

Dog Show Judging and the AKC

An AKC judge discusses ethics, fakery and the AKC's responsibility.

Jonathan Jeffrey Kimes

In a recent magazine survey the question was asked about fakery, such as coloring used on some show dogs. The answers were disturbing, if predictable that many people felt if the "enhancement" was done "tastefully," then it was probably OK. Isn't that a question that we all struggle with throughout our lives, namely, "Is it OK to cheat?"

This is a much more dynamic issue than the simple surface concern, and is driven by core values we learn and develop as we travel through life. Certainly, we have millions of people who subscribe to the belief that you should "try" to be honest, but if, at the end of your life you ask forgiveness for any transgressions, then you will have passage to a peaceful eternal resting place.

To me this is a simplistic and inaccurate view of the whole existence question, but it is what governs probably most of the population on this earth. It provides much too much of a loophole, which is, well, if you feel you are justified in cheating, then just be sure to say you're sorry at a later point in time and it will probably be OK. After all, if the only judgment choices are heaven and he'll, you just need to try to keep your score on the positive side of the checklist. Surely, no one is in he'll simply for coloring his dog!

For me, the life experience is far more complex and far more longitudinal. I theorize that you assume responsibility for every action and every decision you make, you generate positive and negative energy from these actions and they determine what future lessons you must learn. You don't have to be caught by anyone, because the simple action generates the cosmic response. It allows me to live my life believing that every time I make a choice I must choose the right answer for my own good. It also frees me from feeling a need for retribution against others who have wronged me, or someone important to me. The universe has my back covered, so to speak.

So I think everyone must first extend themselves outside of their immediate daily toil and determine their own philosophy of their life experience. It is this fundamental understanding that will steer you in your choices.

Now we can come back to the question of cheating and fakery. First of all, what is it? How is it determined? Certainly a good measuring stick is to ask yourself how an ethical person would choose. A really good test is simply, "Would I talk about this freely amongst strangers?" In other words, would an objective source determine your actions to be ethical and moral? Of course, in circumstances of uncertainty, we have another reliable resource, "What do the rules say?" The AKC and every other kennel club have specific rules of conduct that specify what is considered fair and what is considered unfair.