

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Lee Hanrahan (unlimitedGSD.com)

It is a silly statement when you think about it. We always get what we pay for – the problem is we don't always spend our dollars wisely. The world of puppy buying is extremely difficult to navigate and right or wrong, knowledgeable or ignorant, everyone has their own opinions.

What should you be paying for when you buy a puppy?
What do you think you are going to get?

Here is a list of what your new puppy should come with:

- 4 Legs
- 1 Tail
- 2 Eyes
- 1 Nose
- 2 Ears
- An adorable little face!

Now, you're thinking '*all puppies come with that - I'm buying a purebred dog!*' Ok, lets add the following:

- 1st set of vaccinations
- Registration with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC)
- A guarantee that your puppy will never have anything wrong with it (like hip dysplasia)

Is that enough? Now remember, guarantees are like promises – they are easily broken. And, what is the basis for this guarantee? So far, for the above items, it would cost a breeder probably less than \$50 to produce your puppy. You pay hundreds...they are making a very nice profit off you!

But what if you wanted a puppy that is genetically healthy because it comes with more than just a worthless guarantee? Let's add a few things to the list....

- Health tested sire/dam – the parents of your puppy have been certified free of hip & elbow dysplasia
- Generations of health tested dogs in the pedigree that increase the odds your puppy stays healthy
- A sire & dam that have been judged on their appearance (conformation) to ensure they measure up to the breed standard.

Ok – that's a bit better! Now you have a puppy that will look like a German Shepherd Dog and will hopefully be a nice healthy specimen of the breed.

Now, why did you want a German Shepherd Dog in the first place? You like the look, the colour, the size – what else? What about the breed attracted you? Do you like their loyal, protective temperaments? What about their aloofness with strangers? Or is appearance all that matters to you?

How are you going to feel when your beautiful, healthy dog

has no desire to play ball or lunges at strangers in fear?

We need to look at the traits that go along with producing a good German Shepherd Dog. If all dogs were born the same, we would have Labrador Retrievers as guard dogs, Shih-Tzu's that herd sheep and Bulldogs that retrieve hunting game. Each breed was created for a purpose; each breed's temperament was designed to fulfil the job required. **Temperament is genetic.**

So let's add a few more things to the list:

- Sire & dam that have been temperament tested by an outside source
- Sire & dam that have been worked in a breed specific activity
- Sire & dam that have been trialed and titled in that activity
- Sire & dam that have passed an endurance test
- The mating of two dogs whose pedigree & traits complement each other – nothing random or convenient.
- Generations of dogs in your puppy's pedigree that have all of the above.

What do these things prove? They show that the parents of your puppy can be trained, can work under stress, can do what the breed was created to do and won't physically break down. It helps ensure that the breed stays as it should and you are not buying a German Shepherd Dog with the temperament of a Pekingese or a Grey Hound.

Now the cost of that puppy you want to buy has drastically increased from \$50 to about \$3000 – but the breeder isn't going to charge you 3K because they breed for the love of the breed, not to make money.

Think about which breeder you would like to support and which puppy you should buy. The breeder who does nothing with their breeding stock, charges you hundreds of dollars, promises you anything you want to hear and provides you with an empty guarantee – or the breeder out to maintain the standard of the breed (both inside and out) and provide you with a correct German Shepherd Dog?

You get what you pay for!

