

# Puppy Love

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Diablo was born at Cotswold Wildlife Park in Oxfordshire, England and was immediately rejected by his mother who was already doing double-duty raising her young twins. He weighed in close to eight ounces, which is coincidentally about how much a miniature dachshund weighs at birth. He needed human intervention if he was going to survive. Zookeeper, Estelle Morgan, took on the challenge with great success. She bottle fed Diablo every two hours for a month to get him into a routine and he grew to an amazing four pounds in just six weeks. Little Diablo was quite feisty from birth and it was decided he needed some social skills to soften his nature. Fig, Morgan's six month old dachshund, came to the rescue. Fig immediately initiated play with Diablo and he quickly took to following the little dachshund everywhere. Diablo will continue to live with Fig until he is old enough to join the adult porcupines at the zoo. In the meantime, Fig and Diablo enjoy chasing each other around in the garden. "Porcupines use their quills as a defense mechanism," Morgan says, "and as they get along really well, no defense behaviors have been seen. There isn't anything other than playful interaction between them." Way to go Fig, congratulations for a job well done!

## *The Neurochemical of Love*

Love is a complex and difficult to define emotion, but researchers have long known that feelings of closeness and intimacy are related to releasing oxytocin, known as the "neurochemical of love". Measuring an increase in oxytocin in the bloodstream can give scientists a sense of how strong a feeling of love an interaction elicits. For example, shaking hands with a stranger might raise oxytocin levels 5 to 10 percent, giving a slight sense of closeness. Receiving a hug from one's child, on the other hand, could boost that up to 100 percent.

## *And Then There Is the Goat...*



Paul Zac, a researcher at Claremont Graduate University, conducted a research project to determine just how this "love chemical" worked in non-human test subjects. He found two adorable test subjects at an animal refuge in Arkansas; a terrier and a goat. These two played together frequently and enjoy the time they spend together. Zak did blood work initially to determine their oxytocin level and then he observed the two "friends" chase, jump, and roughhouse for about fifteen minutes. He then repeated the blood test and was amazed at what he discovered. The terrier's oxytocin level increased 45 percent indicating the dog considered the goat a friend. The most adorable results of the test were found in the goat. His oxytocin level jumped to 210 percent. He is in love with the terrier! Zak stated, "The only time I have seen such a surge in oxytocin in humans is when someone sees their loved one, is romantically attracted to someone, or is shown an enormous kindness." This study indicates two separate species can form emotional attachment to each other. Zak states, "You can even call it love."



## *The Love Test*



A new study on the brain chemistry of canines has confirmed what pet-owners have long suspected -- dogs really are capable of loving us. However, this is not universal with people. A woman in the "love test" group had almost no reaction while playing with a puppy. She later admitted she doesn't really like babies either. Dogs of course, always have the ability to love unconditionally.