

# 20 Principles of Breeding Better Dogs

There are a vast number of different breeding methods, some good, some bad. I should never presume to try to tell fanciers what is the right method because there is no such thing. Outstanding success can be achieved and has been achieved in a variety of different ways. So all I am going to do is to make some suggestions which I think helpful and to warn against certain pitfalls which trap too many of the unwary.

1. Remember that the animals you select for breeding today will have an impact on the breed for many years to come. Keep that thought firmly in mind when you choose breeding stock.
2. You can choose only two individuals per generation. Choose only the best, because you will have to wait for another generation to improve what you start with. Breed only if you expect the progeny to be better than both parents.
3. You cannot expect statistical predictions to hold true in a small number of animals (as in one litter of puppies). Statistics only apply to large populations.
4. A pedigree is a tool to help you learn the good and bad attributes that your dog is likely to exhibit or reproduce. A pedigree is only as good as the dog it represents.
5. Breed for a total dog, not just one or two characteristics. Don't follow fads in your breed, because they are usually meant to emphasize one or two features of the dog at the expense of the soundness and function of the whole.
6. Quality does not mean quantity. Quality is produced by careful study, having a good mental picture of what you are trying to achieve, having patience to wait until the right breeding stock is available and to evaluate what you have already produced, and above all, having a breeding plan that is at least three generations ahead of the breeding you do today.
7. Remember that skeletal defects are the most difficult to change.
8. Don't bother with a good dog that cannot produce well. Enjoy him (or her) for the beauty that he represents but don't use him in a breeding program.
9. Use out-crosses very sparingly. For each desirable characteristic you acquire, you will get many bad traits that you will have to eliminate in succeeding generations.
10. Inbreeding is a valuable tool, being the fastest method to set good characteristics and type. It brings to light hidden traits that need to be eliminated from the breed.
11. Breeding does not "create" anything. What you get is what was there to begin with. It may have been hidden for many generations, but it was there.

12. Discard the old cliché about the littermate of that great producer being just as good to breed to. Littermates seldom have the same genetic make-up.

13. Be honest with yourself. There are no perfect dogs (or bitches) nor are there perfect producers. You cannot do a competent job of breeding if you cannot recognize the faults and virtues of the dogs you plan to breed.

14. Hereditary traits are inherited equally from both parents. Do not expect to solve all of your problems in one generation.

15. If the worst puppy in your last litter is no better than the worst puppy in your first litter, you are not making progress. Your last litter should be your last litter.

16. If the best puppy in your last litter is no better than the best puppy in your first litter, you are not making progress. Your last litter should be your last litter.

17. Do not choose a breeding animal by either the best or the worst that he (or she) has produced. Evaluate the total get by the attributes of the majority.

18. Keep in mind that quality is a combination of soundness and function. It is not merely the lack of faults, but the positive presence of virtues. It is the whole dog that counts.

19. Don't allow personal feelings to influence your choice of breeding stock. The right dog for your breeding program is the right dog, whoever owns it. Don't ever decry a good dog; they are too rare and wonderful to be demeaned by pettiness.

20. Don't be satisfied with anything but the best. The second best is never good enough.

There is an extended version below

Applies to any breed of dog

1. Don't make use of indiscriminate outcrosses. A judicious outcross can be of great value, an injudicious one can produce an aggregation of every imaginable fault in the breed.

2. Don't line breed just for the sake of line breeding. Line breeding with complimentary types can bring great rewards, with unsuitable ones it will lead to immediate disaster.

3. Don't take advice from those who have always been unsuccessful breeders if their opinion were worth having they would have proved it by their successes.

4. Don't believe the popular cliché about the brother or the sister of the great Champion being just as good to breed from, for every one that is, there are hundreds that are not. It depends on the animal concerned.

5. Don't credit your own dogs with virtues they do not possess. Self deceit is a stepping stone to failure. In other words don't be kennel blind .

6. Don't breed from mediocrities, the absence of a fault does not in any way signify the presence of its corresponding virtue.

