

5 Things to Consider Before Adopting a Pet

Written by: Sam Kabbel, CPDT-KA, President, Pet Behavior Solutions
www.petbehaviorsolutions.com

Adopting a pet is a great thing to do! Giving a dog or cat (puppy or kitten) a second chance can be a wonderfully rewarding experience. Unfortunately sometimes it can be quite frustrating when things don't go as expected. Here are 5 things to consider before adopting a pet:

1. What are you looking for in a pet? If you want to adopt a dog - are you looking for a jogging buddy, couch potato, social butterfly, protector, etc.? Do you want him to get along with other dogs, men, women, children, cats, birds, etc? If you want to adopt a cat - are you looking for a playful kitty, a lap warmer, a travel companion, etc.? Do you want him to get along with other cats, pets, other people, etc.? Before being taken in by the sweet face, longing eyes, and beautiful markings - be sure you are looking for a good match for your lifestyle and expectations.
2. Consider the life span of a pet. Some dogs and cats can live upwards of 15+ years. What might your life look like in that time period? Can you anticipate any changes that might occur and is the pet you are considering a good match for those potential changes? (e.g., A dog with a high prey drive may not be a good match for your girlfriend's cats should you decide to move in together.)
3. During the meeting or introduction to that pet - if you see anything that concerns you or causes you to have reservations please take the time to think through that. Do not make an emotional decision or go on impulse just because you fell in love or because you want to save or rescue him/her. Take the time to determine if you have what this pet needs and if the issues you may encounter are things you can live with or work with.
4. Don't forget about expenses other than food and veterinary care. All dogs should receive some level of training and many pets may require behavior modification protocols as well in order to resolve issues that may arise. Most problems or issues can be managed, treated, or completely eliminated with the right training and behavior protocols.
5. Don't adopt a pet that is poorly matched to your lifestyle, needs, or expectations with the intention of changing him or training things out of or into him. While, as stated above, most issues can be successfully addressed it is much better to find the right match in the first place! Trying to mold a dog or cat to meet your expectations could be difficult if not impossible and can be a frustrating experience for both the pet as well as the people involved. Just as in human relationships, we shouldn't enter into the relationship with the intention of changing him or her. It rarely works the way we want it.

Adopting a pet is a great idea and can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Choosing the right match can ensure a rewarding relationship for the rest of your lives together!