



# Do Unto Others . . .

by Stephanie Meyer, Breeders' Education Committee

It is something we learn as children, the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We are taught to follow it and learn the consequences if we do not. This is reinforced as we grow and mature, through little league games, athletic and scholastic competitions, and even our work environment. It is expected behavior.

Why is it then that as adults we are continually faced with situations that challenge this? Why do we find ourselves involved in situations where this seems to not apply? The sport of purebred dogs is no different. The activities we choose with our Weimaraners should be a fun hobby, everyone working towards a common goal, and first and foremost about enjoying our dogs. Why is it then that we experience so many actions that simply evoke negativity?

The November 1968 Weimaraner Magazine published an article which touched on the same issues we see today. "I have watched the owners of different breeds come out of the show ring complaining and crying to death about the terrible judging. What has happened to good sportsmanship? Just how many of us can honestly say we have said to the owner of the winner "Congratulations", "What a nice win", or "Gee your dog looked good today" etc. For the most part, the losers are busy talking about the terrible dog or its owner."

We ponder why it is so hard to get puppy owners involved in the sport and continue, when so many times they are faced with bad mouthing, gossiping, etc. No amount of winning can change the negative impact these instances have on a competitor.

It is not surprising that the rise in bad sportsmanship and outrageous behaviors in professional sports has resulted in a parallel increase in poor sportsmanship in other sports as well. Sportsmanship is something, like the Golden Rule, that is expected when in competition.

The AKC has a Code of Sportsmanship. Here are several of the highlights:

1. Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport.
2. Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
3. Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competitions and the effort of competitors.
4. Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
5. Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
6. Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both

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the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.

7. Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.

The WCA Code of Ethics addresses this as well stating, "The owner shall always conduct himself in a manner which will reflect credit upon himself, his Weimaraner, and the sport of purebred dogs, regardless of the location or circumstance."

Being a "good sport" does not mean that we can't be competitive with each other. On the contrary, that competitive spirit will drive all of us to be better and breed better dogs. Everyone wants to win and to be the best. That is the nature of competition. As good sportsmen, we need to offset the status quo "win at all costs" or "winning is everything" and renew the time honored philosophy "it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game." Negative situations can easily be avoided and changed. Having a positive and encouraging attitude is a choice we all make. This philosophy can easily be followed to help our breed move with strength and integrity into the future.

We all know that problems exist. We all know what they are. Think about the simple things that can make all the difference for fellow Weimaraner enthusiasts.

- Take the time to welcome new comers.
- Congratulate the winners.
- Keep your temper in check.
- Never berate or demean any person, handler, judge or dogs.

- Share the knowledge/experiences we have.
- Offer support and encouragement to each other.
- Be a role model - not just within the breed, but for other breeds as well.

Several years ago I was told a story that opened my eyes to how easily we can have a positive impact on each other. Two women were riding a brace at a field trial. The first woman introduced herself to the other. The second woman said "I know who you are." The first was surprised and embarrassed because she didn't know the other. She apologized. The second woman went on to explain, "I know who you are because a couple years ago at a show, I won, and you were the only person who congratulated me on that win. I have always remembered that and appreciated it".

We all share common goals and ideals. These ambitions may follow different paths, yet are similar. Keep in mind that we all share the love of our breed. A positive attitude will make a better experience for everyone involved. Do the little things that can make a difference, but most of all remember - Do unto others . . .