

## Is Your Dog an Extrovert or Introvert?

**TV judge Allan Reznik shares insight on canine socialization.**

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“Socialization” is a big word, and an equally big influence for how a puppy or adult dog responds to the world, says TV judge Allan Reznik of “Greatest American Dog” on CBS.

Good breeders pick up their newborn puppies daily, stroke them and get them used to the sounds and smells of the household, Reznik says. A calm, even-tempered mother dog, by welcoming visitors in a friendly manner, teaches her puppies that humans are not to be feared.

Breeds differ greatly in temperament, from exuberant terriers to mellow Cavaliers to aloof Salukis and Chows. However, within a given breed and a given litter, there will be more extroverted puppies and quieter, more laidback ones, he says.

Breeders are matchmakers. By knowing you and your family, and observing the puppies on a daily basis, they can choose the most appropriate pup for your situation. A bouncy, inexhaustible puppy would be great for a family with energetic children but would be the wrong choice for a senior citizen or a busy single professional.

Similarly, a quieter, mellower puppy wouldn't be sturdy enough for a family of rowdy boys. That's why, he says, it's important that you tell the breeder your plans for the dog.

For example, are you intending to show the dog, or participate in fast-paced agility trials? Or are you seeking a quiet, easygoing dog for your empty-nester household?

Once you take your puppy home, keep up the socialization routine by signing up for puppy kindergarten classes, and taking the pup to parks and shopping centers; getting him used to car rides; and exposing him to every experience possible. Run the vacuum cleaner and the dishwasher, see how he reacts to strangers ringing your doorbell, and get him used to all the commotion that is part of day-to-day living.

If you acquired an adult dog, or one from a shelter or rescue, his personality will have already been largely formed. If he's the quiet type, you can gently introduce him to the sights and sounds of the neighborhood, but he may never become Mr. Extrovert. Accept that, and don't try to force him to be what he is not.

“Some loving dogs would just rather be homebodies, just as many shy people would,” Reznik says. “Respect that, love him for what he is, and don't stress yourselves out trying to turn him into something he is not. He may not end up a TV star, but at least he's your special star.”

Reznik will be on DogChannel's message boards at 10 a.m. PDT on Thursday to talk about the latest episode and field questions from visitors about the show.