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A note to new (and not so new) TM puppy owners

As there are many new puppy owners atm or about to be, can I take this moment to talk about bringing up Tibetan youngsters.

The key to a balanced adult starts before you even receive your pup but that does not make your input from the time of pick up any less important to the final outcome.

I stress do not allow paranoia of parvo stop you getting your pup out and about as soon as possible. Sure, take some precautions till they are fully immunised but do not let it stop you from taking your pup out and about. I avoid dog parks and other areas that are high traffic with large volumes of dogs, but I use other parks. Puppy preschool is a risk but worth it, so just use common sense. Like always, carry your pups own water dish and hand sanitiser.

Do invite plenty of people around if you want your Tibetan to be visitor friendly and just ask they ignore the pup completely, then allow the pup to approach them once they are sitting.

ALWAYS, ALWAYS, crate train and if you can pen train as well, all the better. No matter what, there will come a day you be thankful for it. I find many really like a cave and will use furniture if they not given an area like a crate. For inside dogs pick a quiet and cool area for the crate and cover with a Cotton sheet that, depending on the dog, you might peg partly open or not.

Make a routine your Tibetan can depend on. Tibetans that live in domestically violent or turbulent, unpredictable households do not cope well. Nor do they cope with victim personalities well, as they feel they must be in control at those times and tend to end up an anxious mess.

They can be destructive and love to chew wood. I always made sure my youngsters have chew sticks (more like lumps of wood as they got older) and try to limit their opportunities to destroy the house until a little older and wiser. This is where crate training is great, as mine would be happy go to their pens or crates when I go to town etc.

They must get enough physical and mental stimulation every day or they will find ways to stimulate themselves. Don't expect to get a Tibetan Mastiff and leave them in the backyard and go to work 9 to 5, without a good set up and some help at home. They will occupy themselves and they can get out of most backyards if they feel they are not getting enough attention.

Get your pup around as many different animals as you can and make sure the situation is controlled to make them positive interactions. Get your pup a kitten (of course only if committed to the other animal yourself) or even better raise beside a

dog proof older cat, but introduce new pets in that first year if you want them to accept other pets down the track. I've found the happiest Tibetans are raised and live around a heap of different pets, but if they are not brought up this way their prey drive instinct will make it hard to introduce them to multi pets as adults. Don't worry if they don't have other animals around, you'll just get all the guardianship and love yourself - just be prepared to be owned by your Tibetans as you are now their whole world. They live and breathe to be with, and watch over, you and you only, or your family.

If you want to show your Tibetan I suggest you get a good mentor as they are not born show dogs as such, although there are exceptions to the rule of course. But to get the best out of most Tibetans in the ring you will need an experienced mentor on your team. But other than that, go for it: you will either love it or not, but no matter what I promise is you will learn things that will be helpful at some stage.

Lead Training is a MUST. I know many carry on like you're killing them and I'm guilty of not having done it enough with some of mine in the past, but with the size and temperament some these dogs that are coming in now, it's nearly an impossible thing to fix later.

Don't wait till your Tibetan is 6mths old to take it for a walk around the block, or on a visit to the groomer, vet or anything else you can think of, as by then it's a big deal with some. Get started early and don't just drop them off in places you visit - have a walk around and leave after some positive interactions with staff the first time, if they are really nervous.

An extremely shy, nervous unsociable Tibetan Mastiff pup becomes a nervous aggressive adult, unless you convince them otherwise.

No matter what you do, some will grow up and be extremely dog selective, if not aggressive to any outsiders and some may never really get to like people much either. But you should, with enough effort throughout the learning years, get them to be stable pets you can trust fully with your family and other pets. So much comes down to what they experience from the very start, too, as I believe a Tibetan NEVER FORGETS. The other component to the temperament and just as if not more important, is genetics. Make sure you get your pup from someone who has the genetics and experience in the breed to give you the best chance of a lovely stable family guardian/pet.

No matter what anyone says I believe at the end of the day the breed does show guardian traits, just that it's more often their family than livestock that they are trying to protect.

They are true individuals of the dog world and deserve to be protected and loved. Although not for everyone, once under the Tibetan Mastiff spell you will never live without one.

Oh and lastly do not wait until your concern or situation becomes a true crisis to reach out to others, particularly your breeder, for help over those first 3 yrs.

So good luck to all the new Tibetan puppy owners and I cannot wait to drool over all the photo