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HORSEMAN



MAKE SURE YOU GET THE DRIFT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN 4 • HEAD FOR THE HILLS 10 • THOUGHTS ON INTRODUCING CHILDREN AND HORSES 12

SOME THOUGHTS ON TRY 15 • FLEEING FORWARD OR THINKING FORWARD 16 • BOX TRAINING FOR THE COMPETITIVE RODEO HORSE 18



4 **Make Sure You Get the Drift With Buck Brannaman**
 Photos by Emily Kitching
 This seemingly simple exercise is not only a help for horses who shuffle their hind feet when untracking, but also the foundation of engagement for every horse.



10 **Head for the Hills**
 By Patti Hudson
 Joe Wolter discusses what can be accomplished beyond exposing a horse to new surroundings when you ride out in the hills.



18 **Box Training for the Competitive Rodeo Horse**
 By Jim Overstreet
 Photos by Amber Overstreet
 Some helpful ways to prepare a horse for being comfortable in the box.

12 **Thoughts on Introducing Children and Horses - Getting it Right the First Time**
 By Bryan Neubert

15 **Some Thoughts on Try**
 By John Balkenbush

16 **Fleeing Forward or Thinking Forward**
 An Excerpt from *Considering Horsemanship*
 By Tom Moates

Inside Every Issue

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 From the Editor | 28 Mercantile |
| 25 Community Listings | 30 Directory |
| 26 Calendar of Events | 32 What Were They Thinking? |

Contributors



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Buck Brannaman a phenomenal cowboy and clinician, has traveled the United States and Australia conducting colt starting, horsemanship, cow working and ranch roping clinics. He has authored the books *Groundwork*, *The Faraway Horses*, and *Believe*, and has produced many educational horsemanship videos.



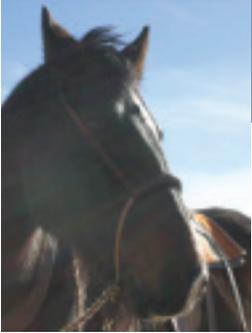
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On the Cover: Mares on the DX Ranch in South Dakota laze on a warm, spring day.
 Photo by Jenn Zeller, The South Dakota Cowgirl. See more images at thesouthdakotacowgirl.com.



Hi All,

I hope your spring is off to a great start. The days are getting longer, which means that my now ten-year-old daughter, Sydney, has more time to ride after school... something which thrills me that she is thrilled about.

When she started riding I was super-apprehensive about putting too much pressure on her. Sure, before she could talk she started out with her saddle on the bean bag chair riding along to the "Gathering Remnants" DVD, but how could I as a parent keep that excitement going? Is horse crazy something you have to be born with, or can it be developed? Horses are my passion, and riding is something that has been such an obsession for nearly 30 years that I wanted to share that with her but not put pressure on her if she didn't have the interest that I do. Quite a dilemma!

Fortunately, we were blessed to have Melvin the wonder horse given to us, which started her off with a gentle, loving mount who gave her a lot of confidence. When her desire to move more did not match his physical ability any longer (he was 29 when he came to us and is now 34), we found a great barn that gave kids lessons just up the road. Sydney benefitted greatly from riding a variety of horses that were used to taking good care of young riders. I benefitted from being able to let Bridget Bailey, her instructor, apply just the right amount of pressure, encouragement and support. Her experience with teaching young riders gave her the patience and persistence that I might have lacked.

Last summer we free-leased Billy Bob from Bridget. Billy is one of her lesson horses whom she felt needed a break from teaching lots of kids and have some time being loved just by one (well, and one mom too). When Sydney outgrows him, he will go back to Bridget (though that is not quite imaginable for either of us). Having Billy to ride every day made the transition from "riding because mom rides to riding because I love riding" happen so smoothly that it just seemed to shift without me really noticing it was taking place.

Billy is a Haflinger quarter horse who is just the perfect amount of safe and salty. Learning to ride is a balance between staying safe and being challenged so that you develop skills to actually ride and not just be a passenger. Sydney has learned so much from him, and her joy of riding is now all her own.

Billy likes to jump and so Sydney likes to jump (itty-bitty tiny jumps). The next horse she rides might like something different, which will be fine with me. The joy of a relationship with a good horse looks good in any costume.

I really enjoyed the article with Bryan Neubert in this issue about some of these same ideas. I was so impressed by watching his children ride at the first clinic I attended of Bryan's way back in 1998, and to see each of them go on to make their living with horses to me spoke volumes about the foundation that he and Patty gave them.

Take care,

Mission Statement > *To be the best resource to help students develop their own horsemanship.*

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THE FINER POINTS

MAKE SURE YOU GET THE DRIFT

With Buck Brannaman Photos by Emily Kitching

Editor's Note: At a clinic when a troubled spot surfaces it's a fantastic opportunity to explore what is causing an issue and how addressing the symptoms might not only help a particular horse and rider but also further clarify everyone's understanding of a concept in general. In the following series of photos what started as Buck's answer to a question about a troubled horse led to a demonstration of a vital concept and a deeper understanding of the foundation of engagement.

"When things like this surface, I hope everyone will store it away in their hard drive. I'm going to show you a way to help a troubled horse that is not truly stepping over behind. But beyond just a fear or a safety issue, this is the foundation of engagement.

"A horse must learn to engage between lateral flexion and movement first before you would ever use two reins to promote engagement of the hind end.

"You have to understand there's some things some of you need to fix. If you're not moving forward and through with the hindquarters well then, everything else connected to it is not going to work either.

"This horse that is bothered is not reaching forward and through with her inside hind leg. To start with, your timing needs to be better as to when you are asking... you need to

consistently time up with when the inside hind foot is leaving the ground for your message to be clear. But she is shuffling sideways when you ask, stepping on herself as she does. If she was really amped up and you asked for her hindquarters she, could flip over backwards on you. And there are many of you on horses that you think are solid who are missing this piece. Your horse might be moving his feet sideways but shuffling instead of reaching forward and through. This is grade school stuff, knowing where the feet are.

"If you were on your horse's back and couldn't feel what is taking place, step off and work on it from the ground so you can help your horse find the answer and improve your timing. A horse that shuffles tends to stop moving forward, to lock up and shuffle sideways. I'll demonstrate on my horse from the ground and then from her back what I call putting her on a drift."

First on the ground...



[1]

Start on the ground so you can see when what's taking place. Send your horse in a united circle around you.



[2]

I ask her to drift her hindquarters away from me while still stepping forward and through. Note the bend in her neck.



[3]

The life in my body tells her to keep stepping forward and through with her inside hind foot.



[4]

Here you can really see that her inside hind is lined up with her outside front.



[5]

We drift step by step until she's smooth and even. Then I take her off the drift back onto the circle, traveling united.



[6]

My leading hand tells her we are going forward; my driving hand may need to help her shift from drift tracking evenly.

THE FINER POINTS



[7]

I'll start again. I feel for her and start asking for a little bend, changing my position to tell her what I'm asking for.



[8]

With a little bend in her neck I ask for that inside hind to step forward and through, putting her on a drift.



[9]

I'll ask her to drift until her steps make an improvement in quality, then I'll release back to the circle.



[10]

She should transition smoothly from the drift to reaching evenly without losing her rhythm.

...then from the saddle.



Now in the saddle I'll start from a united circle. She has to be moving forward with life before I would ask.



I bend her slightly to the inside and apply only my inside leg and ask her to drift her hindquarters.

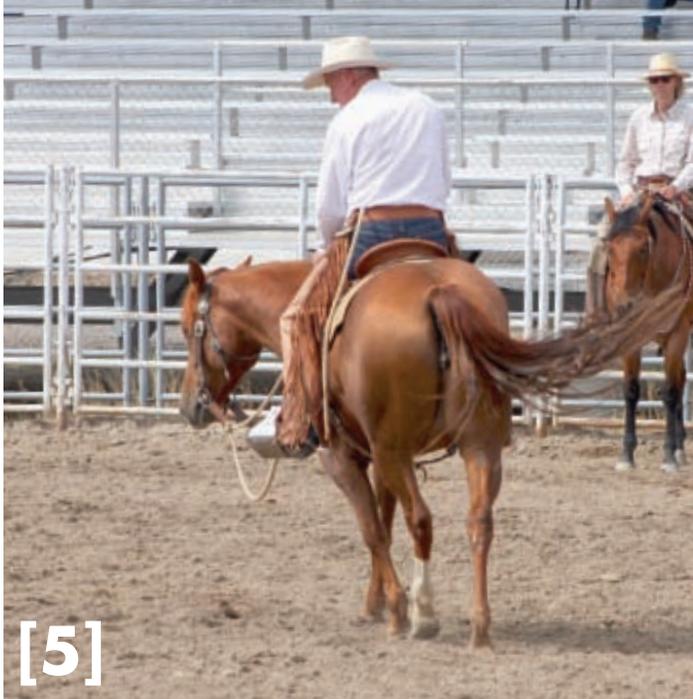


The right moment to ask is when the inside foot leaves the ground. I'll take a few drifting steps with the hind.



Then release the bend and return to the forward circle and tracking united.

THE FINER POINTS



[5]

She has to be traveling with life, with a good cadence around the circle to give me something to direct.



[6]

I'll time up with that inside hind foot, and ask her to drift.



[7]

I'm getting her comfortable stepping forward and through with her inside hind leg.



[8]

Drift. See that the inside hind foot is on the same track as her outside front foot.



Only my left leg is active asking for her inside hind to step over and reach. That needs to be comfortable for her.



I'll wait until her steps feel more smooth, balanced and even.



