



Reasons to Say “No”

One of the most difficult things for anyone to hear is the word “No”. Sometimes it breaks a heart, sometimes it elicits anger. Whether a breeder or a rescue group, we no more want to say the word to someone than a potential owner wants to hear it. Yet, at times, we must. Here are a few reasons why you may hear the word “No” when searching for a TM.

You do not have a securely fenced yard

Tibetan Mastiffs are home and property guardians. If not properly contained, they will patrol and promptly lay claim to the entire neighborhood. Quick to figure out locks and gates or to devise an escape plan, fencing needs to be almost bullet-proof. With sharp wit and high pain tolerance, an underground or invisible fence is of little value in stopping a TM. A dog on the loose is in danger of being hit by a car, stolen, poisoned, attacked by other animals, or worse. A general rule of thumb is that TMs need a sturdy 6 ft. high fence with locks on the gates.

You want a big fluffy teddy bear to cuddle

Tibetan Mastiffs are big and fluffy, that’s for sure, but they are not passive by any stretch of the imagination. They have strong personalities and a mind of their own. They bark, they dig, they chew, and they demand attention, especially as puppies. When they get tired, they may cuddle up on your bed, along with the day’s collection of dust and dirt. If you’re looking for a stuffed toy, there is a Build-A-Bear Workshop at your nearest mall.

You want to surprise your child with a puppy for a birthday/Christmas/etc

TMs are not toys. They are not something to be played with and then discarded when the next trendy toy hits the market. They are living, breathing, eating, peeing, and pooping creatures that need more than just a child’s love. They require time, attention, feeding, training, medical care, and a commitment for 12-14 years of your life.

You have an unstable or chaotic lifestyle

Tibetan Mastiffs require a huge time commitment to raise a well socialized, well behaved mature dog. They thrive on routine and are slow to adapt to changes in their environment. If you are in transition, or have a job that requires frequent travel or relocation, this is not the breed for you. The same is true if your home has a revolving door where random people come and go. Chaos leads to confusion, confusion leads to anxiety, and anxiety may lead to aggression.

You want a livestock guardian

This has been a heated topic of debate for many years. Some TMs make great livestock guardians on small family farms where they are kept in close contact with their people. They are property guardians in the sense that they patrol the perimeter of their property, and cannot be considered trustworthy to remain with the herd or flock. You may argue that in Tibet they are used to guard goats and yak. True, but that is only half the story. During the day, the dogs are tied outside the home to protect the women and children, and so form and maintain close bonds with their family. Even when let loose at night to guard the flocks and herds, they still have access to the homes. Those that travel with the nomads sleep in the camps, not with the herds.

You have never owned or even seen a TM, but you want a puppy to breed

A responsible breeder will know his breed inside out. Not only what the breed looks like, but their temperament; activity, socialization, and training needs; health issues common in the breed; and their good points, bad habits, and quirks. You need to understand how they develop and change to be able to assess puppies for potential buyers to insure a good fit and a successful placement. You need to be able to answer questions and support your puppy owners if they run into a problem. This knowledge only comes through time and experience with the breed.

You want a dog to train for personal protection

TMs are territorial property guardians. They guard their people because they consider them their property and their responsibility. This innate sense of protecting what is theirs is instinctual and something Tibetan Mastiffs have been bred to do for thousands of years. Trust their ability to assess the severity of a threat and decide on the best course of action. If the need arises, they will do their job. Never train a TM to attack under any circumstance.

You want a dog as arm candy

We have seen it happen time and again: A breed is featured in a movie or a TV commercial and suddenly it is in high demand. Remember when everyone wanted a Dalmatian after Disney's 101 Dalmatians, a St. Bernard after the movie Beethoven, or a Chihuahua following a popular Taco Bell commercial? The same thing happened with TMs when the media pronounced them "The world's most expensive dogs". Unfortunately, when the fad passes, the dogs are often abandoned.

You rent your home:

This is difficult when the family would otherwise be a great home for a Tibetan Mastiff. Landlords are unpredictable. While they may accept dogs today, they may change their minds tomorrow. Insurance companies often have a list of banned breeds, and "mastiffs" are on the restricted list of some city/county breed specific legislation. In addition, TMs are big dogs, with big teeth, and while they have no more of a destructive nature than many other breeds, their size and strength make it possible for them to do a lot of damage in a very short amount of time. When it is someone else's property, it may result in eviction. You could find yourself in the position of choosing between your home and your beloved pet

If you apply to purchase or adopt a Tibetan Mastiff and receive "No" for an answer, understand that the breeder or rescue group has the best interest of both the dog and your family at heart. Consider your options, make changes if you can, or consider another breed that may be a better fit for your family or lifestyle. No one wants to place a puppy where it will not succeed or subject a family to the dolor of having to part with a dog that has become a cherished part of their lives.

Deborah Mayer

[American Tibetan Mastiff Association](#)

Copyright©,
Deborah Mayer



Noble Legacy Tibetan Mastiffs