

## SOME BASIC RULES FOR BREEDING

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*This article was written in conjunction with a BTC of Philadelphia Educational Seminar given in 1981 at the Montgomery-Devon show weekend. It is reprinted from the Summer BARKS newsletter 1988 and submitted by the Breeder's Education Committee.*

Rex Moyle, developer of pastel mink, and of his own breed of hounds, cattle and horses, says it all, and succinctly: "The object of a breeding program is to correct mistakes, not to win!"

A mistake is a variance from the ideal. If you don't have the ideal Bull Terrier burned into your brain, secure from whim and fancy, ignoring wins and losses; if it's not up there in 3-D whenever you close your eyes; or standing alongside of whatever living example you're looking at, go out and get it before you go on to the next part. Got it? OK!

Every living Bull Terrier is a mixture of virtues and faults. Managing the inheritance of these traits is the breeder's task. The absence of a fault doesn't guarantee the presence of the appropriate corresponding virtue. **Rule #1:** Virtues must be aggressively bred for. Doing it well is the art and craft – and mixes science with conviction. Conviction without understanding and experience is an express train to failure. The science depends on knowing the mode of inheritance of the major virtues and faults. Inheritance is not simple, but submits to some useful generalizations. Traits are determined by genes in pairs. Some genes visibly display their effect whenever present and are called dominant, even if their paired partner is different, invisible, and therefore called recessive.

Traits controlled by recessive genes must have paired identical genes to be seen physically in the dog. Traits controlled by dominant genes will be visible if one or both of the paired genes are dominant, and you can't tell by looking whether one or both of the pair are dominant.

Some virtues (type, character, fill-up, and downface, to name a few) are hard to obtain and easily lost – let's call them critical virtues – and once they are lost they are gone forever. Critical virtues result from a grouping of dominant genes. **Rule #2:** Breed together animals whose combined virtues include all the critical virtues. These hard-to-get traits are often closely associated with particular faults, i.e. typiness with "bully" fronts, character with aggressiveness, downface with undershot mouths, etc. Breeding together animals both showing such associated virtues and faults cements the faults into the line as securely as the virtues. This establishes **Rule #3:** Breed together animals showing similar virtues and different faults.

A fault may appear in puppies even though neither parent shows it. This proves two things: the fault is recessive, and neither parent has two dominant genes for the corresponding virtue.

**Rule #4:** Only parents who have never produced a particular fault can be paired dominant (pure dominant) for the absence of the fault. Only parents who have always produced a particular virtue can be used as free from the absence of the virtue. The grouping of desirable genes establishing a virtue in one animal may differ from those in another unrelated animal equally admired for that virtue. For instance, fill-up of head may be mostly bone in a thin-skinned dog, but more fleshy in a heavy-hided dog. Breeding together distantly related animals with apparently similar virtue may provide boom or

bust: puppies may get thin skin and less bone – a disappointment – or heavy face bones thickly covered – a triumph.

**Rule #5:** Breed together related animals for intensifying virtues. Cross to distant relatives to regain virtues lost from your line, or to relieve faults uniformly present in your line.

There are infinite refinements and combinations of these principles in successful breeding programs. A photographic memory of all the virtuous dogs in the pedigrees of today is a wild card in the hand of the best.