



LESSON PLANS TO DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP – NO. 1 OF SERIES

By Alice Trindle

Here's the overarching game plan: Develop a set of exercises that build on the basics, to ultimately help horse and rider have effortless communication to accomplish many possible jobs and further the process of training and relationship building.

Have you ever noticed that riding with a purpose is not only more enjoyable for you, but your horse seems to react and respond with more enthusiasm?

If I have some cows to gather or a new trail to explore, I see the ears on my horse coming alert, her walk picks up, she is in perfect balance, and together we work as a team to accomplish this new job or adventure. My very favorite springtime activity is riding out into the pasture to separate the cows and their new baby calves from those mothers that have yet to calve. My horses truly enjoy the work, too, with their maternal instincts rising up as we shepherd the newborns along one step at a time until their baby tails go straight in the air and they burst off in what looks like sheer joy! What fun to have a purpose...a job...a lesson plan for me and for my horse!

As I listen to, watch, read and study the master horsemen, in my horsemanship journey I have noticed one over-riding theme. This being that the concept that horsemanship is a 'Thinking and Caring Person's Art Form' is truly universal. From the Dorrances to Oliveira; Ray Hunt to Baucher; Drummond to Brannaman...they studied how the horse moves, how he thinks and reacts, and cared about how the human interacted with the horse to develop a partnership. For most master horsemen, their journey involved studying the horse and constantly thinking about how they could develop a deeper relationship.

With that as the basis it is incumbent upon us as aspiring horsemen and -women to develop a lesson plan for our work, rides, and fun with the horse. A sequence that has served us well during our 'Horse Study' courses over the past eight years has been to ask ourselves these questions at the beginning of each session with the horse:

- What is my GOAL for today?
- Why am I wanting to accomplish this goal... What is the OBJECTIVE?

- How do I accomplish the goal...What exercises and TACTICS do I employ?

In the next series of articles we are going to discuss a set of lesson plans that you can accomplish to keep enthusiasm in both horse and rider, while building on the basics of rhythm, timing, balance, focus, collection, engagement and ultimately feel. We will give you an assortment of specific tactics through which you can pick and choose, in an effort to keep your lesson plans fresh without drilling. Our ultimate aspiration is to keep both you and your horse looking forward to training with joy!

Three—Five-Day Lesson Plan Execution

In developing a lesson plan that builds on the elements of the "Classical Dressage Training Triangle," I look at employing a model that uses the following steps:

1. Identify my over arching goal for the day.
2. Reiterate and think about 'WHY' I want to accomplish this goal. What is my objective? How does it biomechanically and mentally prepare both me and the horse for the jobs we will need to accomplish?
3. Develop some exercises or tactics that will allow us to accomplish my objectives for that day and which build on our long-term relationship.

DAILY FOCUS AREAS OR OBJECTIVES:

Day 1—Straight Day

Here are the specific goals I aim to achieve within the training scheme, as I execute the Straight Day:

“Develop a set of lesson plans to accomplish together as horse and rider that lead the team to a higher level of understanding, partnership, and unity.”

Focus—Focus is always important for each training day! Included in this huge word is my Horseman’s Protocol (Become present; Think & picture; Allow; then Reward), plus watching the eyes and ears of my horse to see that he is focused and ready. This lets you know he has positive attitude!

Rhythm—Rhythm exercises will include movements that work on rating, speed changes within the gait, and changes of gait. In other words you are working on the musical elements of riding such as rhythm, beat or cadence, tempo, and timing.

Balance and Alignment—Balance and alignment exercises will include riding “perfect” circles with the inside feet tracking up on the inside of the railroad track, and the outside feet tracking up on the outside of the track. This simple exercise is VERY difficult! In order for this to happen correctly the body of both horse and rider needs to be in balance, with rhythm and focus.

Engagement, Impulsion, & Collection—Engagement, impulsion, and collection exercises to be employed will build towards the horse developing first self-carriage, then freedom in their back muscles called Swung, and finally implementing a light collection with the hindquarters engaging from behind.

