

# Puppy Love

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## Mirror Mirror On the Wall

Many people are puzzled by the fact that dogs seem to ignore images of themselves reflected in a mirror. Young puppies encountering mirrors for the first time may treat the image as if it is another dog. They may bark at it, or give a little bow and an invitation to play as if they are encountering a real dog. Some dogs may even be fearful of the dog in the mirror. However, after a short while they lose interest. Mirror self-recognition may seem obvious to people, but it requires a certain cognitive sophistication. In fact, human babies don't understand mirrors until they are around two years old. Self-awareness is the ability to think about yourself as an individual and to realize that you are separate from others around you. This is a key part of being human, and to some scientists, it's a debatable dividing line between people and animals. However, a dog's lack of understanding their reflection in a mirror is surprising considering the other complex mental and social skills dogs have been shown to possess. Several tests have been developed to evaluate the self-awareness of dogs by using a dog's own urine. One Researcher creatively used random dog urine found in the snow to use as specimens. Each dog tested had the opportunity to examine all of the urine specimens, which included a specimen of their own. The dogs tested did the sniff test on all of the specimens, only briefly smelling his own specimen, and then moving on and spending more time examining the random specimens. So, what does this mean? There might be a simple explanation. Humans are visual creatures; we experience the world primarily through sight. Dogs do not. A dog's sense of smell is his main gateway to the world. As humans, we would not be able to pass a self-awareness test by smell. Sniff. Sniff.



Morty is home in New York with his wonderful family. And, he has indeed, found a "friend."



## It's Me!

Dr. Gordon Gallup, a psychologist from State University of New York, developed a mirror/red dot test to determine whether an animal possesses the ability of visual self-recognition. He administered the red dot test on chimpanzees by secretly painting an unscented red dot on an ear and eyebrow. When a chimpanzee was given a mirror it touched the red dots on his eyebrow and ear, some even turned their body to get a better look at the red dots. Clearly, the chimps tested understood that the reflection in the mirror was of themselves. Orangutans, gorillas, elephants and dolphins have also demonstrated they possess self-awareness. Dogs showed no interest in the test and failed miserably.



Dogs have a sense of "mine-ness" which is the sense of what belongs to himself and what belongs to others: such as "my food," "my bone," "my territory." Even Tarzan got it: "Me Tarzan, you Jane."