

# Would You Date Your Dog?

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From the beginning of time, dogs have been man's best friends. Today, dogs are part of the common American household. Dogs come in different breeds, from the fluffy poodle to the muscular pit bull. There's a breed of dog for every dog lover or just someone that's simply in need of a canine companion. Our society has voted dogs as the number one pet, for good reasons. Looking into the eyes of your canine companion or simply just hearing his heartbeat as he cuddles next to you has been proven to reduce stress and increase your happiness level. Yes, dogs can be undeniably cute and make great pets, but they don't make great boyfriends. One study showed that a dog's personality is heavily influenced by their owner. The phrase men act like dogs, should actually be dogs act like men. Men, similar to dogs, are the number one human companion chosen by teenage girls — more specifically, teenage boys who mostly resemble our beloved canine companions. If you wouldn't date your dog, why would you date a man that acts like one? Despite the fact that men and dogs are two species, they share similar characteristics that make them unfit for dating.

Men and dogs communicate in similar ways. Dogs bark in order to communicate with humans. Depending on the dog breed, some bark more than others. Just like humans, dogs bark in order to express anxiety, excitement, boredom, and other emotions (Stregowski). A dog's bark can be considered cute at first, but after five minutes of consistent barking, one may become annoyed. A dog bark can also demand authority. Have you ever walked past an unfamiliar house and a huge rottweiler dashes at the fence barking while your heart stops working? Our bodies go into fight, flight, or freeze mood. Our brain recognizes the sound as danger, as a situation we don't want to be in. Men also bark, but we consider their barking to be talking. Men talk in order to communicate, to express basic human emotions like anger, happiness, and fear. However, most of the time these simple communications come out as yelling that sounds similar to a dog

barking. At first, like our canine companions, we might find it cute and tell ourselves he's just mad because he cares about me. But is that really true? If we compare this behavior to our canine companions that we love so much, we would notice that they don't bark because they care about us; they bark to protect what's theirs. Dogs commonly bark to protect territory. Men usually think of women as territory, as an item they possess. Therefore, men yelling can be because they don't want to lose their territory. Yes, the deep voice of a man yelling can cause a similar reaction to a dog barking. Your brain tells your body that this is not a good situation to be in, but unfortunately, your heart sometimes overpowers your brain and simply just sees your significant other yelling as a sign of his love. To humans, barking sounds like noise we can't necessarily understand. Men arguing sounds similar to a dog barking, noise we can't necessarily understand. Yes, not all dogs bark, and not all men yell, but the similarities are hard to dismiss.

Women have the same attachment to dogs as they do to men. Studies have shown that dogs can reduce depression and increase your mood. Dogs can sense human emotions and act on what you need emotionally. Dogs can also improve health because they encourage you to be active ("Mood-Boosting Power of Pets"). Why do we love dogs so much? A dog provides companionship and helps us to be less lonely. Over a period of time, we become attached to our new best friends. Our days become so much better just seeing our pets wag their tails when we open the door. A behavioral specialist, Kelly Benamati, helps to prove the fact that relationships with humans are similar to a relationship with pets. Your relationship with your significant other also helps to improve your emotions and get you out of hard times. Women are more emotionally attached to a relationship, whereas men are not (Benamati). Have you ever gone on a walk and saw a cute dog and thought, *I want that dog*? Women's brains have a similar reaction when we see a person we consider appealing. Yes, you can argue that these are all good things and there are no problems. However, there is a downside of depending on a pet or a significant other to be your source of happiness and motivation. As I addressed earlier, women tend to be more attached

in relationships than men. If your dog dies, you're heartbroken, so you replace the dog, never really addressing what hurt you. If your boyfriend leaves, you're heartbroken, so you get a new boyfriend. Does the cycle ever end? The short answer is yes. You don't necessarily need a dog or a boyfriend to be happy. Yes, we can get more into how to end the cycle, but that is a topic for another day.

Men and dogs are loyal in a similar way. There's a famous saying: never bite the hand that feeds you. But dogs bite when they are in a stressful situation or feel threatened. A dog may also bite you if you try to take away something they love like a toy or food ("Why Do Dogs Bite?"). Yes, your fluffy ball of fur and cuddles may one day bite you. Dogs are considered to be very loyal to their owner, but that does not mean they don't go exploring. My neighbors have a pack of six dogs that always find their way into my yard. Over a period of time, my mom and I started feeding the dogs. In the beginning, they were afraid of us, but they soon became comfortable and the little puppies would sometimes hang out with me. At first, the neighbors never noticed they were gone. In fact, she found it surprising when she saw me holding one because they never let other people hold them. Yes, dogs are often said to be one of the most loyal animals, but one might miss the fact that they can be loyal to more than one person. Men are similar. Yes, men are proven to be loyal. Statistics proved that only 21 percent of men cheat ("Extramarital"). Similar to dogs, if you don't pay close enough to your partner, you will never know if they are spending their time with someone else. You can argue that 79 percent of men are truly loyal. That is correct, but if we put the statistics in more comprehensible numbers, we would see one in six men are unloyal. The percentage of unloyal men to loyal is too high to overlook, and you will never know if you picked the "one in six" until it's too late.

With that being said, men and dogs are more similar than we think. Humans put a lot of time and consideration into picking the perfect dog, and they should do the same when picking a partner. Yes, not all dogs are bad, and yes, not all men are bad. We can overlook the similarity

between men and dogs, but we would be putting ourselves at a disadvantage. If you get a dog that's not right for you, you get a new dog or go without one. But when it comes to men, we find a hard time letting go of relationships that hurt us. If you wouldn't keep a dog that hurts you, don't keep a man that does.

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