Day 2—Lateral Day

Goals we will accomplish through Lateral movements:

Focus—Again, focus is a critical component in every day of training, but on the Lateral Day we will learn to become more geometrical in diagramming in our mind’s eye, the pattern we are asking the horse to accomplish, and the necessity of preparing our body to focus on that pattern ahead of time.

Rhythm and Timing—Lateral movements will greatly improve our ability to know “where” the feet are in all gaits, but also to develop the knowledge to understand “when” to influence where the feet and body travel.

An equally important aspect of training the horse to develop rhythm and timing is the component that develops the same qualities in the human! A good horseman is a great dancer!

Balance—Of the three lesson days, the Lateral Day combines our ever-present challenge to seek balance, but adds in the value of building strength, self-carriage, and suppleness. For leg yield and half pass postures to work in concert with rhythm, timing, and focus, both horse and rider must be in balance flowing with the movement.

Day 3—4 and 5—

Cowboy, Doma Vaquera, and Classical Dressage Day

These are the fun days where you combine the skills you have been honing in the Straight Day and the Lateral Day, to

actually do a job. (Or at least accomplish an imaginary one!)

Cowboy Day—Objectives for this day build on the foundation of the musical elements, with relaxation and flexibility, while allowing us to strengthen, engage with supple back muscles and a strong core, and create the driving power of impulsion. Our cowboy-type jobs also require a balanced horse with self-carriage, light contact, soft-feel, and great focus.

Doma Vaquera Day—Objectives are similar to the Cowboy Day, but today you picture working the bulls from

horseback! Engagement and impulsion become essentials with both horse and rider staying relaxed with positive tension in the core muscles applied with clear focus and intention of the movements.

Classical Dressage Day—The objectives today will vary with the patterns you choose in selecting a dressage test to execute. You will be employing the centuries of training knowledge to further develop your horse, yourself and your partnership.

Here’s how it will work...

For the next several articles I will give you specific exercises to practice within the three- to five-day training schedule. It is a series of lesson plans for you and your horse. You may not have the luxury of riding five days per week, but it will still give you some specific goals to accomplish every ride opportunity. You will have a clear purpose, and your horse will appreciate the clarity, consistency, and ultimately look forward to the work!

Please turn to the next page to see your week one riding plan.

CLASSICAL DRESSAGE TRAINING GOALS

- Lightness & Brilliance!**
- Collection & Engagement**
- Swung & Impulsion**
- Contact & Connection**
- Balance/Suppleness/Straight**
- Rhythm/Timing/Musical Elements**

FOCUS WITH PURPOSE THINK



HORSE-HUMAN CONNECTION

STRAIGHT DAY DAY ONE - WEEK ONE

Goals/Objectives

Rhythm, timing, balance, relaxation & alignment

RIDING

Ride actual straight lines utilizing the long and short sides of the arena for changes of pace/speed within each gait (i.e., fast walk, medium walk, slow walk; Fast trot, medium trot, slow trot). Longside / Shortside Rating

Exercises:

*Rising trot medium on longside to sitting trot slow on shortside.

LATERAL DAY DAY TWO - WEEK ONE

Goals/Objectives

Relaxation, supple, strengthen, self-carriage, contact

RIDING

Ride shoulder-in down the long side into the corner; straight on short side; Next ride shoulder-in to a half-pass on the diagonal to the center-line; Practice at the walk and the trot.

COWBOY DAY DAY THREE - WEEK ONE

Goals/Objectives

Engagement and impulsion

RIDING

Picture yourself working cattle in an alleyway. Your job is to get around the cow and send her back up the alley the opposite direction. Leg yield away from the wall to a roll-back (1/2 turn towards the wall); Now picture a narrow alley and accomplish your rollback with little forward movement for haunch turn.

DOMA VAQUERA DAY DAY FOUR - WEEK ONE

Goals/Objectives

Relaxation & supple; Contact & soft-feel; Focus & balance; responsiveness to aids

RIDING

Using the garrocha in the right-hand: Forward ½ turns towards and then away from tip; Leg-yield towards tip with forward motion; half-pass away from tip with forward motion.

