

## ***Drives: Your Dog's Personality***

*(An excerpt from Dog Tricks Step by Step by Mary Ann Zeigenfuse, published by Howell Book House)*

If you have more than one dog or have known more than one dog, you already appreciate that each dog is very different in personality. One dog likes to cuddle more than the other; one likes to play ball and the other doesn't, one will guard the house well and the other one will run when approached by a stranger. What makes each dog different?

Each dog, including your dog, was born with a pre-determined personality. Your dog's experiences since birth have helped mold that personality. How he was raised while in the litter with his mother matters. What age he left the litter makes a big difference. What experiences he has had during his critical periods of development have all influenced how your dog looks at the world and how he chooses to react to it. You can take a test and actually determine how your dog reacts to the world around him. This will tell you what your dog's drives are and will give you a clue as to what type of personality your dog has.

Your dog's way of reacting to the world is instinctive. These instinctive behaviors can be broken into three categories or drives: Prey Drive, Pack Drive, and Defense Drive. These drives are referred to as natural instincts because our dogs came pre-programmed with them. It is the concentration of each drive that makes up each dog's personality.

You can test your dog and see how high his drives are in each category. You can then determine how your dog looks at the world. It will help you to understand how your dog learns, and to know which exercises or tricks he will find easier to accomplish and which ones may take a little longer to learn. This applies to formal obedience as well as to household training. It can help you to recognize which exercise might be easier to teach your dog based solely on your dog's drives and your dog's personality profile.

**The Personality Test** (a test developed by Wendy Volhard)

Let's see how your dog's personality is arranged. Each category in this test has a set of questions. While taking the test for your dog you will need to answer each question honestly. Answer according to what your dog would do if presented with each opportunity in each question. If he would almost always react this way, score 10 points, if he would sometimes act this way score 5 points or if he would hardly ever do what the question says, score 0 points. Points are neither bad nor good. The total score will simply give you the concentration of the three drives that your dog possesses. Remember Defense Drive is divided into two categories so they each get a set of questions.

Take the test if you haven't yet. *(continued)*©Volhard

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### ***Drives: Your Dog's Personality (cont'd)***

As you can see by the questions themselves, each category tells a little about your dog's makeup. Pack Drive shows your dog's willingness to be part of a pack or group of which you are part. Prey Drive shows the instincts that helped your dog get food when he lived in the wild. Defense Fight shows just that, the behaviors of defending with courage the dog's territory or space. Defense Flight shows that your dog has concern for his own well-being and would preferably leave if he could during stressful situations, just as you might at times wish the floor could open up and take you inside.

With few exceptions, dogs will have some of each drive in their makeup. They need all the drives to survive in nature. And even though we now provide their food, they still need prey drive to play and retrieve. We secure their safety, but they need defense fight to be able to cope with pressures from hard work, like learning new things. And they need pack drive just to live with us in harmony. The need for defense flight is not really evident in a domesticated situation. But if a dog has a lot of defense flight it is important to know it, because how we act towards a dog with a lot of flight drive will make or break that dog. A dog with high flight can be easily stressed and might live in a constant state of turmoil if not provided with a consistent and stable environment.

The level of each drive is what helps you to see into your dog's personality. Any number above 50 is considered high. Obviously, the closer to 100, the higher the drive. A dog can be high in all the drives: Prey, Pack and Defense (either fight or flight). Or a dog can be high in only one or in none. Lower than 30 is considered low in any drive. Being low in a drive is not a bad thing; being high is not necessarily a good thing. The numbers are simply teaching you about your dog. True, some drives are more desirable for certain tasks. High Fight Drive is wanted for a dog needing lots of confidence to work alone, like a guard dog or a seeing-eye dog. High Pack Drive would be desirable for a family pet or a therapy dog. High Prey Drive is needed for a good herding dog. But as already pointed out, high is over 50 and too much of a good thing may not be so desirable either. A high Prey Drive dog may not be able to concentrate on the job at hand if the leaves in the trees are rustling. Learn your dog so you can be prepared for any situation that you are putting your dog into. Know what to expect from your dog so you won't be surprised or disappointed when your dog acts a certain way. Learn to anticipate how your dog will react by knowing your dog's personality profile.