This is the beginning of engagement, one hind foot at a time, traveling forward while reaching under and through.



When we return to the circle I release the bend, and my outside leg comes in and says now we're going united.



HEAD FOR THE HILLS

By Patti Hudson

Having an indoor arena helps Joe Wolter keep his horses in shape and advancing in their training throughout the year, regardless of the West Texas weather. But many times he finds even better training opportunities by heading to the hills out in the back pasture. “I used to think it was just about exposing the horse to different terrain,” he says. “But there’s so much more to it than that.”

First off, negotiating steep slopes helps physically condition a horse and can get them to thinking about where to place their feet. “They learn how to use their bodies better, to be more careful with their feet and to get their hindquarters under them,” Joe explains.

While it’s great for conditioning and can be a lot more interesting for both horse and rider than loping circles in an arena, Joe finds it even more valuable for the opportunity it gives him to connect with the horse mentally.

“Horses don’t naturally want to go straight down a steep hill. It’s more work and they feel more secure if they can contour,” Joe says. “A lot of people feel the same way and aren’t that comfortable asking their horses to go straight up or straight down a really steep hillside. So they miss a chance to connect in a way that can have a great deal of meaning to the horse.”

Joe is quick to caution that if the rider is unaccustomed to steep terrain and is worried about trying something new, the horse will also be worried. “Look at yourself first. Figure out where you’re comfortable and what you can do, then build from there. Ask your horse to go where you and the horse think you can go and where you feel secure. But take the lead in asking. That’s something I think a lot of people miss. Taking the horse where he wants to go is very different from just going where he wants.”

That means becoming aware of when the horse is and isn’t with you mentally. “That’s the value in this,” Joe says. “If the horse wants to go too fast, is hesitant to move, unsure where to place his feet or isn’t traveling straight, then he isn’t with me and I can use the hill to get his attention and get him with me more.”

The hill provides a focal point for both horse and rider. “You want to get him straight first. You can’t start off wrong and expect a good result, so if he’s crooked, fix that. The idea is to get your hands and body in time with the horse’s feet so that he begins to pay more attention to those things. The hill helps it all make more sense to the horse, so you don’t want to do so much that he loses his focus on the hill. You want to be able to leave some of it up to him, so you’ve got to be able to let go, let the hill pull on him and make it his responsibility to stay on track.”

It won’t all come at once. You’ll have to work at slowing him down or speeding him up, getting him straight and on course without doing so much that it becomes about you and not about the hill. You also don’t want to do so little that you have no effect on the horse. “It’s a titter totter and you’re trying to find the balancing point. Each time you try something, it’s just information for what you’ll do the next time. What’s important here is that you and the horse are concentrating on the same thing and working together to find the path of least resistance.”



1 Joe gets the horse lined up to the hill and straight before starting down.



2 Once the horse is straight, Joe is able to turn him loose and allow him to carry the straightness on down the hill.



3. Here the horse has gotten a little crooked, but his ears are still forward as Joe tries to get with him again, get him straight and back on course.

4. Joe influences the horse without distracting him so that the horse's attention is both on Joe and on carefully placing his feet in order to negotiate the hill.

5. The horse is straight, soft and prepared to go downhill with his body well organized and his mind on what he is being asked to do.



6. By preparing the horse and getting him straight Joe is able to turn responsibility for the hill over to the horse.



7. Going up or down, Joe gets the horse straight and prepared first. Here the horse is straight and fully committed to going up the hill. He and Joe are connected and working together.



Thoughts on Introducing Children and Horses – Getting it Right the First Time

By Bryan Neubert

Some people who know me know that I have three adult children who have become very successful in the horse business. Occasionally someone will ask me how that all got started.

As I remember when they were pretty small we held them up to a horse's face and just let them get a close-up look at a horse while in our arms. They could see what a horse feels like to pet, pull on their manes, feel the warm air coming out of their nostrils and let them see how funny they look when they look into the mirror of a horse's eyeball. Then perhaps when they were big enough to appreciate it we would set them up in the saddle with us and give them a little ride around the yard on a horse we could really trust. Eventually when they were strong enough we might let them take hold of the reins and help them feel what it's like to slow one down, stop him and maybe back a few steps. Generally at this stage a child's arms are too short to do much steering.

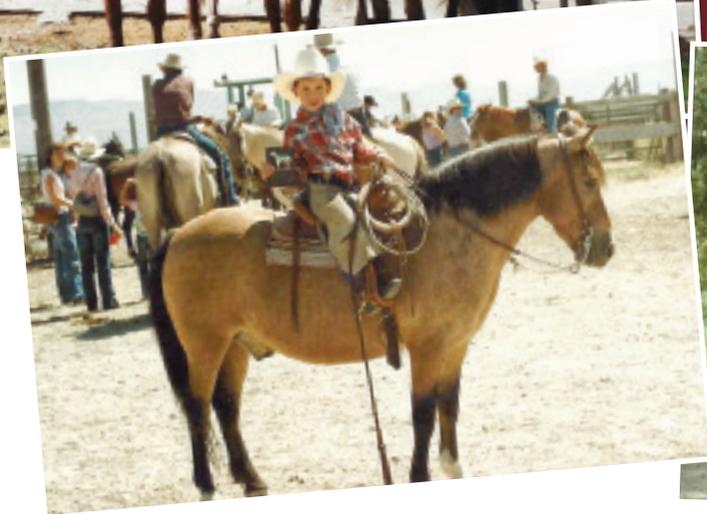
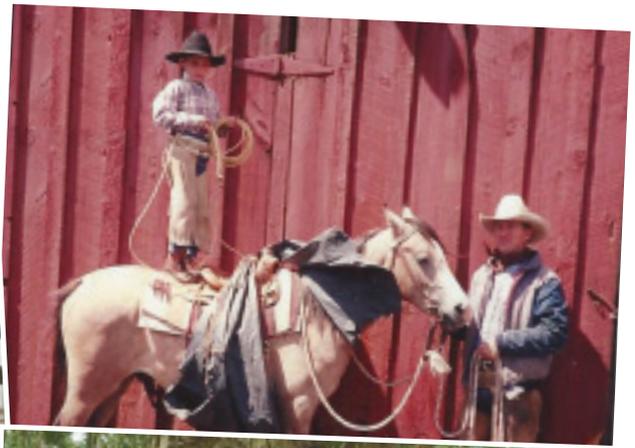
Then as they get big enough we would mount our kids up on something really gentle and we led them from the ground with a halter under the bridle. Soon they would be learning more about how to get a hold of the reins so they could be effective. The natural thing for a child to do is pull from wherever his hands are on the reins instead of choking up and shortening those reins so he is pulling on the bit and not against his own belly, under his chin or worse yet over his head. For this stage I would use a leverage bit with a chain curb if necessary and wait until the child's legs are long enough that he can get a little weight in the stirrups.

If children's legs are too short they're about doing the splits setting up there and all a horse needs to do is shake to send a little guy to the ground. As a child's legs get a ways past the blanket they may start using their feet for acceleration in addition to their romal. Although I am not advising it to anybody my kids wore spurs as soon as their legs were long enough a horse could feel them. Some people would consider it dangerous and for some it could be but any horse I would start my kids on probably has been rode with spurs for many years prior. A little kid is pretty handicapped if he can't get forward motion. A horse is like a bicycle in that you really can't steer much until you get the wheels turning.

After they know how to choke up on the reins 100% of



Jim 4, on Slim.



Top left: (From left to right) Kate 12, Jim 13, Bryan, and Luke 8, each with a horse to sell at a horse sale in Alturas, Calif. Luke is on Penguin, purchased as an unstarted stud for \$90 and sold at this sale for \$900. **Top right:** Luke 7, and Bryan with a yearling they started. **Above left:** Jim winning a trophy on Coyote in Battle Mountain, Nevada. **Above right:** Kate 6, on Brownie at the San Benito Cattle Co., where Bryan was cow boss. Bryan had started Brownie on the ranch with Tom Dorrance many years before.

the time and he can get a horse to move and turn I would play games in a small area perhaps with some buckets for barrel racing or tag games with me on foot and on and on till we are taking little rides around the yard.

So far I've written with little kids in mind but if you have a more timid child or you don't have a fitting horse available I suggest just waiting until your child gets more size, strength and boldness. Some of what I have written so far you may take lightly and if you have a fitting horse and an older child you could do that but what I have written about rein handling (choking up) is crucially important. I have heard story after story of children that are done with riding for life after one bad scare or injury. These early years are so fragile. I saw my own cousin when he was 9 years old have a trot-away on the old horse we all learned to ride on. Although he never broke a trot he was just terrified and out of control but pulling on the reins with his hands above his head. When we got him stopped the old horse didn't even know he was being asked to slow down. With plenty of good horses available he never rode more than a few times for the rest of his life. Bill Dorrance told the worst story I ever heard from his youth in Oregon. The neighbors had family come from back East for a family reunion. They mounted their little cousin on the old horse they all learned to ride on for her first ride ever. Probably with no rein instruction at all. The old horse trotted across the yard she bounced off onto some farm equipment and died right in front of the whole family. I tell this story of tragedy in hopes that people will really consider safety when starting kids out on horses.

The Fun Factor

I believe the biggest thing children need once they have learned to be safe is how to have fun.