7. Don't assess the worth of a stud dog by its inferior progeny, All stud dogs sire some animals of lesser quality at times; what matters is how good their best efforts are. Conversely, don't judge a stud dog by one great offspring produced out of many and always remember that the stud dog only makes up for half of a great dog.

8. Don't allow personal feelings to influence your choice of a stud dog. The right dog for your bitch is the right dog, regardless of who owns it.

9 Don't allow admiration of a stud dog to blind you to his faults.

10. Don't mate animals that share the same fault.

11. Don't forget it is the whole dog that counts. If you forget one virtue while searching for another you will pay for it.

12. Don't search for the perfect dog as a mate for your bitch. The perfect dog (or bitch) doesn't exist, never has and never will.

13. Don't be frightened of breeding from animals that have obvious faults so long as they have compensating virtues. A lack of a virtue is by far the greatest fault of all. And never breed two dogs with the same fault.

14. Don't mate non complimentary types. An ability to recognise type at a glance is a breeder's greatest gift. Ask the successful breeders to explain this subject- there is no other way of learning.

15. Don't forget the necessity to preserve the quality head. It will vanish like a dream if you do.

16. Don't forget that substance plus quality should be another one of your aims. Any fool can breed one without the other.
17. Don't forget that a great head plus soundness should be another one of your aims. Many people can breed one without the other or neither..
18. Ask yourself "Am I a breeder, or do I just produce puppies?" Remember, it's your reputation at stake and a bad one will haunt you for a very long time!
19. Keep the breed's best interest at heart, if you know your dog has a serious congenital defect, don't breed it .
20. Learn to read a pedigree and do your best to breed the most complimentary dog to your bitch.
21. Don't let sentiment be your reason for breeding your dog, if he is not worthy of being shown, why would you breed him. ?
22. Don't use the excuse "she wants to have babies," Your bitch would probably prefer never being bred and she will never miss having babies
23. Don't believe it's healthier for a bitch to have a litter before she is spayed, it's healthier for a pet bitch to be spayed without having a litter.
24. Colour should be a determining factor.
25. Never be satisfied with anything but the very best.
26. Second best is never good enough.
27. Your reputation as a breeder is at stake.
28. The foundation that you lay is what will determine the quality of the stock you will produce for a long time to come.
29. The strength of a blood line can be greatly weakened by mating to an unreliable dog or bitch which is the opposite of inbreeding or line breeding and is termed "out breeding" .However, while the blood line may be weakened , the quality of the pups might still be good if the combination were a lucky one. It will be important to breed offspring of an outcross back into either the sire or the dam's line.
30. Inbreeding intensifies all qualities, whether **good** or **bad**. Remember that.

31.If most of the characteristics are good. inbreeding is an excellent way to obtain uniform type, since each parent is dominant principally in the same qualities .

32.The stud must be dominant in the same characteristics as the bitch and should also be dominant in additional good qualities which appear as faults in the bitch.

33.To breed for improvement, you must know the breed and be able to recognize a good specimen when you see it. You must be able to visualize the perfect individual toward which you are striving and never give up in attaining that end.

34.In evaluating pedigrees, don't let the number of titles be a determining factor unless you personally know every dog back for at least three generations.

35.The age of a stud dog has no bearing on the quality he can produce.

36. Don't breed bitches too early, If she is immature, you will just be robbing her of time for which to develop.

37.Any animal whether cow or dog will yield much better if it is happy and contented with its lot in life

38.REMEMBER Don't try to make huge profits in breeding dogs, your reputation as a puppy farmer will grow faster than a forest fire and the breed won't suffer as a whole

39.It is not great numbers of dogs which makes a Kennel great, but rather it is the excellence of the few. Even if you breed rarely don't settle for second best.

40.Don't ever try to decry a great dog. A thing of beauty is not only a joy forever, but a great dog should be a source of aesthetic pride and pleasure to all true lovers of the breed.