DRESSAGE DAY - DAY FIVE - WEEK ONE

First:	A X	Enter working trot Halt at X, Salute Proceed working trot	9 Between H&C	Working canter right lead
2	C E	Track left Circle left 20m	10 B	Circle right 20m
3	Between K & A	Working canter left lead	11 Between centerline & B	Working trot
4	B	Circle left 20m	12 at A X	Down centerline Halt at X, Salute
5	Between centerline & B	Working trot		
6	C	Medium walk		
7	C-H	Medium walk		
8	HXF	Free walk		



LESSON PLANS TO DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP – NO. 2 OF SERIES

By Alice Trindle

Here's the overarching game plan: Develop a set of exercises that build on the basics, to ultimately help horse and rider have effortless communication to accomplish many possible jobs and further the process of training and relationship building.

In the previous article within this series we established a road map for exercises to accomplish with your horse. By having a lesson plan as you work with your horses you will get several excellent results.

First, because asking yourself critical questions is key to building your lesson plan, you develop awareness, which sets it up for you to become a good leader.

Second, for most humans and all horses, consistency and clarity are key components in not only our ability to succeed, but also to happiness. Third, while consistency is certainly critical, a lesson plan also gives us permission to change it up and experiment within a set of principles based on the biomechanics and attitudes of both horse and human.

Using the structure that starts with setting an overarching GOAL, moves to asking what the OBJECTIVE is or why I want to accomplish this goal, and ends up with exercises or TACTICS to reach the goal. In other words, once I know the basic recipe and the “What-Where-When-Why & -How” of preparing the recipe, I can begin to make it my own by experimenting with other ingredients or combination of materials. That's when the fun-factor really goes up for both the human and the horse!

So, let's get started with a suggested lesson plan for Week Two goals, objectives, and tactics!

(Note: You can find videos on this series via the Horseman's Gazette. In addition, articles and Tip for the Ride videos that describe these maneuvers and exercises via Alice's website: www.inthorsemanship.com)

Straight Day

Day One - Week Two

Goals/Objectives

Rhythm, balance, supple & alignment

Riding

Trot concentric circles, counting the number of beats: start with 16, moving to 12 and then down to a walk for a 10-beat circle, making it smaller to a 6 beat or turn-on-center. Next, increase size of circle (6 beat to 10 to trotting a 12 & 16 beat); Leg-yield to expand circle; Half-pass to decrease circle size.

Partial List of Resources:

(To further help you develop your lesson plans)

- *Gymnastic Exercises for Horses – Vol. 1 & 2* by Eleanor Russell
- *The Handbook of Riding Essentials –* by Francois Lemaire de Ruffieu
- *Build a Better Athlete!* by Leslie Webb
- *How your Horse Moves* by Gillian Higgins with Stephanie Martin
- *The Balanced Horse (The Aids by Feel, Not Force)* by Sylvia Loch
- *True Unity* by Tom Dorrance, Edited by Milly Hunt Porter

Lateral Day Day Two – Week Two

Goals/Objectives

Balance with contact; self-carriage; listening to aids

Riding

Ride a square with a forward turn on the forehand at each corner, feeling for the movement of the inside hind foot stepping under to align with the new line of each corner; half-halt using a slight squeeze in the outside rein; Step inside the square and shorten the number of steps between each corner until you are riding a forward, shoulder-in or sideways on a circle; NOTE: Several pieces of PVC pipe and a hula hoop are a great visual aid!

Cowboy Day Day Three - Week Two

Goals/Objectives

Balance, alignment, supple, engagement and impulsion

Riding

Ride a large figure-8 pattern at the trot – top circle regular bend and bottom circle in a reserve bend. Next, same pattern at a trot but at X out of the reverse bend pick up a canter for the top circle – no need to change the bend!

