**Dogs**

Dogs come in many different sizes, colors and shapes. From Bernese Mountain dogs to tiny Pomeranians, each breed has its own behaviors and personality. Choosing a dog breed that will fit your lifestyle comes down to how much exercise the dog requires, how much stimulation and attention as well as what the dog will be expected to do. For example, you can’t buy a Belgian Malinois as a family dog that won’t receive training and ongoing exercises to keep them stimulated. While most dogs are eager to learn and obey commands, not all of them are bred with protection in mind.

Then grooming also factors in. Does the dog breed have long hair, double coat? This is also important to take into consideration. If your dog has long hair or a double coat grooming is an essential part of your daily routine as they can develop matts, skin sensitivity or their coat can become impacted. Grooming a dog with a long luxurious coat can take a significant amount of labor and time and this should be considered. Dogs like Italian Greyhounds are notorious for their sleek fur that does not shed as much as a typical dog. Family dogs are usually dogs like Labradors, Golden Retrievers and Jack Russells.

Feeding your dog the correct nutritional diet is essential to give them the best chance at life. Many dog enthusiasts prefer to feed their dogs home-cooked meals, a certain brand of kibble or even raw diets consisting of different types of raw animal meats, including every part of the animal like their liver, stomach and so on. The animals seem to prefer the flavor of meat to the vegetarian options.

Caring for any animal takes commitment, as they can live over 10 years and should be treated as part of your family. Most people don’t do enough research about the breed they are buying and end up surrendering their dogs after they come out of the cute puppy phase. They state that the dogs are too much effort, too aggressive or have grown too big for them. Another scenario is when dogs get dropped off at a shelter because the owners want to start their own family and decide to get rid of the dog.

The house/apartment you live in will also impact your decision. Having a yappy little Yorkie or a howling Husky might not sit well with your neighbors, especially in an estate.

Remember, your dog might not live as long as you, but you are their whole life. Analyze all the different aspects and take it into consideration before you adopt or take a dog into your life.