For more information refer to *Dog Training for Dummies* by Jack and Wendy Volhard, published by IDG Publishers.©

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### *Volhard* **Canine Personality Profile**

When presented with the opportunity, does your dog (name) \_\_\_\_\_

Always - 10    Sometimes - 5    Never - 0

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1) Sniff the ground or air a lot?                             | _____ |
| 2) Get along with other dogs?                                 | _____ |
| 3) Stand its ground or investigate strange objects or sounds? | _____ |
| 4) Run away from new situations?                              | _____ |
| 5) Get excited by moving objects, such as bikes or squirrels? | _____ |
| 6) Get along with people?                                     | _____ |
| 7) Like to play tug-of-war games to win?                      | _____ |
| 8) Hide behind you when he feels he can't cope?               | _____ |
| 9) Stalk cats, other dogs or things in the grass?             | _____ |
| 10) Bark when left alone?                                     | _____ |
| 11) Bark or growl in a deep tone?                             | _____ |
| 12) Act fearful in unfamiliar situations?                     | _____ |
| 13) When excited, bark in a high pitched voice?               | _____ |
| 14) Solicit petting, or like to snuggle with you?             | _____ |
| 15) Guard its territory?                                      | _____ |
| 16) Tremble or whine when unsure?                             | _____ |
| 17) Pounce on his toys ?                                      | _____ |
| 18) Like to be groomed?                                       | _____ |
| 19) Guard its food or toys?                                   | _____ |
| 20) Crawl or turn upside down when reprimanded?               | _____ |

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 21) Shake and kill its toys?  | _____ |
| 22) Seek eye contact with you?  | _____ |
| 23) Dislike being petted?   | _____ |
| 24) Reluctant to come close to you when called?                           | _____ |
| 25) Steal food or garbage?  | _____ |
| 26) Follow you around like a shadow?                                      | _____ |
| 27) Guard its owner(s)?   | _____ |
| 28) Have difficulty standing still when groomed?                          | _____ |
| 29) Like to carry things?   | _____ |
| 30) Play a lot with other dogs?   | _____ |
| 31) Dislike being groomed or bathed?                                      | _____ |
| 32) Cringe when someone strange bends over him?                           | _____ |
| 33) Wolf down his food?   | _____ |
| 34) Jump up to greet people?  | _____ |
| 35) Like to fight other dogs?   | _____ |
| 36) Urinate during greeting behavior?                                     | _____ |
| 37) Like to dig and bury things?  | _____ |
| 38) Show reproductive behaviors, such as courting or mounting other dogs? | _____ |
| 39) When a young dog, get picked on by other dogs?                        | _____ |
| 40) Tend to bite when cornered?   | _____ |

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*Volhard*

## Canine Personality Profile

### Scoring

Name of dog \_\_\_\_\_

1)	_____
5)	_____
9)	_____
13)	_____
17)	_____
21)	_____
25)	_____
29)	_____
33)	_____
37)	_____
Total	_____

Prey Drive

100	
75	_____
50	_____
25	_____
0	

2)	_____
6)	_____
10)	_____
14)	_____
18)	_____
22)	_____
26)	_____
30)	_____
34)	_____
38)	_____
Total	_____

Pack Drive

100	
75	_____
50	_____
25	_____
0	

3)	_____
7)	_____
11)	_____
15)	_____
19)	_____
23)	_____
27)	_____
31)	_____
35)	_____
39)	_____
Total	_____

Defense (fight)

100	
75	_____
50	_____
25	_____
0	

4)	_____
8)	_____
12)	_____
16)	_____
20)	_____
24)	_____
28)	_____
32)	_____
36)	_____
40)	_____
Total	_____

Defense (flight)

100	
75	_____
50	_____
25	_____
0	