Doma Vaquera Day Day Four - Week Two

Goals/Objectives

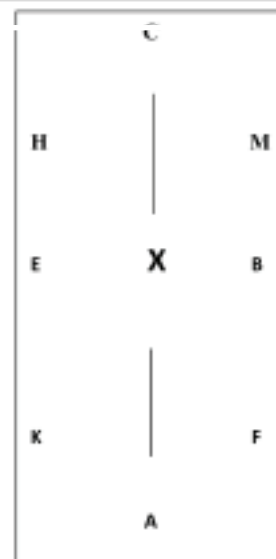
Relaxation & supple; Contact & soft-feel; Focus & balance; Responsiveness to aids; Multi-tasking focus

Riding

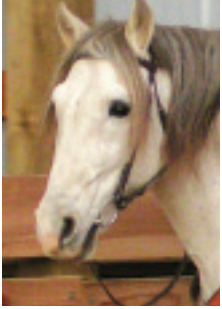
Using the garrocha in the right hand: Forward full-turns towards the tip with change of hand position; Forward full-turns away from tip with change of bend to start the circle and again as you return to the original circle direction/flow. Requires change of hand positions; Accomplish at walk, trot for fun, and ultimately at canter.

Dressage Day Day Five - Week Two

A	X	Enter working trot Halt at X, Salute Proceed working trot
C	E	Track left Circle left 20m
3	Between K & A	Working canter left lead
4	B	Circle left 20m
5	Between B and M	Working trot
C-H H-E-K		Shoulder-in corner Shoulder-in
K-A A-F		Shoulder-in corner Shoulder-in corner
8 X-C C	F-X	Half-pass Straight to C Change bend track right
9	C-M B	Working trot Circle right 20m
10	Between F & A	Working canter right lead
11	E	Circle right 20m
12	Between H & C	Working trot
C-M M-B-F		Shoulder-in corner Shoulder-in
F-A A-K		Shoulder-in corner Shoulder-in corner
X-C C	K-X	Half-pass Straight to C Change bend track left
C-H-E-K-A	X	Down centerline Halt at X, Salute



A to X to C is the "Centerline"



LESSON PLANS TO DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP – NO. 3 OF SERIES

By Alice Trindle

Here's the overarching game plan: Develop a set of exercises that build on the basics, to ultimately help horse and rider have effortless communication to accomplish many possible jobs and further the process of training and relationship building.

Several years ago at a clinic in Washington State, I had the opportunity to learn a valuable lesson about human nature and horse-human relationships.

It was the final day of a five-day clinic and I thought I had been communicating a consistent set of overarching goals and presenting a clear set of exercises to accomplish them. This particular morning we were working on a balanced turn on center in our groundwork and then transferring that feeling, flow, and balance up into the saddle. I needed to leave the arena for a short time, and turned to one of the participants to ask them to take over for a period. The young lady I queried, who had been accomplishing the exercises effortlessly, said to me with all sincerity, "What are we working on?" At first I was a little upset to think we had been working on a set of principles for five days, had been applying very specific exercises to practice these goals, and yet she had no verbal or pictorial idea of what we were working on, nor perhaps why we were accomplishing them! Once I settled down, I realized some valuable lessons that have since served me very well in my personal life and in helping others to develop a willing partnership with their horses.

1) In life, and with horses, don't be afraid to ask...WHY? In the scenario above, if the young lady had simply been more persistent in asking for clarification on why we were accomplishing certain exercises, and how it all related to our goals, then perhaps she would have been more clear and consistent in requesting those maneuvers from her horse, therefore becoming a confident instructor for both human and horse.

2) Become your own best teacher! As we have discussed many times, your horse is looking for good leadership. Your ability to develop feel, timing, balance, and lightness is directly related to your understanding and practice of preparation, thought, focus, self-carriage, and posture. Developing a

"Horseman's Protocol" is critical to the success in communicating to the horse. Your horse is looking to you for clarity, consistency, compassion, understanding, patience, and forgiveness. All qualities of a good leader and a good teacher!

3) Give yourself and your horse the gift of TIME! Unfortunately in our current human world, time seems to be something in very short supply. Ask anyone "How are you doing?" and the answer will be, "I am so busy, and I just don't seem to have enough time." With this as the backdrop, it is very difficult to have a relationship with horses when their instincts relate to "time" through their herd senses. They know when it is time to eat, play, sleep, and fight for their safety. In all of these essentials for their daily life, "horse time" is still greatly dictated by the leader of the herd. Give yourself the time it takes to become present, think about what you are asking of your horse, visualize the perfect outcome, and allow the time for both you and the horse to accomplish the picture. In this process—the process of developing a "Horseman's Protocol"—you will give the horse the time to recognize your leadership qualities.