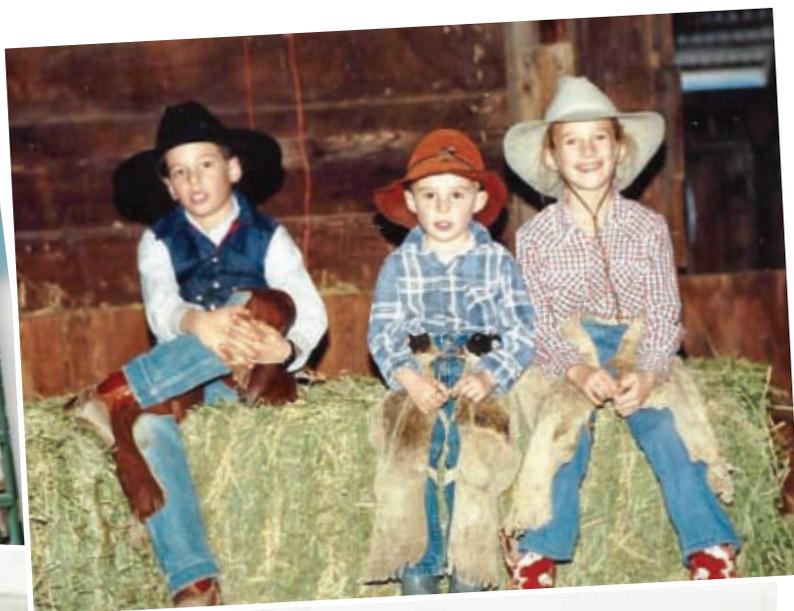
I've seen people get so stuffy with their riding lessons that they sometimes take the fun right out of it. I figure they get plenty of school in school. Not everybody can do like my family did and get those kids involved with cow handling and roping but even a good brisk tag game can be so much fun and I believe they can learn to ride quicker and better than any riding lessons could possibly achieve.

The Money Factor

Our family is a little different than some in that we never gave our children money. We tried to instill the thought that the way to acquire money is by earning it. They were home schooled and never got into the sports thing like most kids so they had plenty of time for riding. Seems like they always had plenty of projects going at a pretty young age. As soon as they started selling a few and had a little money they were constantly upgrading their prospects.

With my children we had lots of colts to ride so when each turned 11 years old I would hire them to ride colts for me. I gave them a dollar a ride the first year then double that when they turned 12, triple by the next year and so on. By the time they were 16 they were doing pretty good and taking on their own customers. The money factor was definitely a big incentive to saddle up even when they were tired or the weather wasn't so great.

SHARING EXPERIENCE



Top Left: Kate 7, mounted on an older horse. **Top right:** In the barn from left to right, Jim 9, Luke 5 and Kate 8. **Left:** Jim 3, on Pinto Bean at the Cross Ranch in Deeth, Nevada. **Above:** Jim 4, showing Coyote at the Elko County Fair.

Prospects for Children

The fact is that finding a good horse for children, especially little children, can be quite a difficult job. The best I've seen for little kids is to find something bigger kids have been riding and out grown. The best ones are ones that have been gentle their whole life, enough on the lazy side to where a kid has to work some to get up speed and a little arthritis could be a big help as well.

It needs to be understood that because a horse is gentle he may not be a fit for children. Consider also a good old horse for an adult may be terrified to look back and see the vacancy left by a small child. I would be very cautious when first introducing a horse to children. I would have one person leading the horse and a separate person have a hold of the child so he could be pulled off quickly if it was evident that it wasn't going to be a fit.

Sometimes people ask about ponies. Seems like the general consensus on ponies is they are mean and nasty animals. I had a pony when I was little. I've had ponies when my kids were small. My youngest son Luke was a pony breaker and dealer when he was younger and is lately back in the pony business and my grandchildren both have ponies. I've helped

start ponies in my clinics and I've yet to see a mean pony in my life. I've seen ponies that have got out of whack some and that had shenanigans going like any sized horse could but I have always attributed that to the fact that most pony riders are pretty young and green. One nice thing about ponies is they provide independence to a child. They can catch, saddle and mount by themselves easier than a normal sized horse. When my children were little I had a pony big enough I could ride as well. Then I could give it good ride the day before or in the morning before which took the edge off and made it so much more manageable for them. You may have thought I might be going to hurt the pony but it was well worth the gamble. I was more concerned about the pony possibly hurting my child than me hurting the pony. New ponies are being born every day but nothing is more precious to me than my family as I'm sure yours is to you.

My advice for anyone is to slow down and be careful when finding the right mount and introducing your children to it. Regardless of the age of the child or size of the mount you may only have one chance to get this right. It could be the difference between your children finding other things to do or sharing your passion for riding the rest of your lives.



SOME THOUGHTS ON "TRY"

By John Balkenbush

When we hear someone say a horse has a lot of "Try," what exactly does that mean? Synonyms of try would be: attempt, accomplish, effort, test, and or investigate. We can all relate each of these words to our horses' behavior at one time or another.

Our friend Ray Hunt said the most important thing he wanted from a horse was "Try." Isn't that interesting? How could what we perceive as "Try" be so relevant to what we have going on with our horses? Try means everything to a horse. If we want to be the best horseman or -woman we can be, it should mean a lot to us too!

When I first started on this journey I watched a clinician working a horse in a round pen. Horse and human were moving, reacting to each other, and the clinician was explaining what he wanted to accomplish, and how he hoped to accomplish his goal. Occasionally the horse would hesitate, look, and change expression or direction. The clinician would respond with movement, sometimes subtle, sometimes firm and direct, and the horse would react. Occasionally the clinician would say... "There's a try." A while later the horse would do something else, and he'd say "There's a try"... Huh? What does that mean? What is he seeing that I'm not?

I've since started to understand a few things about "Try" in our horses, and in all living things, for that matter, and how "Try" affects our relationships. I'd like to share a few of those ideas with you.

We invite horses into our world. His job, as he sees it, is to find a way to get along, stay out of trouble, and just be "okay" in the many different situations we put him into. He is constantly searching for the best way to get along. He is constantly "Trying" to help himself be okay in our world. It's our responsibility to help him be able to do that by recognizing his "Try."

When I recall the best teachers I had growing up, they were the ones that made their classes fun and interesting. They presented their ideas in a manner that helped us, as students, feel that their ideas were our ideas. Our best horsemen and -women seem to have that same ability. To set things up so their ideas become their horses' idea. They recognize when and what their horses are "Trying" to figure out, then reward them for their "Try."

In recent years I've had the opportunity to halter break colts for a couple large Arizona ranches. The learning opportunities are endless with these young horses that, basically, have had very little human interaction. Most of these colts are blessed with a world of "Try." They move their feet and minds freely, and present hundreds of chances to help them understand how to become responsible citizens in our world. We can help them

IF.....we can interpret their "Try."

Every horse has a built in amount of "Try" influenced by his genetics and, ultimately, his environment. His environment would sure include which human he initially comes in contact with. Each situation he is presented with allows him the chance to respond with yielding (he'll try to go along with) or resistance (sorry but he just doesn't understand), flight or fight, depending how things appear to him. That yielding or resistance will be nurtured by our ability to interpret his "Try." If we fail to recognize that he is working at understanding our idea, and we pull too hard, or don't release soon enough, we will encourage him to resist. He would much rather yield and get along, but if we get in his way, he'll be quite sure he has to resist. If we develop a pattern of not recognizing his ideas, he'll surely develop a pattern of resistance.

With most living things there is usually a fine line between yielding and resisting. When pressure is introduced, we decide to accept the idea, or find our own way to avoid it. Horses are no different. Depending upon his genetics and environment, he responds instantly, or he takes a little time for his decision, if we allow him the time he needs. Some are forgiving, and allow us to fumble along and make mistakes, and some cannot and will not tolerate anything but instant recognition and release. Horses that require a little more timing and understanding can be the "best horse you ever had" or the "worst horse you ever had." It all depends on us. It all depends on that same inherited genetics and environment. The exact characteristics that make him a "bad" horse to one human, will make him a "good" horse to another.

Each of us will probably never become as good a horseman or -woman as we would like to be. Our horses tell us our timing could be better. They tell us our feel could be better. They tell us our balance could be better. Isn't it a blessing that most horses are forgiving? If we miss a "Try" or miss several, most will keep trying, keep experimenting, keep searching until we learn to back off, and release them, or firm up, then release him. However, some cannot keep trying. Those are the horses that will buck us off, kick us, and drag us until we acknowledge that we may have missed something along the way. Their refusals or acting out are letting us know they feel they have "Tried and Tried" and we just didn't get it. We failed to "set it up" to allow them to find our correct response, so they feel they have to come up with an answer of their own. Usually when a horse comes up with his own answer, it's not the best one for us.

So, isn't it wonderful that we have all of that responsibility? And isn't it a little frightening that we have all that responsibility?



FLEEING FORWARD OR THINKING FORWARD

An excerpt from *Considering Horsemanship*

By Tom Moates

“A race is, ‘Who flees the fastest,’” Harry said.

This little quote that I jotted down during a clinic years ago may not seem to say much at first glance. However, I recorded it because it struck me as being plenty profound. In so few words, Harry summed up how a great many of the equestrian population think horses should operate, and at the same time he is hinting at how this notion is misguided.

When Harry said this, he was making the point that many people drive horses' bodies around. This idea ran counter to what he was demonstrating and explaining to us—that horses can be mentally present and follow a feel offered by a human, that they can think about going forward (as opposed to panicking and running forward, even if we want to ask for quickness), and that equines can move themselves forward physically and mentally with us in a relaxed and willing way without being forced and/or worried into it.

For instance, it is common to see people put pressure on horses towards their rear ends to get them to move forward, especially when asking for speed—essentially bringing out their flight response. An extreme case of this is a horse race. Whichever horse is driven to flee the fastest wins, as Harry points out. But, this is true in part because the entire field of them are being driven forward.

