

JLo and Casper Smart: Should You Get a Puppy Together?



By Jane Greer, PhD for Galttime.com

When is puppy love the smart choice?

Jennifer Lopez and boyfriend Casper Smart [introduced](#) the newest member of their family to the public recently via Twitter – a brown boxer puppy they’ve named Bear. Lopez, who has four-year-old twins with ex-husband Marc Anthony, has been dating Smart since 2011. This step seems worth noting – not only for them but for all couples who might be wondering what the next phase of their partnership might be.

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of your love and just want to enjoy the day-to-day, but at some point things

must grow in one way or another. Sometimes the next step is decided for you, with an unplanned pregnancy for example. Other times, a couple may hastily get ahead of themselves, moving in together or taking on more responsibility than they might be ready for. Or maybe they already have kids who are begging for a new sibling. Often when partners find themselves biting off more than they are ready to chew, the relationship can implode.

Instead of being taken by surprise, one way to test the waters of how you and your partner might handle responsibility in your shared life together is to get a pet. It will give you a sense not only of how your partner will be in a traditional role, but also how you'll take to it. Think of it as a practice run. Having a pet, especially if it's a puppy, requires some of the necessary behavior that occurs when you have a baby. Your schedule changes so you can take care of the dog – walk him, feed him, train him, and comfort him when he whines during the night. It will tell you a lot about how much each of you will be able to sacrifice your personal needs and work as a team to cover all the bases. Pets might be really cute, and melt your heart, but there is no denying how much hands-on obligation they require. In many ways, it is its own form of parenthood.

Puppies might bring puppy love and tug at your heartstrings, but they pack a punch when it comes to accountability – as does building a life with another person. JLo and Casper are doing it right, they are dipping their toes into the pool of settling down more before taking that jump. They brought home Bear before adding to their already existing family, allowing them the time to find the balance between love and reality.

The bottom line is that if your biological clock is ticking and you think you want a baby, but you're wondering about the timing and what it will mean to your relationship, take control rather than letting yourself be pushed into anything before you're sure you're ready. Instead, do a dry run with a

pet – after all, you are never too old for puppy love.