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### Breeder Feedback

**Thanks for the email and welcome to the world of being owned by a Tibetan Mastiff. Just some words of advice as I've read a line that stands out to me. I'm glad to hear that your puppy is such a sweetheart but the Tibetan Mastiff is definitely a guardian breed. You might want to consider the expectations you have of your dog as he grows.**



**Anticipate that your Tibetan Mastiff's inherent guardian character will shine through as he matures.**

# The Tibetan Mastiff

## The Guardian Character

*"I'm so glad that I found your site on the internet. I'm a brand new owner of a 16-week TM puppy and we are in love. I read all about the breed before getting him and I just knew this type of dog was exactly what we were looking for. I travel a lot for business and my wife and 2 children are home alone. I'll feel much better leaving now that we have a guardian dog in the house to ensure my family's safety. I was looking for a dog that would guard and protect but still be friendly. He barks already to let us know when someone is at the door but he's just a squiggle kissy-baby as he jumps all over our visitors. He's just awesome."*

Breeders are often asked about the guardian character. One analogy that I find valuable is the parallel that can be drawn between a TM and a security system. I want you to pretend that you've decided that you need a new home security system installed. I want you to think about why you feel you need this new system in the first place. You obviously feel that you, your family and home require some kind of protection but what kind of system does that call for? Something simple or something complicated? Once you've figured all that out, it's time to put your money down. Some guy will come out to the house and set the whole thing up for you. The installer now asks you to select a private number or letter code, he explains how to activate the system and how to disarm it when you return home. Seems straightforward enough.

Your new alarm system isn't harmful but it sure can set off some problems if you don't get your routine down right. I assume that you would like to deter strangers and criminals but what happens if your sister or another family member tries to enter your home without knowing the access code to turn it off? Do you think that the alarm system knows the difference between a stranger and your sister? Or does the alarm system just do its job?

### **Guardian Nature of the Tibetan Mastiff**

Part of a breeder's job is to determine if that whole sentiment about wanting a guardian breed is actually correct and warranted. To do that means finding out from the prospective owner if he actually understands the characteristics of the guardian breed. Let's look back to the initial email. *"I was looking for a dog that would guard and protect but still be friendly."* Asking a dog to be protective but friendly is mighty confusing, don't you

think? Expecting a dog to be defensive and trusting at the same time is in absolute conflict. There is a vast difference between a dog that accepts people easily but uses barking as a deterrent and the inherent guardian nature of the Tibetan Mastiff. Early and on-going socialization is key to a TM accepting people but no owner should assume that a TM will always recognize friend from intruder. Neither should any owner assume that a TM will welcome someone based on previous meetings in the presence of his owner. Just because your buddy down the street has always dropped by once a week does not mean that your adolescent/adult TM is going to just let him in the door if you're not there to supervise. Because your mother-in-law has always visited once a year does not mean your grown-up TM is going to be thrilled that she has access to your home for two weeks. The divergence in the security system comparison comes to this fine point. Your TM is not an electrical system. He is a living being with a guardian mandate. He does not come pre-programmed with an automatic discerning on/off button when it comes to dealing with strangers and visitors. It should also be stated further that it comes as a shock to many a first-time owner that only he may know and manage the access code.

Over the years I have found it valuable to stick with the home security system/Tibetan Mastiff analogy. Just as a security system shouldn't be considered dangerous neither should a Tibetan Mastiff. But just as people must learn that there are simple routines and strategies in order to ensure that the police department isn't answering false alarm calls 5 times a week, prospective owners should understand that there are early routines and strategies that need to be in place for a young Tibetan Mastiff - or any dog, for that matter.