Which brings me to another quote I've heard Harry say often—“If a horse isn't feeling his best, he's not performing his best.” Thinking about this, then I wonder, what if there was a calm, relaxed horse in the lineup of a race? One who was willingly with the rider, thinking forward (rather than fleeing forward), and able to truly collect himself and feel in top shape about running? How much better might he perform than the others?

I certainly think about the likelihood of a horse who is handled Harry's way—mind with the person, relaxed, willing—living a more happy, productive, and healthy life. The mental and physical effects of being forced to bring up that adrenaline along with the poor posture of going with an alarm all the time will break a horse down prematurely. It is well known and no

surprise that these kinds of stresses can cause a range of health problems and injuries.

Ultimately what we have in this simple quote is Harry shedding light on another instance of how people cause, allow, and even encourage horses to separate their thoughts from their bodies. It is pretty easy to see that a horse which is fleeing is thinking far away from where his body is (like the “busy” horse in Chapter One) and is racing to get the body to where the mind is thinking. Until the two are reunited, turmoil reigns in the horse's body and mind.

Reflecting on Harry's quote brought back a vivid picture in my mind of an experience I had some years back—the first and only horse pull I ever attended.

Two things really stood out about the horse-pulling event for me. The first was the magnitude and beauty of the amazing behemoth draft horses. I had never been around horses of such gigantic proportions before.

In particular, the teams of Clydesdales impressed. The sheer gravity created by their massiveness when they got close to me emptied the breath from my lungs, and their dinner-plate-sized feet connecting with the ground caused an earthquake as they walked by. The effect on me was much like when I saw the Grand Canyon for the first time. Sure, I had heard my whole life about how huge it is, I had seen pictures and videos of it, and I had been expecting to go see this massive hole cut into the earth. But in spite of all that, I was not prepared in the least for experiencing the magnitude and the pure WOW! of that great wonder when I walked up to the edge of the precipice for a look ... getting up close to a team of harnessed Clydesdales was like that.

The other thing that stood out at the horse pull was how these draft horses were handled. It proved to be one of the saddest examples of horsemanship I'd ever witnessed that the draftersmen displayed for the public that day.

I'm guessing from what I observed in team after team at that event that such handling is the norm and not the exception for horses in these pulling competitions. A high level of anxiety already existed in them as they entered the arena, no doubt a

result of past experiences and “training.” No attempt was made to help the horses find any relaxation or okay-ness in this situation. As they were driven out onto the track to be attached to the sled for pulling, the high heads, bit biting, prancing, and such increased all the more. It was all several men could do working together to position the teams on the straight dirt track and then back them up to the sled.

The moment the pin was dropped into the tongue connecting the team’s harnesses to the sled, they tore ahead in an anxious, sweaty, wall-eyed run for their lives. I watched the crews of people working with each team to instigate a frenzied panic in these wonderful creatures as they sought to pull their loads. It was a chaotic scene, and such was the fervor of reckless anticipation in the horses of hearing the pin drop at the moments of hitching, that some teams bolted before they could be connected to their loads. They charged nearly the length of the run before they could be stopped. Backing them up again to the sled became a doubly difficult chore at that point.

I left that place with a strange haze in my head, somewhere between amazement that such incredible creatures as these still existed in our internal combustion world that day and disgust at how they were handled.

I remember saying to my wife, Carol, as we drove back up the mountain towards home, shaking my head, “If I was the king of the horse pulling world, I’d make some new rules, and I’d begin with: every team must calmly approach the track and back up to the sled to be hitched, and then stand there quietly for at least 30 seconds before being asked to pull or they are disqualified!”

I’ve told this story a few times over the years and in reply I’ve heard rumors from a handful of folks about this horseman or that one who has a team that is perfectly calm and that they outperform all the others at such events. I’m not eager to go to another horse pull to find out if it is true, but I hope it is. And if it is true and the others are losing to these fabled, careful, thoughtful handlers of horses, then the mainstream (from what I could see anyway) sure does not seem to be working on enlisting any of their secrets.

I think we can broaden the idea of “race” from Harry’s quote to include horse pulls easily enough, but we also should understand that the “race” part of the discussion is not the real point of it. Harry was not worried about racing per se, rather he is

addressing how people so often bring up the flee in a horse to achieve forward movement (or any movement), and that is the lesson here.

If we do something as simple as chase a horse out into a circle around us to make it lunge, that is the same thing as a jockey whacking his race horse with a crop in the butt. It is extremely common to see people swing the tail end of a lead rope at a horse to get him to step out and go circle around them, for instance. This rope-swinging move is a mainstay of natural

horsemanship videos and clinics, to be perfectly honest. And yet, folks simply could offer a feel on that lead rope for the horses to go with to see about getting them to step off and begin to walk around them.

Perhaps people don’t believe a horse can accomplish that task without the encouragement of something to get away from. But we do the horses a disservice by not presenting the chance for them to hear a soft request to go with—to give them that chance, persist with it, and let them search and find that interac-

tions can be smooth, relaxed, soft, and sweet between us.

Harry has helped me to see with absolute clarity that we do not want to offer our horses reasons to get away from us, even little reasons. As creatures with a strong hardwired ability to flee, horses are all too easy to encourage to flee from us.

The quickness with which people can get horses to go forward by driving them into it is most likely why this practice has become the standard of horsemanship. In natural horsemanship circles, this is often referred to as the “pressure” part of “pressure and release.” And while a mechanical application of pressure and release which engages the horses’ flight response gets quick results, we should consider how a horse feels about that versus providing them a feel from us to go along with.

I agree that it typically takes more time to set things up initially to get a feel working between a person and a horse than it does to chase them into some movement, but once established, what a difference there is to see between a relaxed and willing horse—a reality that then can last a lifetime—as opposed to how a horse feels and postures himself every single time he goes to get away from the person, day after day, year after year.

Editor’s Note: Considering Horsemanship and many other wonderful books by Tom Moates are available in The Mercantile.

"Perhaps people don't believe a horse can accomplish that task without the encouragement of something to get away from. But we do the horses a disservice by not presenting the chance for them to hear a soft request to go with—to give them that chance...."



BOX TRAINING FOR THE COMPETITIVE RODEO HORSE

By Jim Overstreet Photos by Amber Overstreet

Box training a horse is often one of the more difficult parts of preparing a horse for tie down roping, team roping, breakaway roping or steer wrestling competition. Whether you are at a rodeo or a team roping practice, it is not unusual to see someone having trouble either getting their horse into the box or having trouble getting them to stand correctly once they get in. Rope horse trainers use many different strategies that work, some better than others. Over the years, I've figured out a few things that have made box training easier for me. Maybe some of what I do can help you. Every horse is a little different and some of them go through periods of difficulty no matter what you do.

Baby steps: I often try to work beginning box training into a colt's early learning. The same method works on more broke horses as well. At first, at the end of a ride, I ride into the box, stop the horse, stand a few seconds and then dismount. The first time or two I don't even turn the young horse around. All this does is accustom the horse to entering a relatively confined space and being rewarded. As soon as the horse feels comfortable entering the space and standing, I ask him to turn around and stand facing out. Just standing can be difficult for many horses. If the horse settles at all, I try to relax and get soft, particularly in my legs and back. If he stays with me, we will rest there for as long as a minute or two. But, if I feel energy building up inside the horse or if he begins moving his feet, whether it's after a half second or half a minute, I try to hold the position only a beat longer. The trick here is to ask the horse to stand, reward him for it but release before it becomes too difficult for him. If the horse is really green, you shouldn't expect much. If the horse is further along in his training, standing and relaxing might not be difficult at all and you can pass through this part quickly.

After I'm sure the horse is comfortable just standing in the middle of the box, I ask him to stand next to the fence on the side of the box away from the chute. For most horses this is not a problem but occasionally this further confinement bothers a horse. It's just something I like to check out before I ask him to back into the corner where he is closely confined on two sides. Whenever the horse becomes comfortable standing there, I ask him to take a step back and if that goes well, ask him for another. Depending on what the horse knows and how comfortable he is to backing up to an obstacle, I might be able to back into the corner the first time I ride in or it might take twenty tries. This seems so simple that it is easy to hurry when you should be taking whatever time it takes for your horse to make this move in a relaxed and comfortable way. At first, I'm not too particular

about the horse standing in the perfect place. Whenever we get close to where I want him to be, I try to let a lot of life out of my body. If I have time, I sigh out a breath and let my legs and back relax. This tells the horse that he is in the right place or at least close enough for today.

Before I ask a horse to back in the box, I make sure he is already confident backing in the open where there are no external obstacles. He doesn't have to back fast, just willingly. Some horses don't back into the corner of the box readily at first because they are very aware of that fence behind them and worry about when they might bump it. If a horse hesitates in that tight space, I try to be patient. This is not the time or place to start a fight. Given time, most horses will take another step back and then another until they are in the right position. But to begin with I might have to settle for something less than the horse going full into the corner. Tomorrow or the next day, I will probably be able to get back into that corner where I want to be. If a horse braces up and refuses to back toward the corner and being patient does not overcome the resistance, I accept that the horse isn't ready, at least at that time. I back off the pressure and try to reward him for just standing there. Then, I go somewhere else to make the horse more solid on backing. Depending on the circumstances, I might just wait until another day. The next day, the horse might back into the corner just fine. But when I try it the next day, I'll still approach it gently and make no demands. I want my horse to feel like the box is a safe place. If I end up having a battle getting him to back up to an obstacle I want to do it somewhere else.

