



Bossy Pants

— The Guide —

*For pups who take charge
(of virtually everything.)*



Honor your Bossy Pants for who they are
so you can make the most of your time together.

Honoring: _____
Your Bossy Pants



The Honored Dog

There is a particular kind of knowing that happens between a person and their dog. It doesn't come from training, or from anything you can find in a book (or even taking a quiz).

It comes from paying attention; from noticing the specific way your dog engages with the world, the things that light them up, and the way they love. It comes from seeing them, not just living with them.

Most pet parents share that knowing. They just may not have the words for it. The Honored Dog experience exists to give you those words. Not to tell you who your dog is. You already know that. But to offer you a language that finally matches what you've felt from the beginning. A way of describing, celebrating, and relishing in the relationship you have formed with your four-legged best friend.

Think of this as recognition. This guide puts language to what you've already been noticing; how they engage, what drives them, what settles them. As you move through it, the moments you've shared take on more meaning. The written reflections bring your observations forward. And over time, they become something you can return to, helping you remember your dog and the experiences you shared.

The PDF/printed guide is a condensed version whereas the full experience lives online at HonoredDog.com/Your-Pack where your reflections will be saved in your account.

This is not a training guide. It is not a behavior manual. It is a recognition; of your dog, of what they bring to your life, and of the unmistakable personality that makes them entirely and completely themselves.

Because every dog deserves to be known.

Welcome *To the pack*

Welcome to The Honored Dog. You and your dog are now part of our pack. A community of people who share the profound love for their companion animals.

My name is Kimberly Jo, and I'm the creator of The Honored Dog. If you're anything like me, you love your dog immensely. So much that it's impossible to express. The days pass by too quickly. And before you know it, your beloved companion is aging more than you care to acknowledge. As the years pass, we want to make the most of our time with them; to give them a life that reflects how deeply they are loved.

This is why I created The Honored Dog. Because we all want to love our dogs fully, a feat only possible if we give ourselves permission to truly feel it.

The concept of The Honored Dog Pack Personalities began as a way to help customers envision colors for the custom crochet dog sweaters I create. Within weeks of recognizing Josie as a Social Butterfly and Murphy, a Bossy Pants, I began witnessing my own relationships with them shifting into a more connected, compassionate, and grounded way of being together.

Unwanted frustrations began to fade every time I reminded myself that they were simply being a Social Butterfly and Bossy Pants. In the end, that's all that I could ask for. After all, they were embodying the very traits that make up their personalities. Perfect manifestations of joy and determination. Perfect manifestations of love.

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Bossy Pants

The Bossy Pants
is a dog who takes charge
of a situation
before anyone else
has figured out
what the situation is.

A note on the name: "Bossy Pants" is a personality, not a critique. The dog who runs the household, announces every visitor, and has opinions about the schedule is not a problem to be solved. They are a dog who is doing exactly what they were built to do. The name belongs to any dog who has something to say and isn't shy about saying it.



Introduction

Often rising late, Murphy greets the day barking orders. After making his way to the kitchen, he surveys his surroundings. Displeased with the results, he throws an insistent look his mama's way, staring intensely as if to say, "Where's my breakfast, woman?"

Bossy Pants will run the show if given the chance. They are highly focused and purposeful; often looking for a job or challenge. Exercise, play, and structured activities give the them much needed stimulation, which makes room for their softer side to come through. While they may prefer leading, they will follow; as long as they are led by someone who is grounded and confident. on.

Under the bravado, the Bossy Pants harbors a softer side that longs to be nurtured. Often unexpected, their fragility reminds us that their loudest behaviors are layered above softer traits. These less obvious characteristics are easy to overlook if we aren't paying attention.

Meet Murphy

Bossy Pants

Chief Executive Pup

Murphy has opinions. About the neighbor's schedule, the meal schedule, and the squirrel situation across the street. He communicates those opinions clearly, confidently, and at a volume that leaves very little room for misinterpretation.

