

BREED MENTORING

By: Sherry L. Anderson (Sher-Mi Labradors)

Is breed mentoring still relevant today? If so, what does it entail. A good breed mentor can provide valuable guidance and support for those seriously interested in the breed and learning. They can share their expertise and help you make informed decisions and avoid common mistakes that can take years to get right. They can help you identify strengths and weaknesses in your dogs. They can help you achieve your goals faster and more effectively. Through networking and connections, they can introduce you to other reputable breeders and help you expand your connections. Good mentors need certain qualities. Experience, knowledge, integrity, Be ethical and responsible, and lastly passionate. Mentors help each other too. You never stop learning.

Experience...good breed mentors have years of experience behind them. Fruitful experience. They have paid their dues. They've numerous titles on their dogs through generations of their breeding programs—not dogs they bought but from their own program. In Conformation, they win both sides, all breed and specialties. If their breed does field, they will have titled there too. They have walked the talk. They're true breed preservationists. They are dedicated to maintaining the breeds unique traits and characteristics—rather than following trends and being just about the win. Ensuring the breed remains true to his specific purpose. They are a wealth of information and their insights, invaluable. Be it mentoring in exhibiting, grooming, breeding, evaluating litters, etc, a good mentor helps you avoid pitfalls.

Knowledge...extensive knowledge about the breed, its history, origin, genetics, breeding practices, understanding pedigrees. How to manage a breeding program where you go forward and can see improvements. They'll possess a thorough understanding of anatomy to be able to articulate the breed's written standard explicitly. They educate positively and objectively, concentrating on the virtues rather than the faults. Understanding the breed's hallmarks and their importance in defining type. A good mentor can articulate the standard well where understand what it is telling you and leaves you with no doubt or confusion.

Integrity...is a crucial quality in a breed mentor. Honest and transparent. By exemplifying integrity, a good breed mentor will have established trust and credibility within the breed's society.

Ethical and Responsible...responsible and always has the dogs' welfare first and foremost. They respect the breed's written standard and adhere to it as well as utilizing health-screening tools and promoting responsible breeding.

Passionate...mentors who are passionate not only love the breed but they genuinely like helping others to be successful. Their passion will be evident in their dedication to mentor.