Horsemanship review: The next step requires some basic horsemanship that not everyone knows. That is the ability to control all four of the horse's quarters—to move the front and hind ends of the horse separately, sideways, either direction. At rodeos, I frequently see horses back into the box, fill up with

BASICS: SETTING UP THE FRONT END TO MOVE TO THE RIGHT



This is how I set it up to move the front end to the right: right rein tipping the horse's head slightly to the right. My right leg is lifted to make a space for the horse to move into. At the same time, I'm beginning to ask the horse to move away from my left leg.



This is the first step to the right. I have more pressure on the right rein. My right leg is still lifted so I'm not asking the horse to move into pressure. Here I have released the pressure from my left leg to let the horse know that he's doing the right thing.



Here the horse is beginning to take the second step that I'm asking for. Right leg still lifted. Left leg is applying pressure.



Here I'm just beginning to set up for the horse to step his front end to the left.



The horse is starting the first step to the left with his front end. Here I'm using the left rein to tip the head to the left. My left leg is lifted slightly and my right leg is applying pressure.



Here we are beginning the second step to the left.

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tension so that their energy boils over in a step sideways out of the corner with their hind end. The contestant whose horse does this rarely asks the horse to reverse the move and step his hind end back into the corner. Most likely the horse has never been taught how move his hind end on command anyway. To me being able to direct the placement of the rear quarters is critical to controlling a horse in the box.

Since this is important, let's quickly review a basic method for directing both ends of the horse. 1) To move the front to the left, lead with the left rein just enough to tip the horse's head slightly to the left, push just behind the cinch with your right leg. 2) To move the front to the right, lead with the right rein, push with your left leg. Keep the off-side rein just tight enough to keep the horse from stepping forward. 3) To move the hind end to the right, use the left rein to tip the horse's head slightly to the left and push with your left leg back either just in front of or just behind the back cinch. When the horse knows the proper response, leg on the back cinch will often work. 4) To move to the hindquarters to the left, use the right rein to tip the horse's head slightly to the right and apply leg pressure somewhere well behind the front cinch. In the photos that accompany this article, I've exaggerated the head position so that you can see it.

Moving in response to these cues is pretty natural for a horse, at least before he learns not to do it. I've had many colts respond correctly to this combination of pressure (very lightly

placed) on the first or second ride—the first time I asked for it. Of course, I didn't ask for a lot—at first just a short step with the lead foot followed by a release of pressure, maybe followed by a second request after a short pause. In the beginning, I might have to offer a brief release when the horse shifts his weight to the correct leg so that the one I want him to move is light enough to lift. Some older horses catch on quickly as well but others have learned to ignore leg pressure and I might have to hang in there patiently before they make the first move so that I can give them relief. When I say to wait patiently, I mean to put just enough pressure on a horse so that he will want it to diminish and then wait before adding any more pressure. Sometimes a spur is helpful but I try not to overdo it. I know it is hard for some people to spur or otherwise apply pressure to the horse with only one leg at a time. I frequently see people trying to move the horse sideways but kicking with both feet. When I want the horse to learn to move away from pressure, I always try to leave a place for him to go where there is no pressure. I try to press or kick only with the foot I want my horse to move away from.

Placement in the box: I like to get my calf roping horses placed in the corner at the back of the box, quartered slightly so that they are aimed just past the end of the roping chute. A team roper or steer wrestler might want his horse aimed straighter down the arena. I try to aim my horse where I want him to go.

BASICS: SETTING UP THE HIND END TO MOVE TO THE LEFT



This is how I set up to move the hind end to the left. Right rein tipping the head to the right. My right foot is back just about to apply pressure as I ask for the step.



This is the beginning of the first step to the left with the hind end.



This is the beginning of the second step to the left. My right leg is asking the horse to finish the step and my left leg is lifted slightly to give the horse space to move into.

RIDING INTO THE BOX



If this horse had been in a box before these photos it had only been a time or two nearly a year earlier.



Beginning the turn.



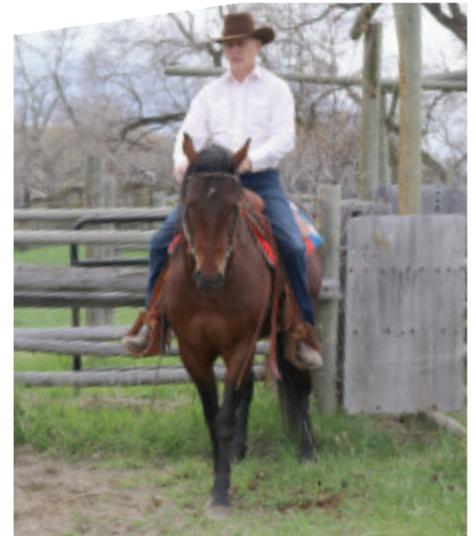
Here the horse was slightly uncomfortable and got a bit sticky. I want him to know that he can exist in a tight space but I could feel his energy building up. At this point, no matter what I did, he was likely to move. I preferred to direct his motion by asking him to move his hind end to the left.



Here his hind end has taken a step left and I am asking him to bring his front end across to even up.



I let him pause here.



As soon as he needed to move, I asked him to step his front back to the right.



Here I'm asking his hind end to step right to catch up with the front.



We paused here for a few seconds and I set it up for another step to the right with his hind end.



This is pretty much the place I want the horse to want to end up. Even though I had to keep the rein tight to hold him in place for a few seconds, I've rewarded him with a softening in my back, hips and legs.

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The place in the box I want the horse to seek is the place where I want to start from so that I can take the most direct route to the calf or steer. Even later, on a well-trained horse, when I ride into the box, I try to get him to stop in that starting spot. When he gets there, I let out a breath and soften my body enough so that the horse knows he's found the sweet spot.

In beginning training, soon after I get a horse standing comfortably in the corner I ask him to move forward a step or two and then back into the corner again. I try to do it slowly so that the horse moves quietly and never feels threatened. Next, I will ask him to move his front end more toward the chute and back to the sweet spot. If there is room I might ask him to move his front end closer to the side fence, pause, and then step back to where we started. Next, I will ask the hind end to step out of the corner toward the center of the box and back. Later, as we enter the box I might direct the turn so that we end up right beside the chute. From there, I'll ask him to move his front end toward the center of the box and when he gets that done, I'll ask the hind end for a sideways step so that the front and back end are lined up in the middle of the box. I'll keep directing each end separately until we end up in the sweet spot again. And, of course, that's where I'll let my breath sigh out and relax. Once I get this going, it doesn't take all that long to get where I can move my horse to any place in the box. This comes in handy later after I've been running cattle out of the box and the horse starts getting anxious. If he moves out of position, he already

knows how to respond when I ask him to get back to the sweet spot and I'll usually be able to direct him back without too much difficulty.

Another problem that can come up, particularly on a very green horse or a horse that tends to be very nervous, is that when you ask him to stand in the box, he refuses to stand quietly for more than a few quick seconds. If the horse insists on moving, I ask him to move when I feel his energy build up, before it explodes. But, I guide the speed and direction of the motion. I limit the move to only a step or two in any direction if I can without creating a crisis—forward, back, hind end left, hind end right, forward, back, front end right, front end left—in whatever order that feels right to me. On some horses, for a while, one motion may barely pause before I have to begin directing the new step. I try to always give the horse the option of pausing before he moves again. I am careful not to start directing the motion until I feel the energy in the horse telling me he's going somewhere. In my experience this need to move will eventually die down if you can control the direction of the steps.

I often see other ropers letting or even encouraging their horses to circle in the box when they get too anxious. I don't use that technique, although there may be a time for it. It seems to me that some horses might interpret this as a reward for not standing properly. Still, it is a way to reduce the pressure inside a horse in a relatively safe manner.

TURNING EITHER WAY IN THE BOX



He backed into the corner but I could feel his need to move and I'm beginning to set up to step his front end to the left. A directed step moving his front end to the left.



When he had to move, I set it up to move the front end back to the right. Here he is completing that step to the right with his front end.



When the lesson was over, I dismounted in the sweet spot. I petted him and then loosened the back cinch.

MAKING THESE MOVES IN A CURB BIT AND NECK REIN

This is a fairly well-trained heading horse. I've included these photos to demonstrate that it's possible to make these moves using a curb bit and neck rein.



Backing into the box.



Relaxing in the box.



Front end to the right.



Moving the front end to the left.



Pausing.



Moving back to the right.



Live cattle: I usually try to teach a horse to track cattle outside or just around the arena before I start running live cattle out of the box, although, if I had a long-enough arena and good, slow cattle, it wouldn't be absolutely necessary. But I wait to start chasing live cattle from the box until after I've got the horse standing comfortably in the proper position in the box. Even if the horse knows how to chase fast cattle in another setting, I like to start out with very slow cattle. The faster the horse has to run to catch a calf, the more likely he is to get excited in the box on the next run. I gradually work up to faster cattle over an extended time. Depending on the horse this can take several months.

In the beginning, I ask the horse to start taking a walking step forward before the gate opens so that he is already in motion when the calf starts to move. This makes the horse's acceleration smoother and less exciting. In asking him to take that first step, my signals to the horse will be clearly different from when I want him to stand. On some horses, I might ask for the early first step for quite a while. Sooner or later, the horse will tell me when he's ready for a standing start. On really slow cattle I might switch to a standing start fairly quickly. But when I move up to faster cattle I might go back to asking for that controlled step just before the gate opens for a while.