"Murph-Man"

Murphy walks into a room and lets everyone know he's in charge. He carries a confidence that is entirely his own; unhurried, unshakeable, completely certain that his perspective is both valid and necessary.

His first photo was taken with his mouth open, mid-bark. For a long time, Kimberly Jo heard the bark first. She saw the insistence, the way he held his position until things were resolved, his way.

But over time, something shifted. Once Kimberly Jo had the language around it, she could appreciate his Bossy Pants nature for what it was. This shift in her perspective led to more patience and understanding in her response to him.

"Mooph"

And since he was already running things, we made it official; promoting him to Chief Executive Dog at The Honored Dog. It just made sense, given he already has eight years of experience barking orders.

But for now, he really just wants you to know about the squirrels.



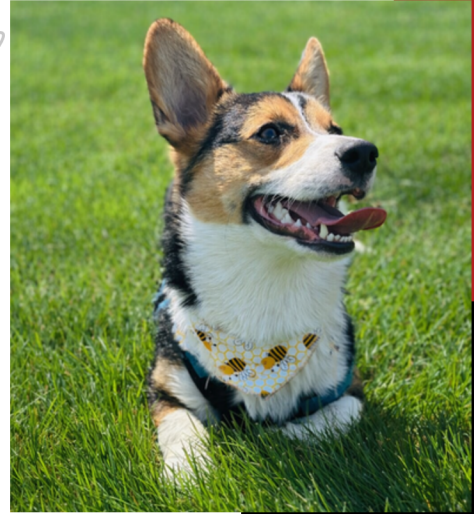
Reflection

In what ways is your dog similar to the Honored Dog's original Bossy Pants, Murphy? Capture details below, in a journal, or online at HonoredDog.com/Your-Pack.

Your Bossy Pants

Expressive

Strength



The Bossy Pants communicates with a clarity that becomes a gift once you recognize it, expressing what they feel directly and in the moment so their needs and reactions are unmistakable. They carry themselves with a quiet certainty, engaging the world head-on while reserving their devotion for the one who has earned it.

Core Traits



Vocal, Bold,
Directive

Social Focus



Agency -
Directed Connection

Motivation



Expression
& Having a Role

Loyalty:



Fierce
& Protective



Expressive and vocal, Bossy Pants are socially focused on having agency over their own decisions, while also keeping everyone informed. Given their directive nature, Bossy Pants appreciate schedules and routines. These daily norms provide structure, which helps curb their anxiety.

Murphy is, by human definition; a mall cop. Always on duty, he is motivated by having a "job", and enjoys participating in day-to-day tasks. Fiercely loyal and protective, he stands guard, watching the front door of their community great room while his sister Josie relaxes on her back, beckoning for a spontaneous belly rub from passers by. Keeping his station, Murphy remains keenly aware of the goings-on throughout the day.

Every bark, every insistent moment is communicating a message.



Engagement

Murphy starts the day by waking with expectations; for breakfast, a walk, and more breakfast. It's up to his mama to put her foot down, reinforcing the one-breakfast a morning rule. But that doesn't stop him from trying.

Bossy Pants are directive by nature, communicating their wishes by barking, insisting, or planting and refusing to move. Over time, those moments begin to form something consistent and understandable; a language worth learning.

Connections

Engagement

Engagement Style

Focused & Directive

Understanding the Bossy Pants starts with a single reframe: rather than seeing their actions as *misbehaving*, consider what they are trying to *communicate*.

Focused and directive, Bossy Pants behaviors commonly challenge the status quo. What can feel like intensity is often clarity; an effort to organize the moment, guide interaction, and stay actively involved in how things move forward. When their actions are viewed through this lens, life can become more enjoyable for both you and your dog.

Guide



Bold

Bossy Pants take charge of a situation before anyone else has figured out what the situation is.

