

# Before bringing home a forever dog, here are some helpful questions for consideration.

## 1. All Aboard?

- Does the entire family want a dog? Each person contributes to creating a safe and suitable home for the whole family.
- Everyone living in your house will be affected by a dog, so be sure everyone is comfortable with a new pup and prepared to deal with the frustrations and chaos that ensue!

## 2. Time, Attention, and Exercise

- Dogs need a lot of attention. Puppies demand even more attention.
- Daily walks, mental stimulation, training, nurturing, grooming - even a dog that is ok with being left alone during the day needs attention before and after work or school.
- Some dogs require more exercise, attention, and stimulation than others - a 40-minute walk may be fine for some, but high-energy or high-intelligence breeds may need hours of activity! Can you commit - or afford to hire a dog walker?
- Insufficient stimulation can lead to destructive and dangerous habits, like chewing, digging, and even self-harm tendencies.

## 3. Lifestyle

- Will someone be home most of the time, or is everyone out working and at school?
- Do you have an active social life? Travel often? Have a hectic schedule or heavy responsibilities?
- Dogs are social – leaving them home alone for hours every day can create behavioral issues. They need daily interaction and stimulation.
- Some dogs tolerate being alone better than others, but having a plan, such as adjusting schedules or hiring a dog walker, is important to consider.

## 4. Stable Lifestyle?

- Life can be unexpected, but if in a year or two there are some planned changes or potential for change, will your pup still fit in your life?
- If you currently work remotely and at home all day, will you still be in a year?
- Are you planning to move? Downsize?
- Would you be comfortable with a dog around a newborn if your family grows?

## 5. Vacation

- Do you travel a lot?
- Will the dog come with you?
- Are you willing to adjust to pet-friendly vacation spots?
- Or would you hire a sitter or use a kennel?

## **6. Living Space**

- Is there enough space to eat, rest, sleep, and exercise?
- Where will you walk? Go potty?
- Is the yard fenced in, or do you have an alternative?
- If there is no yard, keep in mind the pup will need to go potty often.
- If you are in an apartment, are there parks nearby or walking trails? Also, be sure to check if dogs are permitted if you rent.

## **7. Mr. Clean**

- Dogs and spotless houses do not mix well.
- Dogs..well..are dirty, messy little creatures. Accidents, muddy footprints, and potential damage from play or chewing are part of doggie parenting.
- If you love white carpets, white furniture, and glistening floors... perhaps get some fish instead.
- Conversely, a messy house can be a hazard - a tidy house is a safe house. Dogs are curious and will get into (and frequently eat) anything that looks fun or smells good!

## **8. Contingency Plan**

- Who will be the primary pup parent? What happens if they, or your family, can no longer care for your dog? Is there a friend or family member who can take your pet, so it doesn't have to be surrendered to a shelter or rehomed?
- We agreed as an extended family that if circumstances changed - someone else in the family would take the pup. We would socialize him well with everyone to ensure that he was familiar with all, making a change of primary parent less traumatic.

## **9. Behavioral Issues**

- No pet will behave perfectly, and it's important to consider how you'll deal when problems arise (we have some experience with this...stories to come in future tales!)
- It's normal to feel overwhelmed by a pet with behavioral issues (especially biting), and it's vital to be honest about your ability to handle these situations before ending up with an out-of-control dog.
- Would you stick with training for however long is needed - a year or even years - or would you surrender or rehome the puppy?

## **10. Patience**

- Patience is essential - especially when bringing home a new puppy or adopting an older dog. It takes time, patience, and love for all household members and the new pup, to adjust.
- This includes considering the patience of all in the house - kids, in-laws, and roommates.
- Everyone needs to work together and be consistent with training and care (a little tough with young kids or other pets who don't always grasp this concept!)

### **11. Kids?**

- Some breeds are better suited to children than others.
- Some dogs are better with older children than toddlers if you have children.
- Is everyone (who is old enough) willing to help with care - walks/feeding/grooming...and poop cleaning?
- Would you be comfortable with a dog around a newborn?

### **12. Cost**

- The initial pet purchase is just the beginning! Vet visits, toys, food, training, dog walker, dog-sitters, groomers, nail trimming, pet insurance etc
- The average cost for a dog is about \$200CDN a month - depending on health, size (big dogs eat more!) and other factors.
- This can increase if unexpected behavioral issues need more training or if health problems arise.

### **13. Existing Pets**

- How will they interact if a puppy is introduced?
- Are there smaller pets (hamsters, rabbits, etc.) that could appear like a tasty snack?

### **14. Training**

- Do you have the time to devote to training?
- Will you pay for a trainer and socialization classes, or do it yourself?