Through all these steps it is important that you relax when you get to the sweet spot. But it is also important bring the life up in your body smoothly just before you ask your horse to leave. You need to communicate to the horse that he is going to have to do something soon so that he is not surprised when you ask him to accelerate. This clear forewarning gives the horse a chance to mentally prepare for the change and reduces his uncertainty. And reduced uncertainty translates to less stress for the horse and less troublesome anxiety in the box. When I bring the life up in my body before I ask him to go, I don't want the horse to have to wait too long. If things aren't right, say the calf turns his head back, I'll try to go relax again before the horse gets upset. This might be just a brief reset before I bring the life back up in my body to tell the horse to prepare to start. As the horse gets more confident, he'll be able to wait longer before I have to go back to a more relaxed posture.

In box training, scoring means to turn the calf out of the chute without chasing it. When I first started scoring, I made mistakes and created problems. But done correctly, it is an excellent tool. In the early stages of box training, when I score, I ride into the box, find the sweet spot and relax. But instead of bringing the life up in my body before I nod for the calf, I relax even more and ease the tension on the reins so that the bit is no longer in firm contact with the horse's mouth. I don't get far off the bit though so that if the horse starts to go with the opening gate or the starting calf, I barely have to move my hand to stop him. Even when I score, I don't want the horse to disconnect entirely. I try to keep his head straight, just where I would want it when I plan to make a run—same with his feet. Many horses

will go through a phase when they want to start on the nod or the movement of the gate. My goal is to get them to take their cue from me instead of those external things. As the horse gets comfortable with knowing when I want to score and when I want to run, my cues become more subtle. Eventually, I want to be able to let the calf move a long way, then bring the life back up in me and ask my horse to give chase. If I go to a rodeo with a long score, that could come in handy.

Don't overdo it: When I was young, I figured if you didn't run at least ten head, it wasn't a practice for either me or my horse. Now early in training my horse, I might run two head and score one and call it good. Some days I might run one and score two. As my horse gets more comfortable, I will likely run more but I try to be aware of rising tension in my horse and quit before it becomes a problem.

If it falls apart: I figured out some of these things because at times I misjudged how much pressure my horse was ready to take and I tried to do too much too quick. I didn't ease off as too much energy was building up in my horses and some of them more or less exploded by rearing and plunging forward. I find a desperately rearing horse scary as hell. And it puts me in a spot where I either have to release the horse and reward him for rearing or I have to keep the pressure on and risk him falling over backward on me.

When things transpire so fast, it's difficult to think, but if that happens to me again, I will try to pull only on the rein that is toward the outside of the box—right rein if I'm in the calf roping box, left if I'm in the heading box. What I'll really be asking the horse to do is step over with his hind end. The rein I choose to pull on will direct his hind toward the center of the box where there is space for him to step into. The horse is likely to respond because I've already taught him to step hind end over when only one rein is tight. With his hind end drifting away, he can't put much power into the next rear and is much less likely to fall back on me. It also keeps pressure on the horse when he is doing something wrong and makes it something he's less likely to try again.

A couple more small things that make a difference: When I am through practicing, I ride into the box, stop in the sweet spot, dismount and loosen the back cinch whether I'm roping on an old horse or a young one. I may also remove the skid boots. Horses learn that this means we're done and they associate that pleasant relief with the sweet spot in the box. When I'm first taking a horse to rodeos, I try get in the box before the rodeo if I can. I go back to those early box lessons and ask my horse to step his quarters in all directions plus move forward and back. I make a point of getting to the sweet spot and standing relaxed. After the run, if the opportunity presents itself, I get back in the box, dismount and loosen the back cinch. I wish I had figured out more of these things when I was young.

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4/25-28 Buck Brannaman colt starting class and horsemanship 1, Carmel Valley, contact Bonnie 831-457-2224 bonnies@cruzio.com

4/26-28 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver cow working clinic, Orland, contact 530-865-2610 info@thecalifornios.com

5/1-6 Dave Ellis and Jody Grimm ranch riding, LS Ranch, Porterville, contact Jody 303-503-2911

5/2-4 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver ranch roping clinic, Orland, contact 530-865-2610 info@thecalifornios.com

5/2-5 Lester Buckley English/Western horsemanship clinic, Berry Creek Ranch, Willits, contact Tango@pacific.net

5/3 Jec Ballou cross training and trail clinic, Fort Ord National Monument, Marina, contact jec@jecballou.com

5/3-5 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship clinic, Rolling Hills Casino Equestrian Center, Corning, contact Tina 530-680-6924 athenamjames@yahoo.com

5/5-6 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver advanced ranch roping clinic, Orland, contact 530-865-2610 info@thecalifornios.com

5/10-12 Buck Brannaman horsemanship 1 and ranch

roping clinic, Rolling Hills Casino Equestrian Center, Corning, contact Tina Cornish 530-680-6924 athenamjames@yahoo.com

5/11 Jec Ballou fitness re-boot clinic, Watsonville, contact jec@jecballou.com

5/16-19 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver ranch branding clinic, Shamrock Ranch, Laytonville, contact Mike Prescott 707-354-0251 mprescott449@aol.com

5/21-26 Bishop Mule Days, Bishop, muledays.org

5/23-27 Bryan Neubert home clinic, colt starting, horsemanship and cow working, Alturas, contact Patty 530-233-3582 bpneubert@yahoo.com

5/25-27 Lester Buckley English/Western horsemanship clinic, Novato, contact Dawn 650-400-0434 Dawnwilliamsdes@yahoo.com

5/25-27 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver cow working clinic, Woodside, contact Rich Boyd 80-691-9691 rd-boyd3@comcast.net

5/29-31 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Running I Ranch, Dunnigan, contact Kelly 209-694-5783 or kells2kids@gmail.com

5/30-6/3 Bryan Neubert home clinic, colt starting, horsemanship and cow working, Alturas, contact Patty 530-233-3582 bpneubert@yahoo.com

Colorado

4/27 Steve and Amy LeSatz annual spring tune up clinic, Last Resort Equestrian Center, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724 amy-steve@bridle-bit.com

5/4-5 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724 amy-steve@bridle-bit.com

5/6 Steve and Amy LeSatz pri-

vate cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724 amy-steve@bridle-bit.com

5/11 Steve and Amy LeSatz trail obstacle clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724 amy-steve@bridle-bit.com

5/16 Whit Hubbard Low Stress Livestock Workshop, Dolores Public Library, Dolores, contact Tim McGaffic at 808-936-5749 or tim@timmcgaffic.com

5/17-19 Joe Wolter horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2 clinic, Circle Star Arena, Platteville, contact Kristi 303-506-9934 kristiplutt@gmail.com

5/17-19 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 1 clinic, Routt County Fairgrounds, Steamboat Springs/Hayden, contact Barb 970-846-5151 bjs7753@gmail.com

5/18 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724 amy-steve@bridle-bit.com

5/30-6/2 Lester Buckley open horsemanship clinic, Dream Ranch, Arroyo Grande, contact Tricia Giz dreamranchtg@gmail.com

Georgia

4/26-28 Tom Curtin horsemanship and cow working clinic, Gay, contact Margaret Sission 770-241-8440 margaret.fay-ettems@gmail.com

5/24-26 Brent Graef foundation and advancing horsemanship clinic, Gay, contact Bonnie Martin GemFox@Bell-south.net

Idaho

5/4-5 Dressage Principles for the Horseman with Jim Hicks, Box K and Y6 Ranch clinics, Bruneau, contact Cindy 208-845-2090 FCBachman@gmail.com

5/15-17 Lee Smith 3 day ride

program, Rigby, contact Connie 208-589-2829

5/18-20 Lee Smith video clinic, Rigby, contact Connie 208-589-2829

Illinois

4/16-17 Jec Ballou clinic, Peoria, contact n.mauserstorer@huskers.unl.edu

Indiana

4/25-27 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Wild Willow Equestrian Center, Zionsville, contact Karen 317-695-7539 or WildWillowEquine@gmail.com

8/2-4 Jatón Lord clinic, Genesis Equestrian Center, Noblesville, contact Alicyn 317-690-9307 genesisesequestrian@gmail.com

Iowa

5/18 Kip Fladland groundwork and horsemanship 1 clinic, Griswold, contact missyand-kip@lariatranch.com

Kansas

5/10-12 Dave Ellis horsemanship workshop and lessons, Hiawatha, contact Nancy 816-215-7842

Kentucky

5/11-12 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Circle G Guest Ranch, Lynnville, contact Narci Gussler 269-720-0158 narclogg@gmail.com or Dee Tomshany 734-368-5855 horse-brat@gmail.com

Maine

4/25-28 Dressage Principles for the Horseman with Jim Hicks, Shinanatu Farm, Portland, contact Kim 207-751-8854 Shinanatu@yahoo.com

Michigan

5/2-6 Bryan Neubert colt starting and horsemanship clinic, Fenton, contact Kathy Malone 810-515-0115 bluegateshorse@gmail.com

5/17-19 Wendy Murdoch clinic and lessons, Massman Stables, Mason, contact Bess Miller

734-834-1844 arbormeadow-farm@msn.com

Missouri

5/9-11 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Von Holten Ranch, Mora, contact Brandy Von Holten 660-668-0880 vonholtenranch@yahoo.com

Nebraska

5/18-19 Ricky Quinn ranch clinic, North Platte, contact Brenda 816-309-8063 bmaddux@gmail.com

5/24-27 Buster McLaury horsemanship 1, horsemanship 2 and colt starting clinic, Fremont, contact Colleen Parmenter 402-427-5244

