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***The meaning of the term and words "gameness"
and being "game bred".***

By - [Tom Garner](#)

I regularly get calls from folks asking if my dogs are "game bred". I always pause when I hear these words, reflecting on which of several ways I might answer this question.

The reality is that if a dog isn't game bred, it isn't an APBT.

Gameness is a non-negotiable cornerstone of the APBT breed standard. Gameness is the willingness to persevere in the face of adversity. Without this desire to persevere, it isn't a "pit-bull". Sometimes the caller is ready to pounce on a positive answer, filled with humaniac misinformation and spin.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The **"assumption"** is that admitting to breeding for gameness is equivalent to breeding for fighting purposes.

My take on gameness has changed little since 1985 since I wrote the following little essay that elaborates on my feelings about the breed, and in particular provides context for understanding **"gameness" and being "game bred"**.

Why love a Pit Bull?

Often in the course of my daily activities I am asked to explain how a mental health professional and humanist (not humaniac) can be so involved with and appreciative of dogs whose instincts urge them to love all competition and to fight their own kind when challenged. Perhaps I invite such questions, as I proudly display an 11" x 14" picture of my stud dog "CH" Pedro" beside my children's pictures on my office wall.

At any rate, the consequence of these questions is that I have spent considerable time pondering this apparent conflict and will happily share my conclusions with anyone who **cares to read further.**

Now most of us sense that there is something noble about having the courage to stick by our convictions.

In fact, this wonderful country we live in would certainly be vastly different were it not for the convictions and courage of our ancestors. Our heritage practically demands that we place a premium on convictions and courage.

But how does this relate to our dogs?

Well in my estimation a **"bulldog" (APBT) that doesn't start, have no convictions.**

One that starts and quits has no courage.

The one that starts and sticks with it can eat the same thing for supper that I do.

But why is it necessary to experience pain and injury in demonstrating courage and convictions?

This is the nature of life.

Ask Nathan Hale who died for his beliefs.

Ask the mechanic who daily busts his knuckles to provide for his family.

Ask the secretary who suffers migraines from stress but regularly gets the paperwork out on time.

Ask the doctor, who accepts the pain of self-denial for eight years to complete his degree.

Ask the labourer that work 12 h in the sun day in and day out to make a living.

Ask yourself.

Pain is the hand-maiden of achievement, and the triumph of will and perseverance over the forces of pain and fear, is the essence of all achievement.

This is a scenario which permeates all of life.

The props and actors may change but the story remains constant.

Why then are so many people capable of accepting this struggle in some settings, but not others?

I suspect that many of these people **do not have** a good philosophical understanding of themselves, of life, and certainly not of our dogs.

Many people could not do an adequate job of contemplating their navels.

Many outsiders view our acceptance of pain as a love of pain.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

I for one would be perfectly content if our dogs could do their thing without pain or injury.

But that wouldn't require a great deal of conviction on their part now would it?

Unnecessary pain is certainly an evil.

That is why my dogs sleep in heated houses in the winter, eat good nutritious food, are kept free of parasites and get all of the love and affection I can muster.

A crime against nature.

Prevent a living entity from actualizing its potential is a crime against nature.

I love life especially fruitful life, in all its forms.

I love it for myself, my family, you and your family and for my dogs.

To prevent a living entity from actualizing its potential is a crime against nature.

To do so out of love is a terrible mistake.

To clip an eagle's wings so he could never fly and run the risk of a crash would be absurd, but this manner of thinking is often applied to our dogs.

Ernest Hemingway repeatedly demonstrated his belief through his novels that life comes to be meaningful through fighting the good fight.

I too contend that the most meaningful element in living a full life comes from having a purpose and the courage to fulfil it.

Nowhere in my experience have I seen these qualities **more clearly displayed than when our dogs are simply being themselves.**