

How to Tell if Your Dog Loves You

By Comfort for Critters

We all assume it, but maybe we shouldn't. Not when neuroscientists and animal behaviorists will back us up! Here's some quick, easy and fun ways to know for sure your pooch thinks you're pretty awesome!

1 - Your dog greets you at the door! Sometimes it's a full-frontal assault, but not always. For some dogs just showing up with a wagging tail is enough. However they greet you, they are saying "I'm so happy you're back" each and every time!

2 - They'll wag their tail! Yes, it really is true that a wagging tail usually means a happy dog. When they start wagging it when they hear your voice or see you approaching, it always means happiness and reflects the strong bond you share.

3 - They'll show it on their face! A wagging tail is great, but sometimes their face tells a deeper story. If you check out the movement of their eyebrows, you can learn a lot. Dogs will lift their eyebrows more often when a loved family member approaches, than when it's a stranger.

4 - They look deeply into your eyes! Experts tell us that when a dog gazes steadily, they are "hugging" you with their eyes. Oxytocin is released in both of your brains, a hormone that helps mothers bond with new babies. Prolonged eye contact with your pooch just establishes a stronger and stronger bond.

5 - They treat you as their leader! Dogs are pack animals and so there's no higher compliment than allowing their human companion to be their leader. If they tend to follow you around the house, take it as a big "I love you" message. When they treat you as the pack leaders on walks, observing your cues for when to go and when to stop, that's another great sign.

6 - They share a yawn! We've all experienced just how contagious yawning can be. This also occurs cross-species, between dogs and their human companions. Sharing a yawn is expressing empathy to one another, a clear sign of love.

7 - They check out your privates! Embarrassing at times, but never from the dog's point of view. Many experts consider this behavior to be a "handshake" from a canine. They are greeting you in their customary way (with other dogs), a sure sign they feel close to you.

8 - They'll pee in front of you! Dogs typically won't do this in front of other dogs, or humans, they see as a threat or just don't feel comfortable around. So consider it a big "thumbs up" (or "leg up"), when they do their business without hiding. In dog-language it's a sign of affection.

9 - They'll lick your face! Dogs usually won't do this to people they don't like or don't feel are part of their family. So enjoy it, or simply tolerate it, but know that it's their way of bonding.

10 - They want to be by your side! There's no greater way to show your love than to simply want to be around someone. Dogs are masters at showing love in this way. If they lean on you (ie. the famous "Labrador-lean"), sleep next to you, or curl up with you on the couch, enjoy it as an indication of their love. If they enjoy cuddling right after they eat, or snuggle up when you're sick in bed, that too is a sure sign of affection.

Most dog owners have already identified some of these behaviors as a sign of bonding, but now each and every way our dogs show us love are easier to spot. Though maybe I missed one or two? Tell me how YOUR dog shows you love....

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