How Bossy Pants Connect

Attention Style	Direct — makes contact immediately, on their terms, with full energy
Connection Style	Intense and loyal — chosen people receive fierce devotion
Engagement Style	Broad and bold — engages everyone, but anchors deeply to their person
Initiation Style	Always — does not wait to be approached; approaches with full confidence
Social Seeking	Leads — naturally takes charge of the group dynamic
Loyalty	Protective and fierce — will advocate loudly for the ones they love

Engaged

Relationships

Engagement

How Bossy Pants Relate

New Space	Assesses immediately — takes charge of the environment before settling.
Unfamiliar People	Bold and direct — approaches with confidence, makes an impression.
Building Bonds	Fast and committed — decides quickly and invests fully.
In a Group	Natural leader — organizes, directs, and manages the dynamic.
Social Energy	High — brings energy to every situation and expects engagement in return.

Exhilarating

Despite their frequent insistence, the Bossy Pants is deeply relationship-driven. They don't just exist within the relationship. They want to participate in it. Lead it, even.

For this reason, being with a Bossy Pants is exhilarating, exhausting, and yet somehow still something to look forward to every day.

When they're not keeping you on schedule with feeding and walks, gentle corrections and full-stop "no's," they're showing their spunk while fulfilling their neighborhood watch duties.

But at the end of the day, when the world has settled in for the night, there is a tender spirit that wants to unwind in a moment with you.

Loyal

Reflection

What are some ways you might give your Bossy Pants the opportunity to serve a purpose or have a job to do where they can lead with structure or direction?

When a Bossy Pants
enters the room,
their presence is
immediately known;
regardless of
whether or not they
make a sound.



Expression

For the Bossy Pants, expression is direct and hard to miss. Rather than processing internally or waiting for the right moment, they communicate outward (through voice, movement, and action) making their needs, preferences, and reactions known in real time.

There is no guessing with this dog. When something is right, you'll know. When something is off, you'll know that too. The Bossy Pants doesn't hold back, doesn't hint, and doesn't wait to be asked. They are, in every sense of the word, expressive. And that expressiveness is one of their greatest gifts once you learn to receive it as communication rather than noise.

Emotions

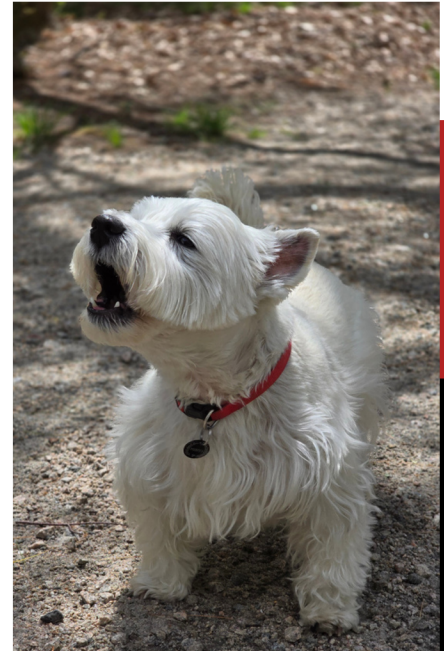
Expression

Bossy Pants do not hold their emotions quietly. Their feelings move through them and into the moment, expressed clearly and without delay. Rest assured, if something matters, they let you know.

Looking back, the signs were all there. Murphy's first puppy video featured the tiny white fluff ball exercising his right to voice his opinions. Which were quite large, especially for such a small pup.

From that day forward, Kimberly Jo's third West Highland Terrier would prove to be the most vocal of the pack. Over the past seven years, he has grown into his voice, learning when it is most effective, often choosing to ignore any signs that it's not.

Steadied by structure, purpose, and feeling heard, Bossy Pants, can relax and thrive when engaged and included. Additionally, when they are met with steadiness, they can relax and shift towards a more focused, engaged, and connected demeanor.



Emotions, Responses, & Ideal Settings

Sensitivity Level	High — feels things strongly and expresses them just as strongly.
Expression Style	Direct and immediate — there is no filter between feeling and communication.
What Grounds Them	Structure, purpose, and a person who can hold the energy without shrinking.
Response to Environment	Reactive — responds to change, stimulation, and perceived threats quickly.
Emotional Needs	To be heard, to have a role, and to know their person can handle them.