New Jersey

4/26-28 Ricky Quinn foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Pittstown, contact Mollie 908-200-8829 or Courtney 703-300-2920 courtney_smoot@yahoo.com

New Mexico

5/16-17 Ty Evans trail clinic, Taos Horse Getaways Tres Piedras, contact Holly 575-758-3628 or taohorse@gmail.com

5/25-27 Lee Smith foundation and advancing clinic, Estancia, contact Bryce 208-745-0863

North Carolina

5/1-3 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Leatherwood Mountain, Ferguson, contact 919-754-7568 or quota2high@aol.com

Ohio

4/26-28 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Simmons Equestrian Center, Negley, contact Paula 412-398-8838 cowgirlmattes@aol.com

5/3-5 Ricky Quinn foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Cleveland, contact Claudia 440-241-4621

Oklahoma

5/9-12 Buster McLaury colt starting and horsemanship 2 with cows, Adair, contact Sanna 918-740-8344 buckurancho@aol.com

Oregon

4/20-21 Alice Trindle dressage clinic & lesson sessions, T&T Ranch, Haines, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234 tnthorse@eoni.com

4/26 Alice Trindle private lessons, Summerville, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234 tnthorse@eoni.com

5/3 4/5 Alice Trindle private lessons, Red Barn, La Grande, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234 tnthorse@eoni.com

5/3-5 Brent Graef foundation and advancing horsemanship clinic, Eagle Point, contact Kim Ewalt 541-821-0422 kim.ewalt1@gmail.com

5/11-12 Alice Trindle clinic, T&T Ranch, Haines, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234 tnthorse@eoni.com

5/17-19 Jordan Valley Big Loop Rodeo, Jordan Valley www.biglooprodeo.com

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5/31 Alice Trindle private lessons, Red Barn, La Grande, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234 tnthorse@eoni.com

5/31-6/2 Joe Wolter horsemanship and cow working clinic, John Day contact Patti Hudson 541-620-1951 patti@patti-hudson.com

South Carolina

4/26-29 Buster McLaury horsemanship 2, cow working and ranch roping clinic, Pendleton, contact Dottie Davis 828-891-4372 larryanddottie1@bellsouth.net

South Dakota

5/9-12 Jody Grimm horsemanship clinic and lessons, Rapid City, contact 605-431-2867

5/30-6/2 Buster McLaury colt starting and horsemanship 2 with cows clinic, Red Owl, con-

tact Brad & Becca Andrews 605-985-5493 andrewstraining@hotmail.com

5/31-6/2 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Seven Downs Arena, Spearfish, contact Lori 605-415-8701 or Deb 605-515-3995 loripendleton1@gmail.com

Tennessee

5/2-5 Buster McLaury colt starting and ranch horse versatility clinic, Lebanon, contact Neal Agee 615-812-8253

5/31-6/2 Brent Graef foundation and advancing horsemanship clinic, Chattanooga, contact Ben Eudy BenEudy@gmail.com

Texas

4/14-19 Brent Graef halter-start untouched yearlings, Amarillo, contact BrentGraef@Yahoo.com

4/16-20 Buster McLaury home clinic, Paducah, contact 806-492-2711 806-773-2159 or 806-773-1649 mclaury_clinics@yahoo.com

5/3-5 Joe Wolter horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2/cow working clinic, McCall Ranch, Bastrop contact Julie 713-392-3264 julielsinger@gmail.com

5/15-18 Buster McLaury men only ranch clinic, Paducah, contact 806-492-2711 806-773-2159 or 806-773-1649 mclaury_clinics@yahoo.com

Utah

5/24-26 Ricky Quinn foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Oakley, contact Dave Hicken 435-654-8101

Virginia

4/19-21 Ricky Quinn horsemanship 1 and introduction to ranch roping clinic, Chesapeake, contact Marilyn Obie 757-784-7793 hossboss@tripler-ranch.org

4/25-28 Dave Ellis ranch versatility clinic, Lovettesville, contact Kathleen 703-599-3069

5/9-10 Tom Curtin stockmanship clinic, Buckingham, contact Jennifer Ligon jligon@vt.edu

5/18-19 Tom Curtin horsemanship clinic, Bar W Ranch, Bridgewater, contact Derek & CJ Wise 540-828-2742 cjwise-fromthebarw@yahoo.com

5/25-26 Tom Curtin stockmanship clinic, Raphine, contact Derek Wise 540-471-1331 CJ Wise 540-480-5600 cjwise-fromthebarw@yahoo.com

Washington

5/25-27 Wendy Murdoch clinic, Northwest Trails, Deer Park, contact Sally 509-999-3796 marn1111@yahoo.com

5/31-6/2 Ricky Quinn horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2 clinic, Olympia, contact Jordyn 360-789-6599 jordyn.hanchett@hotmail.com or Charlie 360-943-9076

Wisconsin

4/20-21 Jec Ballou clinic, Madison, contact sugarcreekstablesllc@gmail.com

Wyoming

5/13-14 Jody Grimm natural horsemanship private lessons, Big Horn, contact Sara Lee 307-672-8308

5/24-26 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 2 clinic, Laramie Country Community College, Cheyenne, contact LuAnn 970-568-7682 or 970-690-1854 luannresort@aol.com

Canada

5/4-5 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Murdock Stables, Winnipeg, MB, contact Neil & Gail 204-222-6295 gailcornock@yahoo.ca

5/3-5 Jatón Lord clinic, Keystone Center, Brandon, Manitoba, contact jean_nine1@hotmail.com or Rossetbl@gmail.com

5/10-12 Jatón Lord clinic, Stony Plain, Parkland County, Alberta, contact Darlene 780-554-5090 ddsark@gmail.com

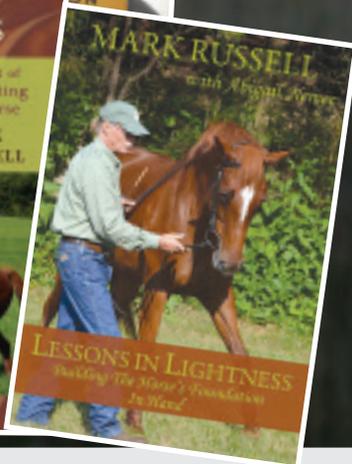
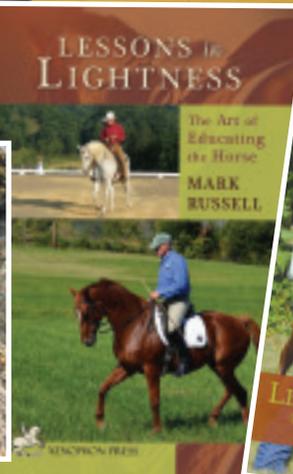
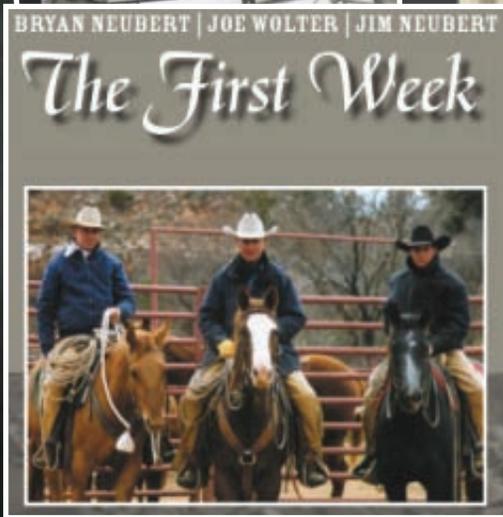
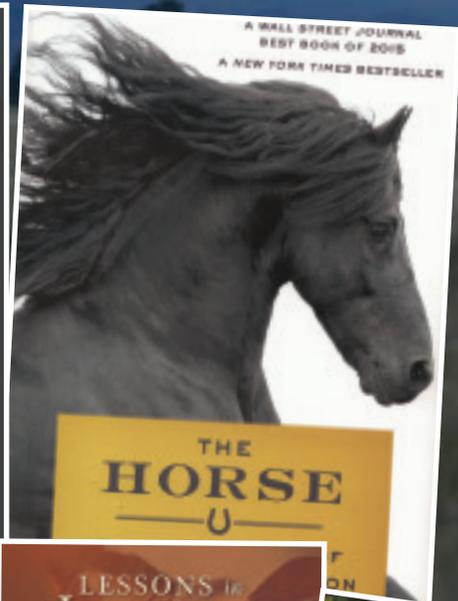
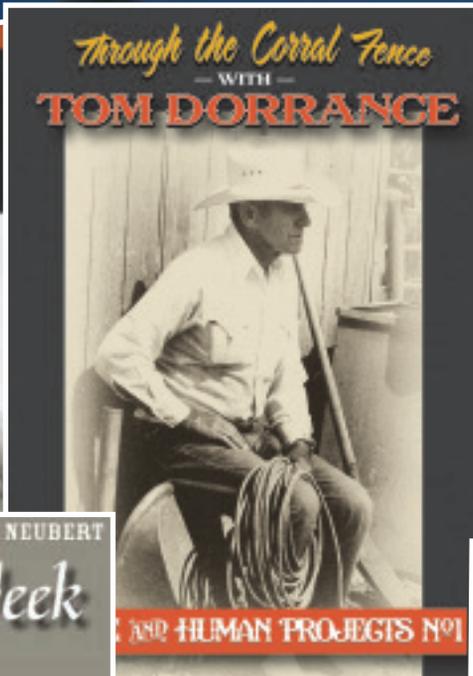
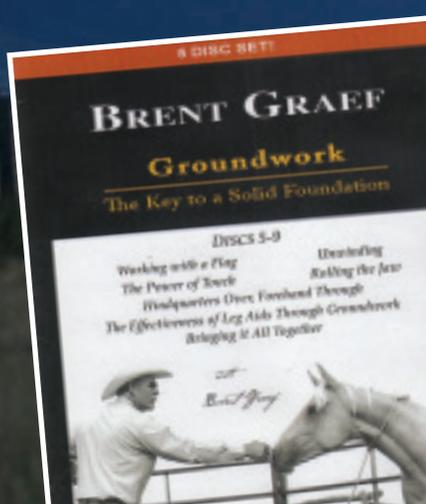
Switzerland

