

Name droppers

Here are the names of the dogs I see on a regular basis: Emma, Katy, Lilly and Judy. Do you notice anything about their names, other than being girl names and BORING? They are all people names. Whatever happened to more traditional dog names like Bingo, Blaze, Buddy, Bandit, Buster, Ruff, Rover, Lucky, Potlicker and Melon Head?

As more people consider dogs to be part of their family they are giving them more human names like Irving, Mandy and Rockefeller. Dexter is a beautiful dog I know who is being groomed to be a seeing-eye dog, but his name sounds like he was raised at an expensive boarding school back east, wore a uniform everyday to learn elocution and looks down his nose at mere mutts and mongrels.

But having a name like Dexter just guarantees that once he's out on the cold, mean streets he's going to get beat up by every pit bull and rottweiler that comes along. You might as well name him Precious.

Included in dog-food-maker IAMS list of proper dog names are Aaron, Abbott and Achimus. You want to name your dog Achimus? Really? You can find such names in any book of human baby names, or in the phone book for that matter. In the American Kennel Club's 2007 top 10 list of dog names were the human monikers May, Mae, Maxwell, Maximus Rose, Daisy, Belle, Bell and Bella. (What's the fascination with bells?)

Another Internet list of top 20 dog names included Toby, Murphy, Oliver, Jack, Charlie, Molly, Maggie, Bailey, Zoe, Sasha and Chloe. Chloe? You named your great dane Chloe? What's next, Hilton, Holden, Huxley, Walker, Parker, Monroe, Kendall and Farcas?

I feel you should wait awhile to give any pup its permanent moniker so that you can name it something that fits its personality, like Stinky, Pinky, Nipper, Mooch, Bones, Pee Wee and Sir Wagsalot. Aren't they more personal and descriptive? A friend of mine calls his dog Alimony because it's the only thing he ended up with in his divorce.

Instead of just giving your dog a royal name like Duke, Duchess, Princess, King, Queen or Baron, show a little imagination and call it Diesel, Nixon, Bigfoot, Dumbell, Jalepeno, Hoss or Jughead. If your dog came from the pound why not call it John Doe, because you don't know its real name. A dog that keeps disappearing could be called Houdini or Abracadabra, and a dog that's hard to catch is just crying out to be called Frisbee.

If you got your dog fixed call it Sam Spade; if it likes to play ball call it Shortstop or Catcher; if it leaves home but keeps coming back call it Boomerang; if it's always a nuisance by laying around in the way call it Speedbump; if it's fat call it Crisco.

I like the idea of being breed-specific in naming your pets. For example, a boxer could be called Sugar Ray; a German shepherd Rin Tin Too; a dachshund Longfellow; a non-working breed could be called Layoff or Senator; Burrito fits a chihuahua; and I wouldn't even have to tell you the breed if my dog's name was Llasa Poopo. I also like the idea of naming dogs after brands of beer, like Schlitz, Bud, Corona and Coors.

If you have two dogs, name them after famous duos like Abbott and Costello or Lewis and Clark. Especially if they're always going off on trips of discovery in the neighborhood.

I suppose in this politically correct world traditional dog names like Blackie, Brownie or Whitey are taboo. And naming your dog after a human like Tiger just sets it up for embarrassment when their human counterpart turns out to be a bum.

I also would not name your dog something that could be mistaken for a command. For example, if your dog is named Sit he will just go down on his haunches every time you call him.

If you name your dog Fetch he'll retrieve your neighbors newspaper when you call him and your dog Spot just might pee on the carpet when you call for him. Then again, some dogs misbehave so badly they think their names are Downboy and No.

It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

Take it from someone who hates their name, don't name your dog Oprah, Barbie, Vanna or Megan. As Charley Brown said to Snoopy (a real dog name), "Good grief."

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