Reflection

The Bossy Pants is steadied by being heard. How can you acknowledge their communication in a way that helps them feel understood, rather than resisted?

Purpose

Energy

Expression

The Bossy Pants doesn't hold back energy. They put it into motion. Their presence is active, engaged, and hard to ignore.

Persistent

What may come across as intensity or persistence is often engagement; an attempt to participate or influence. At their best, the Bossy Pants is not just present. They are fully involved, living a life while tuned in, responsive, and actively participating.

For all their opinions, demands, and dramatic declarations, these dogs are often deeply attachment-driven. Their confidence can disappear quickly when they feel isolated, uncertain, or emotionally disconnected from the people they trust most. What looks like "bossiness" on the surface is often rooted in a profound desire for reassurance, closeness, and emotional safety.

Responsive

Physical Presence



Bold and commanding
Takes up space with full confidence.

Focus Style



Purposeful
Intense focus & energy.

Vocalization Style



Frequent & Expressive
Voice is the primary communication tool.

Beneath the Bravado



Kimberly Jo made her way down the hall towards the closed door separating her from the sound of whimpering cries. She couldn't imagine what would be making such a sound from the closet. As she slid the door open quietly, the story unfolded.

Fragile

Behind the door sat Murphy, uncharacteristically timid, a lost boy who had managed to shut himself in the closet by pushing the door closed with his nose. Most surprisingly wasn't the act of finding him there, but rather his meek reaction to it. In moments like this, the Bossy Pants reminds us how fragile they are beneath the bravado. These moments are stark reminders that through the assertive facade, they just want to be near their people where they can be reminded they are loved.

Stress Response

Expression

When under stress, the Bossy Pants may become more insistent, pushing harder, returning again and again, or becoming difficult to redirect. In many instances, this isn't defiance. It's persistence.

Structure

Other times, it can look quite different. As we learned with Murphy, sometimes the Bossy Pants can go inward with their stress. Which is why we need to follow our gut when we notice their energy shifting unexpectedly.

Acknowledge the moment. Slow the moment.

When a Bossy Pants escalates, the instinct is to push back with equal force. Resist it. Don't match their energy. What they need is someone steady enough to hold the moment without being moved by it.

Lower your energy, not your presence.

Stay calm, but stay there. Speak slowly. Take a breath before you respond. A Bossy Pants doesn't need you to shrink — they need you to hold.

Acknowledge them out loud.

You don't have to agree with what they're asking for. Just let them know you heard them. Say something; anything that signals you registered the communication. While it won't stop them mid-flight, the acknowledgement begins the descent.

Give them something to do.

Their energy needs somewhere to go. A short walk, a structured task, something with a beginning and an end. When their focus finds a place to land, the intensity shifts.

Routine

Return to the familiar. Once they've moved through it, bring them back to routine. A predictable next step, a familiar spot, the rhythm they know. Routine is the signal that the moment has passed. It tells them they can stand down.

Calm

Coping with Stress

First Stress Response	Escalates — increases vocalization, pace, and insistence
Behavioral Shift in Stress	Pushes harder — may become demanding, repetitive, or difficult to redirect
Escalating Stress	Being ignored, feeling unheard, lack of structure, or overstimulation
Resolving Stress	Calm, clear leadership — someone holds steady without matching the energy
Ideal Recovery Method	A clear resolution, physical outlet, and return to familiar routine

Connection

Minimal structure
and consistency
can help the Bossy Pants
find their place
in the world.



Thriving

The Bossy Pants responds best when the relationship has a sense of structure. They do best when expectations are consistent and communication feels clear. When even minimal structure and consistency is in place, their engagement becomes more focused and collaborative rather than reactive.

Their behavior may become less intense or controlling when expectations and communication are clear and consistent. Once you understand what your dog needs and offer it consistently, their behavior is able to become more purposeful, more connected, and more enjoyable.

