

WHY PUREBRED MATTERS

There's been some discussion lately about whether or not papers matter, and I'd like to respond.

I have a good friend who dropped out of high school at 15, ran off with a 27 year old guy and lived in a commune. Not exactly a recipe for success! However, she also happens to be 5'9 with a body and face to die for. She started modeling and parlayed that into a successful acting career. Today, in her 50's, she's far more successful than I'll ever be, with multiple homes and a very nice lifestyle. Yet, if I pointed to her as a reason you - or your kids - shouldn't go to college, you would think I was *smoking crack* and give me a sound lecture on how idiotic that reasoning is - and you'd be right.

A dog which lacks AKC registration papers is like a person who dropped out of high school. If they have great luck and make the right "connections," then like my friend, they can succeed in life...but *most of them don't*. Most high school dropouts find themselves working a series of depressing, dead-end minimum wage jobs, living in sub-standard housing, being preyed upon by high-interest credit cards, 'Rent-A-Center' and similar entities, suffering with health problems because they lack insurance, and bringing children into the same sad cycle of poverty with little hope of a way out. Similarly, *most* randomly-bred dogs find themselves living on a chain in someone's back yard (or worse, locked in a basement and never getting outside at all), thrown some food when someone thinks about it, having their health condition (both physical *and* mental) go unnoticed and unattended, and often being dropped off at the local pound when the kids get tired of torturing it or when it grows up and its obnoxious puppy behaviors have gotten out of control due to lack of training so it isn't "cute" any more.

Yes, yes, yes, I know everybody's got an exception to BOTH sides of this analogy. I always have to hear about Teddy O'Connor. Teddy O' Connor is *exactly* like my actress friend. They both have a rare level of talent AND made the right connections. **THIS IS NOT TYPICAL.**

I know some of you didn't finish high school but have PhD's in the school of life and are smart and competent. Yet, I'll bet most of you who are successful while lacking a high school diploma own your own business, because most of the world is simply not going to give you a chance without certain credentials. The reality is the same for dogs. The average person wants to see papers, whether they're hiring an employee or buying a dog. They want to see what they perceive as some kind of proof they're getting something good - or at least, something reasonably predictable for size, coat type, and temperament.

Are there crappy purebred dogs and excellent mongrels? Of course!

Are there idiots who finished college but can't master a form letter? Of course!

Are there extremely smart, competent, successful high-school dropouts? Of course!

The point is NOT that AKC registration makes a dog good. The point is that papers (from a real registry, not the \$!*\$!&!\$ Continental Kennel Club) make human beings - those creatures who totally control a dog's fate - more likely to commit to giving that dog a good home, correct training, good nutrition, and proper medical care *for life* than those same human beings would be towards a \$25.00 who-knows-what they picked up at the shelter or from (God forbid) a backyard breeder who is deliberately created mutts. Sad to say it, but that's human nature. We're not all butterflies and rainbows, especially in today's economy.

Breeding "designer dogs" (actually, crossbreeds which are not registerable with any legitimate registry despite what the money-grubbing so-called "breeder" might have told you), mixed breeds, or just letting your mutt bitch wander around the neighborhood unspayed, is every bit as irresponsible as telling your kids they can drop out if they're sick of the 9th grade and that they're going to grow up and be my friend the actress. Dogs have enough risk in their lives and we should be doing everything we can to minimize those risks.