independent by nature and capable of developing a very close bond with the family member who takes control as a fair, patient and strong leader. He may not be very affectionate and tends to have a low need for human companionship.

The Adaptable Dog is eager to please, and the easiest of the five personalities to train. Not as outgoing as the happy personality, this pooch gets along well with other dogs, cats, and people, including being reliable with kids. He's perfectly happy to follow commands from his pet parent. This is an easy-to-control dog — cooperative, gentle and affectionate, which makes him a great family pet. The adaptable personality would be a good candidate as a therapy dog.

The Laid-Back, Happy Dog is always ready to greet

everyone he meets, whether he knows them or not. He gets along well with other dogs and cats. Pooches with a happy personality that haven't been taught basic commands, like sit or down, most likely will get into trouble for jumping up on people when they greet them. This dog can also become overly excited, especially around children. He will become well adjusted if he receives regular training and lots of exercise.

The Shy/Timid Dog needs a pet parent who can give calm, consistent, and patient understanding, with sensitivity to his needs and feelings. This pooch is insecure and extremely submissive. A timid dog doesn't like being in uncomfortable situations or around sudden or loud noises. He bonds very closely with his pet parent and requires regular companionship and encouragement to bring him out of his shell. Reward this dog with lots of praise for each little success because he needs that special reassurance from the one he bonds with to feel safe and secure.

Your furry family member may fit perfectly into one of these personality types or he may be a couple of types mixed together, but whatever personality type your dog is,



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Lucas is a laid-back happy dog.

enjoy your time with him and give him every opportunity to be the best he can.

Understanding your furry friend's personality helps you avoid unnecessary confrontations when training or socializing him. Not all dogs enjoy being around other canines, and there's nothing wrong with that. Knowing why your dog behaves the way he does is one part of building a strong bond that will last a lifetime.

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