Fulfillment

Thriving

Being Heard

This dog has been trying to tell you something since the day you met. How have you responded? For the Bossy Pants, the thing that transforms the relationship from exhausting to remarkable is simply to know that you heard them.

Listen

Steady Leadership

The Bossy Pants doesn't need someone who matches their energy, they need someone who channels their energy. They do best with steady leadership that looks like a calm voice with clear boundaries that are consistently held.

Calm

Clear Direction

Bossy Pants respond to clarity. When expectations are understood and the path forward is consistent, they settle into it. Their confidence builds through knowing what matters and where to direct attention.

Clarity

Shared Momentum

When there is a sense of forward motion, something to participate in, the Bossy Pants stays engaged and connected. The relationship strengthens through that shared rhythm, where both of you are part of what is happening.

Motion

Having A Role or "Job"

This dog looks for where they fit in and what they are responsible for. When there is a role to step into, their energy finds direction and purpose. What might otherwise feel scattered or intense becomes focused.

Role



The Door Greeter. Let them announce visitors. They're already doing it; so make it their job. A simple "go tell them" gives the behavior a purpose.

The Scout. On walks, let them lead new adventures; a new path, an unfamiliar space. They're already scanning ahead. Let them.

The Neighborhood Watch. If they have a preferred post such as a window, a spot near the front door — let them keep it. They're working, not misbehaving.

The Welcome Committee. When family members come home, let them be the first contact. They're going to be anyway. Naming it as their role shifts it from chaos to contribution.

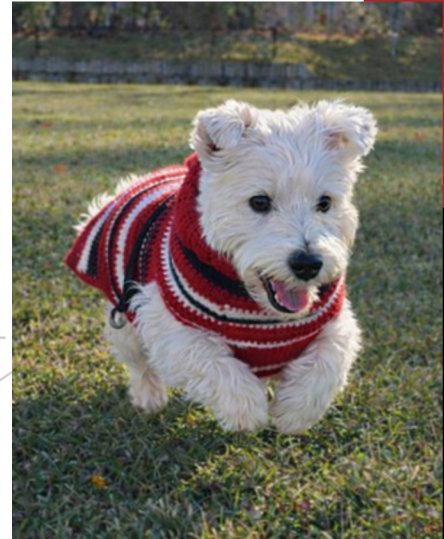
Motivation

Expression

Purpose. Inclusion.

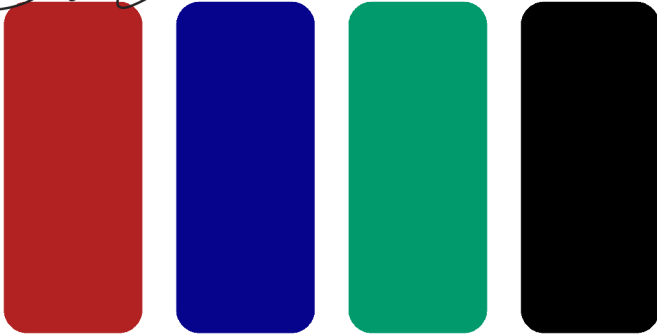
Murphy moves through the world assuming his place in it from the get-go. In a new setting, he scans the scene looking for what needs his attention, and quickly steps in. Having a role matters greatly. Whether he's on a brisk walk with purpose, greeting arrivals in his community, monitoring the squirrel situation across the street, or simply observing his surroundings, he thrives with focus.

Without these opportunities, Murphy appears lost, sad even. When there is something for Bossy Pants to do, a role in the activity, their energy finds its place. With focus, you will feel it in how they show up, engaged and right there with you, working within the moment rather than against it.



Activity

Bold



Colors that are dramatically bold.

What colors reflect their personality?

When we pause and ask, "What colors feel like my dog?", we allow their look to reflect who they are on the inside.

Inspired by Murphy, the Bossy Pants palette was designed for dogs who make an entrance: bold reds, true blues, electric greens, vibrant oranges. Colors that match the energy. Colors that don't whisper.

