

# Pet Preference Personality Profiles

By Linda Slavin, Co-founder, Cat Depot

**I**f asked, would you say you are a cat person, a dog person or both? Whatever your pet preference may be, it could say more about you than you realize. But when choosing a pet, an animal's disposition, heritage and length of domestication can influence your pet decision-making process.

By nature, canines are more sociable animals and were first domesticated in Europe more than 18,000 years ago. They worked together in packs to hunt, but in their evolution, their need for social interaction was altered by becoming man's best friend. Walking a dog provides socialization for both humans and their animals.

Because cats don't have a social hierarchy that allows humans to take the alpha role, their domestication didn't occur until 5,300 years ago. New archaeological evidence suggests that Chinese farmers developed a working relationship with them to protect their crops. In the wild, cats are solitary, proud, nocturnal hunters who take orders from no one. But cat lovers today enjoy their pets' independent personalities, not needing to walk their pets and finding time to interact one on one.

Do we select our furry friends because they have similar character traits as us? Dr. Sam Gosling, a social/personality professor at the

Gosling's profile of cat people reveals that one third are more likely to live alone, twice as likely to live in an apartment and they often are single women. In contrast, dog people are more likely married with children living in a home.

A study at Ball State University indicated that people believe their own personalities are similar to their pets and that cat people saw themselves as "more independent," while dog people saw themselves as "more friendly."

According to Professor Richard Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire, pet owners often show a physical resemblance to their pets. He suggests that over time, pets may even adopt their owners' personalities and visa versa. Wiseman concludes that pets are a reflection of ourselves.

A Hunch.com poll suggests that dog people are 50% more likely to



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University of Texas in Austin conducted an online survey of 4,500+ people. His study's intent was to match shelter animals with the best possible prospective adopter. Participants were asked to identify themselves as dog people (46%), cat people (15%) or both (28%). They were given a 44-item assessment that measured their personality inclinations in five areas. Dr. Gosling's findings below suggest "there are significant differences in major personality traits between dog and cat people."

Gosling's study indicated that dog people are more extroverted (15%), more agreeable (13%) and more conscientious (11%) than feline lovers. Canine people are loyal, direct, kind, faithful and team players. He also described dog lovers as more conventional, traditional and more often men than women. People who had both cats and dogs tended to be more similar to people owning dogs only.

Cat lovers scored higher in neuroticism (12%), and are more open in a diversity of things than their dog counterparts. They were described as graceful, independent, intelligent, thoughtful and mysterious. According to Gosling, "A cat person is more likely to have something unconventional on the walls, like original works of art."

*Photos by Cody Carlson*

be conservative, both dog and cat people are equally likely to have a four-year degree, but 17% more cat people had graduate degrees. If a lost kitten is found, 67% of dog folks would take it to the pound, while 21% of cat people would rescue it.

But, no matter what your pet preference is, pets give us unconditional love and so much more.

According to Jackson Galaxy, a cat behaviorist and a Hollywood star who has both a cat and a dog, it is possible to love both cats and dogs. As he so aptly puts it, "I'm a cat guy, I'm a dog guy. I'm 'bi-petual.'"

What are you? 🐾

Dedicated to saving lives, Cat Depot, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) free-roaming facility, is recognized for its progressive design and commitment to helping homeless, abandoned and injured animals. Open seven days a week, Cat Depot is located at 2542 17th Street in Sarasota. For more information, call 941-366-2404, or visit Cat Depot online at [www.CatDepot.org](http://www.CatDepot.org).

September/October 2014 | Sarasota Pet & Manatee Pet