4) Plan your work...Work your plan! Good teachers utilize well-constructed lesson plans. They have seen the end result at the beginning, and they work backwards from that perfect picture to give the student the tools to constantly reinforce their vision. They are willing to set it up, and wait for the slightest try in the right direction, and then to reward that progress. A set of lesson plans has at its foundation principles that ultimately combine to create a wonderful knowledge base for both student and teacher. Thinking, observing, and studying are critical. With horses and people, when we join together to share this wisdom, it creates a beautiful dance that is truly brilliant.

As you move forward with accomplishing the lesson plans suggested in this series of articles and videos, keep the principles listed above in mind. It's really pretty simple...but not easy! Try to not find your horse asking you what my young client did years ago, "What are we working on?"!

Quick Review

We are looking to develop a Three-to Five-Day Lesson Plan with specific focus areas each day to ultimately accomplish specific training objectives.

Training Goals & Objectives	Straight Day	Lateral Day	Cowboy Day	Doma Vaquera Day	Dressage Day
Focus & Purpose	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rhythm & Timing	✓	✓			✓
Balance & Suppleness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Contact or Connection	✓	✓		✓	✓
Swung & Impulsion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collection & Engagement	✓	✓		✓	✓
Lightness & Brilliance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Straight Day Day One – Week Three	Lateral Day Day Two – Week Three	Cowboy Day Day Three - Week Three	Doma Vaquera Day Day Four - Week Three
<p>Goals/Objectives Alignment, rating, focus, contact/soft feel, listening to aids</p> <p>Riding After your ground school and supple exercises on board: Flank Turns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flank Turns: Ride a straight line across the short side of the arena to a forward turn on the forehand to line-up parallel to the wall; Halt in balance with a slight squeeze of the outside rein and balanced seat down the middle of the horse; Slight backup or rock backwards to turn on the haunch bringing inside eye and front foot towards the center of the arena, a quarter turn; Gather your horse with a relaxed TMJ and depart back across the arena. • Serpentine (Picture hot dog bun on top of horizontal hot dog bun!) Ride in a consistent gate or ask for slowing through the middle of the school or increase rate through the middle & slow on the corners; Picture a nice forward arch at the end of each hot dog bun with the outside front foot reaching on that arch and inside hind foot driving under the belly towards the outside of the arch. 	<p>Goals/Objectives Self-carriage & use of outside rein; listening to aids;</p> <p>NOTE: Ground School is critical! Use Work-in-Hand positioning to develop clarity in developing balance via the outside rein; Review the Stop Sign video on TnTHorsemanship.com.</p> <p>Riding the Stop Sign: After supple exercises both on the ground and while riding... Picture a large stop sign (8 sided object) on the ground, or utilize pieces of pvc pipe as a visual aid; At each point of the stop sign you are going to ask for balance, alignment, and a half-halt in the outside rein.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride a shoulder-in posture, or sideways moving away from the bend around the perimeter of the stop sign facing the center. • Ride a half-pass posture, or sideways moving into the bend around the perimeter facing the center *Ride a travers or haunches-in around the perimeter facing outwards from the center. • Ride a renvers or haunches-out around the perimeter facing outwards from the center, 	<p>Goals/Objectives Timing, positioning & focus, impulsion and FUN!</p> <p>Riding with the Mirror Picture yourself in a wide alleyway with you and your horse positioned on the far side and the cow across from you parallel on the opposite side; Your job is to keep the horse slightly shaped around the cow – looking at her and stay parallel to her as she moves down the fence; When she reaches the wall she is going to face up to you and your horse, then take off back up the fence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are going to "mirror" her movements! • Move at the same rate; Halt when she stops; Face up with a haunch turn, then re-shape around the cow and take off after her in the new direction. *Start slow, then move up to a trot and finally a canter; Slow and right beats fast and wrong every time...the cow wins in this scenario! <p>NOTE: This is a great exercise to do with two horses and riders. One of you is the cow and one the horse. Ideally you "mirror" each other's movements.</p>	<p>Goals/Objectives Timing/rating, engagement, impulsion and JOY!</p> <p>Riding the Halt to Backup to Canter After warm-up utilizing previous straight and lateral day movements, and of course suppleness...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While riding a straight line at the trot, picture a halt in your mind's eye at a specific spot; Put a 'C' in your back, tighten your core muscles, raise one hand slightly and bring the other hand down with your elbow coming towards your belly signaling the "Whoa"; • Change your aids becoming internally light; reverse your hands and ask for the backup in rhythmic diagonal pairs; • Next prepare your aids and mind's eye for a canter depart; Outside leg goes from relaxed to slightly back; Inside leg, hip, and hand come slightly forward with no casting of the shoulders and canter off on a straight line. *Once in the canter consider speeding it up and then slowing down, then revving it up again; • Repeat the halt to canter depart sequence starting from the canter gait, to halt, then just think backup, but depart as the horse crouches, is engaged, then blast off with impulsion!

