



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 9, 2019

Dog Owners Happier Than Cat Owners — Because Dog Owners Are Conservative

It could become a pet peeve of feline-fanatic pet owners, but a recent survey found that people with dogs are considerably happier than those with cats. And it's not because dogs are always there for you and cats, well, want you there for them — when it's convenient.

The data comes from the 2018 General Social Survey, which “for the first time included a battery of questions on pet ownership,” [reports](#) the *Washington Post*. Not only did it find that six in 10 households include at least one pet, but also that dog “owners are about twice as likely as cat owners to say they're very happy, with people owning both falling somewhere in between,” the *Post* also informs.



Perhaps this is no surprise given that only one of these creatures is known as “man's best friend.” But, no, acquiring a really big, happy dog that's inclined to eat your cat isn't the solution (relax, cat lovers, that's a joke). As the *Post* points out, correlation doesn't mean causation.

Apropos to this, the paper writes that the “General Social Survey data show that dog owners, for instance, are more likely to be married and own their own homes than cat owners, both factors known to affect happiness and life satisfaction.” Moreover, “Dog owners tended to be more agreeable, more extroverted and less neurotic than cat owners.”

Delving deeper, however, we should ask: Are these just correlations, too? For a simple point is missed here:

Conservatives are [more likely](#) to [own dogs](#), whereas liberals [tend toward cats](#), as the linked sources explain.

And conservatives [are happier](#) than liberals.

Study after study has borne out the last point. Even leftists acknowledge it, with the *New York Times'* Arthur C. Brooks being a good example. After an opening paragraph in which he repeats some negative (and sometimes debunked) stereotypes about rightists, he [admits](#), “Scholars on both the left and right have studied this question extensively, and have reached a consensus that it is conservatives who possess the happiness edge.... This pattern has persisted for decades. The question isn't whether this is true, but why.”

This helps explain much. Yes, dog owners are more likely to be married — but note that conservatives are more likely to be dog owners *and* [to be married](#). Dog owners are more likely to own their homes, but [conservatives are also](#). Dog owners are “more agreeable, more extroverted and less neurotic”; [so](#)



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[are conservatives](#). [Ding, ding](#) — it's light-bulb time.

The *Washington Post* also mentions what *could* be other causal reasons for dog owners' greater happiness, writing that a "2013 study found ... that dog owners are more likely to engage in outdoor physical activity than people who don't own dogs, with obvious benefits for health and happiness."

Yet there could be an ideological link here, too, with [some studies indicating](#) that conservatives exercise more.

The *Post* also writes, "Research also has shown that dog owners are more likely than other folks to form friendships with people in their neighborhoods on the basis of the random encounters that happen when they're out walking their pets."

Of course, walking a pet or not, the likelihood of friendship formation is increased if you're more agreeable and outgoing — which conservatives are.

Dog owners are also "more likely to seek comfort from their pet in times of stress, more likely to play with their pet, and more likely to consider their pet a member of their family," the paper informs. Although [a study showed](#) that conservatives are more likely to hug their kids (though libs hold the edge on hugging trees) — which *may* also mean they're more apt to show their pets attention as well — I can't say there's an ideological link here.

Yet there's more to this story still: Is "conservatism," in a way, just a correlation itself? Is there a deeper reason the people we in our time call conservatives are happier?

Note how [studies have shown](#) that conservatives are significantly more religious than liberals are. (This should be obvious, though; it's not conservatives who say Christians "[should be eradicated](#).")

And [research also tells us that religious people are happier](#) — as well as better adjusted in general.

Related to this is [a study showing](#) that liberals are less likely to know "the meaning of life," which, of course, tells us they're more likely to believe life is meaningless. This is no surprise. What could yield a greater sense of meaninglessness than atheism's corollary that, as famed atheist Richard Dawkins [put it](#), people "are machines built by DNA whose purpose is to make more copies of the same DNA" (though one should wonder how anything in a random, accidental universe could have anything but a subjective "purpose"). People are, you see, mere "objects that perceive," to [quote](#) botanist Lawrence Trevanion. Fun guys.

So, no, buying a cat won't make it Prozac or pistol-to-the-head time. But buying into godlessness and its demon child liberalism just may.

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