

## Scottish Terriers 11-15

### Kindness

Odd title for a breed column about Scottish Terriers, the tough die-hards of the terrier world, but is it? We are hearing a lot about good sportsmanship, ethical breeding, education of exhibitors, judges and spectators, but I find kindness isn't mentioned much.

What started me thinking about this were two compliments I recently received. People from different breeds came to me to say *thank you*. The thank you was for my kindness to them when they were just starting. I found this profound and I was taken aback. Both indicated that the kindness I showed had helped to encourage them to stick with it and stay in the sport. A few simple words telling someone not to be nervous or to share a story of how we all started may put someone at ease. Or, simply saying it's ok to mess up. These are just learning curves. These small comments can have lasting effects and show someone a community they will want to be a part of.

There is a great deal of talk about our sport's declining numbers. Smaller registrations, lack of new exhibitors in our rings, lack of new members in our clubs, even lack of young people growing up in our sport. People would rather buy a "hybrid" from the nice lady in the south who was so kind to them on the phone rather than the purebred breeder. Yes, this is a true story from one of my boarding customers who I hoped to help get a puppy (not a Scottie) and gave him 3 breeders' names. One had no puppies and offered no additional help, another never returned the call and the third started the conversation with, "and what do you know about 'OUR' breed?" I was embarrassed but not surprised that they ended up buying the hybrid. Is it so hard to show a little kindness and appreciation to someone who wants one of our purebreds instead of making it sound like we are doing them a favor by considering them for ownership? How can we expect new people to join our sport if we can't even encourage them to own a purebred?

How do we foster interest in our sport? Certainly not by telling them how rotten and negative everything is, or by pushing the spectator away from our dog because it's almost time to go in the ring. Instead take a moment and explain why. Show them how to greet a new dog. Take the time and really look and see all the good that can come from this sport. Winning really isn't the thing. I am a second-generation dog person. I grew up in this sport and I credit it for helping to make me who I am today. I was exposed to so many diverse people from all walks of life. I had to learn to how to lose and how to win. I learned tolerance for what was different and kindness in how I treated my dogs and the people I met. I will always remember the great judge Alva Rosenberg stopping group judging at the Worcester dog show because our wicked Scottie McDuff slipped out of his lead in the middle of the ring. His kindness was to stop and let mom get him back in his lead and tell her not to worry -- "see all these people, even that man over

there, Mr. Peter Green, even he has dogs get out of their leashes.” What could have been a horrible embarrassing moment became one of bonding with our sport.

Kindness is what keeps most of us going. How many times have you heard stories of dog people in trouble? I never cease to be amazed at how the community comes together with aid and help. Imagine if we kept this going all the time not just when needed.

In the 40 plus years I have been participating in this great sport, in all of its many facets, I still believe there is a lot of good in people. I believe we all found our way here because of someone's kindness to show us the way. Let's not forget that in this current social environment of entitlement, egoism and self-centeredness; let's be better than that. When we get that call for a pup, see a struggling new exhibitor, a curious spectator or even a judge about to judge their first assignment, just remember that a random act of kindness will send ripples throughout our world. After all, if our dogs are capable of giving us kindness there is no reason we cannot be as good as them.

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