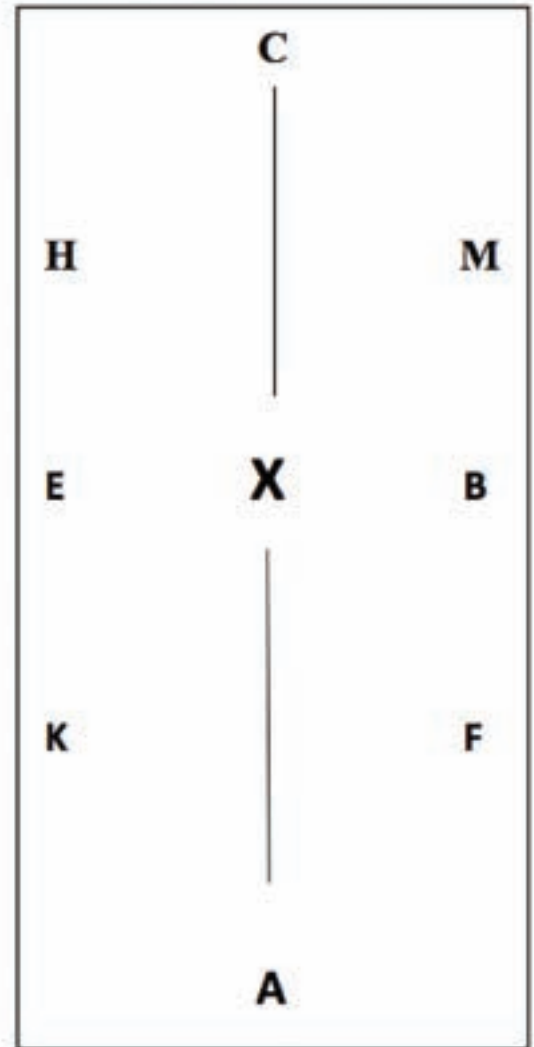
Dressage Day – Day Five – Week Three

Dressage = Training

Build Your Own Test. Combine the exercises from previous days, but ask for the maneuver at a specific place.

A	X	Enter working trot Halt at X, Salute Proceed working trot
C	MXF	Track right One loop
3	Between A & K	Working canter right lead
4	E	Circle right 20m
5	E-H	Working canter
6	H	Working trot
7	C M-B-F F	Shoulder-in into the corner Shoulder-in down the long side Shoulder-in into the corner
8	A-K K-X X-C-H	Shoulder-in into the corner Half-pass on the diagonal Revers/Haunches-out on circle
9	H-E	Straighten & change bend-left
10	K F-X X-C-M	Shoulder-in into the corner Half-pass on the diagonal Revers/Haunches-out on circle
11	M-B	Straighten & change bend-right
12	A	Medium walk
13	K-X X-M	Free Walk Medium Walk, gather reins
14	M-C-H H-X-K	Working trot One loop
15	Between A & F	Working canter left lead
16	B	Circle left 20m
17	B-M	Working Canter
18	C	Working trot
19	C-H-K	Working trot
20	at A X	Turn left Halt, Salute

A to X to C is the “Centerline”



Partial List of Resources:

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