

Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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“If Darwin had been a dog, would he have evolved any further?”

A friend sent me this email:

Who is your best friend, *really*? Try this test to determine once and for all:

Put your wife and your dog in the trunk of your car for an hour. When you open the trunk, which one is happy to see you?

While I didn't actually try this experiment, I did discuss it “in theory” with my wife. She shook her head and left the room as she seems to do more and more often these days. But it made me consider a possible blip on the evolutionary screen. As humans, I think we're one of the most advanced life forms on earth (except maybe for squirrels) but it appears that dogs have a leg up on us. Upon a closer examination, I sniffed out three reasons why.

1. Tail Wagging

If you tried the trunk experiment (which I'm not recommending, but would pay good money for a video if you did) most likely when you let your dog out of the trunk, he would be wagging his tail to show his unquestionable pleasure in seeing you. Wives don't wag their tails. Even when we beg...and offer treats. But I digress.

Dogs don't mince tails when it comes to unconditional love. They let you know up front (sometimes from behind) that they're willing to jump into the relationship with an overtly positive attitude toward you. In fact, you can treat a dog like, well, a dog and he'll still love you.

People, on the other paw, are different.

If my wife is being disruptive and I tell her to “sit,” chances are she will not sit. In fact, she will most likely give me a look that will cause me to sit, stay or fetch depending on what *she* needs at the time.

We all fall prey to conditions for unconditional love. For instance, while I'm grateful when my wife mows the yard, it seems our definitions of a “straight line” differ. I find it hard to love anyone unconditionally who regards “serpentine” as straight.

We have conditions. Dogs just have obligation-free tail wagging.

Dogs—1. Humans—0.

2. Sniffing Out the Problems First

Dogs sniff out the underlying qualities of a new acquaintance by getting to the bottom of any potential problems right from the start. They're not fooled by coiffed hair, trimmed nails or even a shiny new fur coat. They go behind all that and discover what their new friend is really like. And assuming the e"scent"ials are OK, the relationship moves forward.

We humans, on the other paw, will invest in the surface trappings of a relationship and ignore real problems until we've been married for ten years and have five kids. The smell of dysfunction can be right in front of our noses and we refuse to accept that the mangey things won't change and that we can't train our spouse to meet our unconditional conditions.

If the situation stinks to a dog, no matter how attractive the breed, he simply turns his nose and runs.

Dogs—2. Humans—0.

3. Seeing the Big Picture

Anyone who has ever transported a dog in a car knows that he has one, and only one goal – pointing his nose out the window. Why do dogs do this? Perhaps the wind feels good. Maybe they're looking for a dry hydrant. Or possibly, they don't like the smell of rich Corinthian leather. I think it's bigger than that. Dogs seek the big picture and the best view is outside.

We uprights prefer the small, even bad, picture. "The traffic is horrible." "It's so hot outside (of course it's not the heat...)." "Gas cost more than my mortgage."

A dog's life goes by seven times as fast as ours does. He has no time to be cranky. He sticks his nose right into the beauty of it all.

Dogs—3. Humans—0.

I think I've proved my point that dogs—aside from that poop eating thing—are more highly evolved than humans and have much to teach us. So, if you haven't wagged your tail at your spouse, sniffed out a new friend, or stuck your head out the window to take a big whiff of the world, you may well end up in the doghouse.

And that makes your bite just as bad as your bark (whatever that means).

Until next time, just humor me.

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*Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including *Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between*. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit www.RonCulberson.com.*