4/19-22 Paul Dietz foundation and horsemanship clinic, Paradise Ranch, Däniken, contact Sibylle Kloser +41 62 291 16 62 www.paradise-ranch.ch

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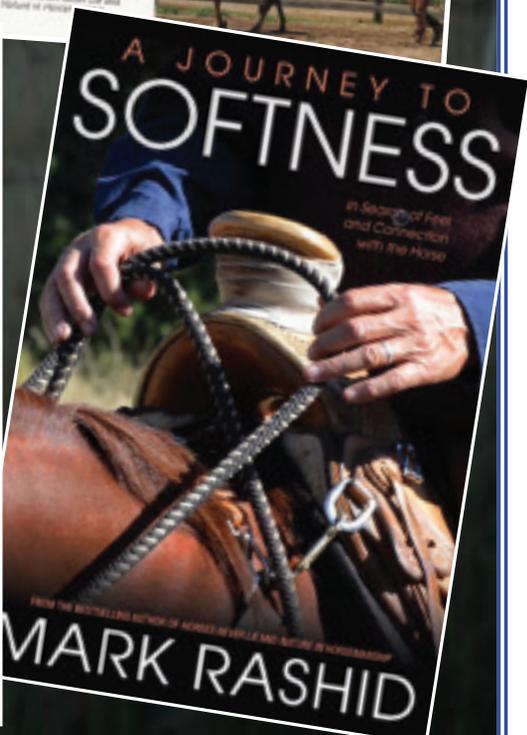
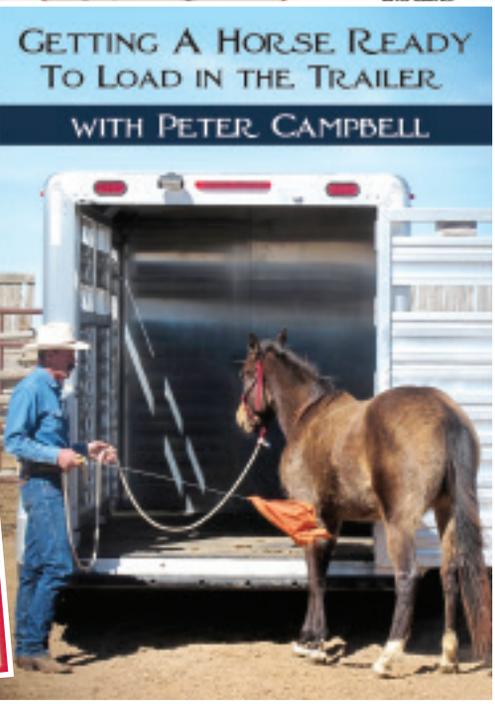
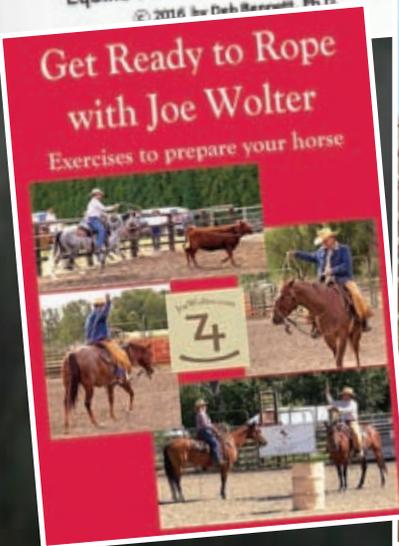
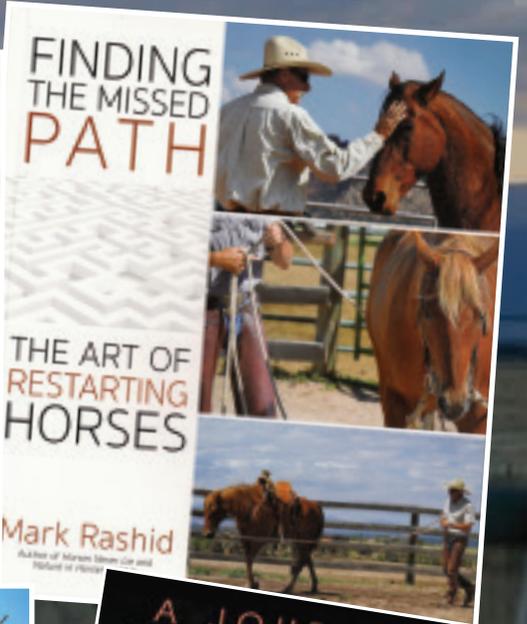
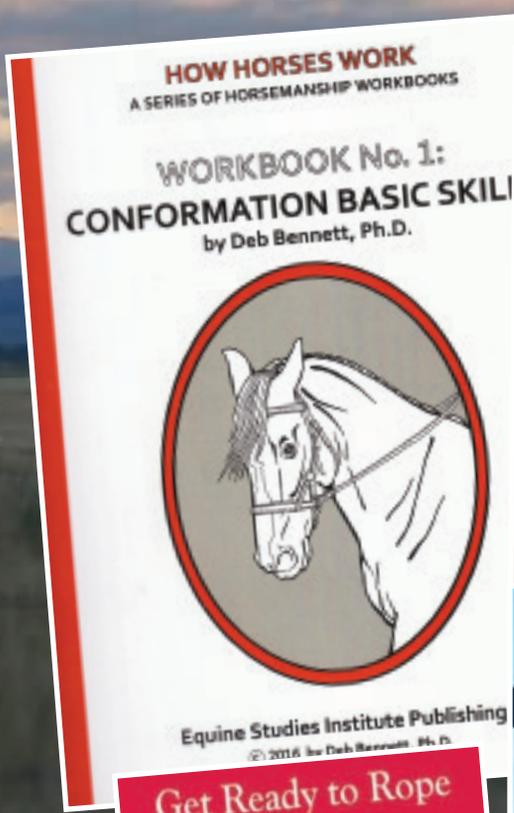
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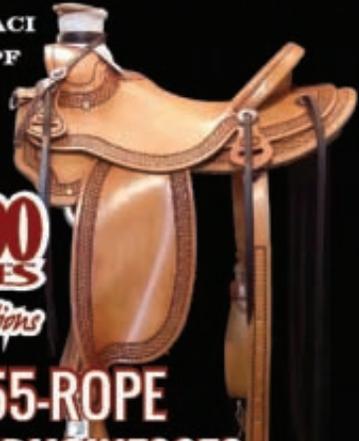
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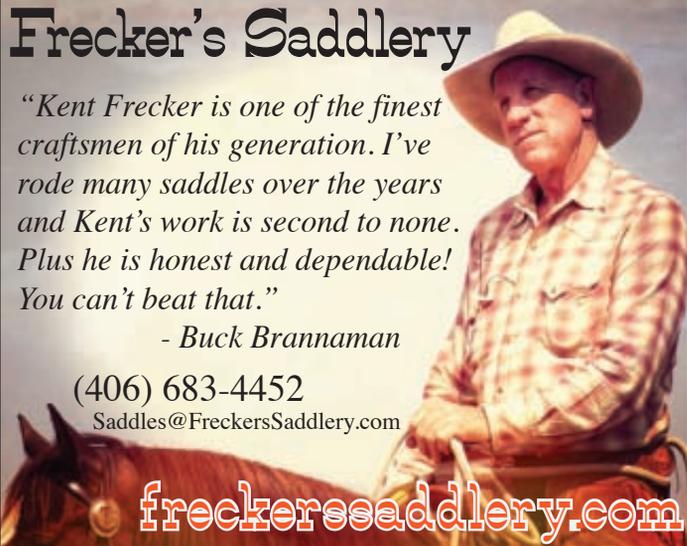

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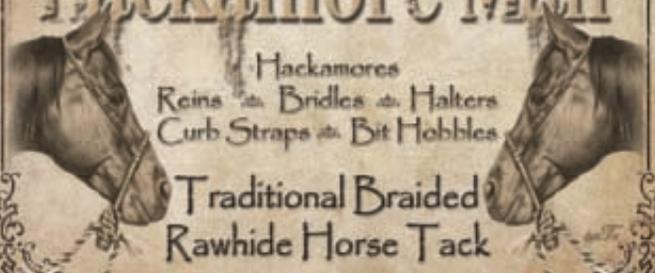
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What were they thinking?



"I was thinking how important it is to ask for help, even if the answers you get are not the answers you want."

Dr. Nikki Zeller is a large-animal vet, affectionately known as the doctor to the asses and half-asses of the world, even though she mostly practices in southern Colorado. She is based out of Z Ass Lass Ranch in Westcliffe, Colorado. Dr. Zeller had taken Walter the mule to Kristi Plutt for help with a bolting issue that led to her being seriously injured. Kristi encouraged her to attend the Joe Wolter clinic she was hosting and get additional help. During the clinic Joe was adamant that no one should be riding Walter until this issue was resolved on the ground.