Electric

Reflection

Bossy Pants are motivated by purpose and inclusion. How does this show up for your dog? How would you like to respond to their signals moving forward?

Your Relationship

Ideal environments & interactions:

Ideal Environment	Structured and stimulating — clear rules, meaningful outlets, consistent boundaries.
Leadership Style	Calm, steady, confident, and unmovable — this dog needs someone who won't be pushed around.
Social Needs	Engagement and purpose — a job to do, a role to fill, a reason to channel the energy.
What Unlocks Them	Being understood — once they feel genuinely heard, the relationship transforms.

Structure

Routine

Consistency. Structure.

Bossy Pants don't give their trust to just anyone. They're watching, reading, and deciding; looking for someone they can move through the world with. They thrive with firm, loving leadership from you.

The Bossy Pants also needs to know where they stand. Not because they're difficult, but because clarity is how they settle. When they understand what's expected, the pushing eases, the rhythm steadies, and friction becomes partnership.

That's what this relationship can be. The shift can occur by showing up the same way, every time.

With consistency in place, your Bossy Pants can relax, trusting that the routines they love will take place when expected. This settles the Bossy Pants, revealing the purposeful, loyal, and completely devoted companion who has come into your life.

Leadership

Reflection

What is one way you would like to honor your relationship with your dog moving forward?

At a Glance

Bossy Pants

Identity	How They Love	What They Need	Stress Signals
Vocal & opinionated	Engages everyone	Consistent structure	Volume increases
Confident & bold	Takes charge, protects	Calm, firm leadership	Grows more demanding
Directive, leader	Direct communicator	Meaningful energy outlets	Pushes boundaries
High-energy presence	Loyal to their person	A clear role	May escalate conflict
Self-assured	Knows what they want	To feel genuinely heard	Needs an outlet

Offer

- Consistent structure
- Calm, firm leadership
- Meaningful outlets for energy
- A clear role in the family
- Being genuinely heard

Avoid

- Inconsistent rules
- Backing down under pressure
- Ignoring clear communication
- Overstimulating environments
- Power struggles

Remember

- Barking is communication
- Boldness is not defiance
- They need to feel heard
- Structure is a gift
- Their intensity is also their loyalty



In Their Words

On Communication

"I'm not stubborn. I'm confident."

On Loyalty

"I will defend you from everything. Especially that squirrel."

On Leadership

"Someone has to be in charge. I'm just making sure it's handled."

On Being Understood

"Finally. That's all I've ever wanted."

About The Author

KimberlyeHonoredDog.com



Kimberly Jo DeVault, founder of The Honored Dog™, guides you in exploring your dog's personality on a deeper level.

After several years developing and delivering impactful, interactive humane education courseware for the Arizona Humane Society, Kimberly Jo went on to become a personal, team, and leadership coach. Her experience, education, and relationships with companion animals shaped her understanding of how dogs think, respond, relate, and form connections.

Her approach draws from her education in developmental psychology, a Master's Degree in journalism, and nearly 20 years coaching and facilitating leaders and teams. Together, her experiences inform the way she helps people recognize patterns, understand what they're seeing, and connect more intentionally with their dogs.

Over the past two decades, Kimberly has raised four West Highland Terriers; Fergie, Dudley, Murphy, and Josie; each with a completely distinct personality. What began as a way to help customers choose colors for custom WestieWear® sweaters evolved into something more: a clear pattern in how dogs show up, connect, and move through the world. Those patterns ultimately became the four Honored Dog personality profiles: the Doggy Diva, the Goodest Boy/Girl, the Bossy Pants, and the Social Butterfly.

Kimberly lives in Connecticut with Murphy and Josie. Fergie and Dudley are deeply missed; their presence living on through The Honored Dog™.

Capture Your Reflections



This is what it means to honor your dog; to know and love them for who they are. Scan the QR code below to capture your story today. And cherish it tomorrow.

HonoredDog.com/Your-Pack
