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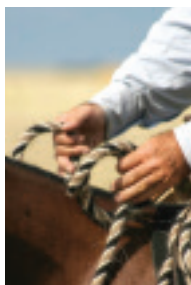
ISSUE NO. 107

HORSEMAN



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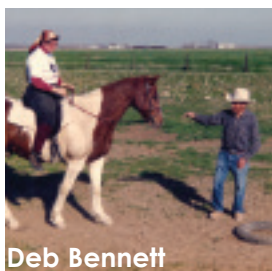
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Deb Bennett

Deb Bennett, Ph.D. teaches unique anatomy short-courses and horsemanship clinics designed to be enjoyable to riders of all breeds and disciplines, and all levels of skill. Internationally known for her scientific approach to conformation analysis, "Dr. Deb" has made a career out of conveying a kind of "X-ray vision" for bone structure to breeders and buyers. Her background helps her clearly explain how conformation relates to performance ability. Learn more at equinestudies.org.

Martin Black is a 5th generation Idaho rancher and 4th generation rodeo competitor. He has a lifetime of experience in handling horses, cattle and roping. In his youth, there was a strong influence of the California-Spanish style of horsemanship. More at martinblack.net.



Lester Buckley

Lester Buckley is a multi-disciplinary international teacher of both horsemanship and the principles of Classical Dressage. He is respected among his peers as one of the most accomplished equestrians and gifted teachers in the business today. Lester was a Light Hands featured clinician. Learn more at lesterbuckley.com.

Ross Jacobs is a professional horse trainer with over 3 decades experience. He lives in NSW, Australia but travels extensively teaching horsemanship to those eager to learn about working from the inside of a horse. His early years were grounded in dressage and jumping where he achieved considerable competition success. But it was not long before his focus was directed toward a deeper understanding of the relationship side of getting along with horses. Ross has authored 3 books aimed at helping the average horse owner gain the skills and knowledge to maximize their potential in the relationship and training of their horses. He has a very active Facebook page with over 14,000 followers. You can learn more about Ross at www.goodhorsemanship.com.au.

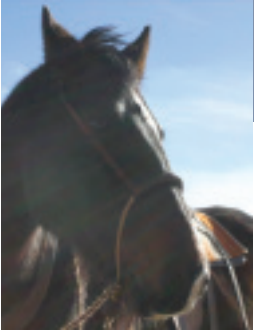


Ross Jacobs

Robert M. Miller, DVM has spent over 6 decades studying equine behavior and was a practicing veterinarian for 31 years. He is best recognized for his system of training newborn foals, known as imprint training. He is a co-founder of the Light Hands Horsemanship clinic.

Heather Smith Thomas grew up on a ranch near Salmon, Idaho. She is the author of 23 books and thousands of articles on animal health care. The 4th edition of her book *Storey's Guide to Training Horses* was just published with updated info and many new photographs. She and her husband have been raising beef cattle and a few horses on their ranch in central Idaho since 1967.

On the Cover: David Shanahan selecting horses for the day's branding on the ZX Ranch near Paisley, Oregon. Photo by Mary Williams Hyde.



Hi All,

I have the fantastic opportunity to visit with a lot of horse people. Our resources are life-long horsemen and -women who are out in the world doing their part to help people with their horses. Our readers call and visit pretty regularly letting me know what is going on with their horse journeys; sharing challenges and successes. When I'm out and about at clinics or events I have the great chance to get to see people with their horses and visit in person about their horsemanship needs and how our magazine can continue to help inform and inspire them.

We are a pretty diverse crowd in experience level, discipline and geography. We have readers and resources from around the globe, from teenagers to octogenarians. I find it incredibly inspiring in my visits to find the things that we have in common through all the surface differences.

Last week I spoke with a brand new subscriber who picked up an issue at her first clinic. She said what she saw in the arena taking place with students and horses resonated with her; she knew there was something going on that had value and she wanted more. The magazine supported the learning that was taking place there; she called and subscribed to keep learning.

In the same week I spoke with a reader that I've visited with on and off for 20 years, she's an older rider, looking for another horse that is a good fit, and while she's looking she's still learning... auditing clinics, reading and studying horsemanship with a passion that is infectious.

Don't Miss!

October 19-20

Best Horse Practices Summit,
Pineland Farms, New Gloucester, Maine
besthorsepracticessummit.org

October 18-20

Brannaman Pro-Am Vaquero Roping,
Santa Ynez, Calif., proamroping.com

Interviewing a long time contributor in this same week I found myself marveling at his genuine enthusiasm for discussing minute expressions, subtle changes and miniscule details of what was taking place with a horse from moment to moment in a photo. That attention to detail willingness to think about what was really taking place is refreshing.

I'm honored to have my passion for horses and horsemanship continued to be nurtured and inspired by my conversations with fellow horse people. We really all are on this journey together. The passion that you feel to improve is inspiring and moves the horsemanship conversation forward in ways that continue to surprise me.

I appreciate your patience with the late issue. Keep those great letters and phone calls coming!

Take care,

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

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Inside Rein - Outside Leg

By Martin Black

That's not a new concept. But what does that mean?

I guess it can mean different things to different people because I see many different applications of it. Quite often I see horses that overbend in the neck; in other words, if the outside rein is not there to stop the horse from overbending the horse's ribs go out against the outside leg.

There is a balance to everything. We can have too much of a good thing and create a bad thing. We need the bend in our horses to direct them in a balanced way, but we can get them too soft and supple to the inside rein to the point that we have to have an outside rein to stop them from over bending.

If we have the feel to acknowledge the horse preparing, and wait so the horse can perform for us without our doing too much, we can prevent creating problems. We only need to start the horse in the right direction and then release. This is where timing is important. If we have the timing we can acknowledge each step and direct each step as necessary. We draw the inside rein and with our outside leg we put life in the feet and release when they respond, then repeat this with the next step. Steady pressure makes horses dull and heavy, pressure and relief in the right proportions with the feet is what keeps a horse light and responsive.

What I see is the inside rein might be the primary rein, but when it causes the hindquarters to move out the opposite direction, the outside rein becomes just as effective to prevent overbending the horse.

If we pull the inside rein back or out too much we can easily create too much bend. Also when this happens the horse usually ends up ignoring the outside leg to whatever extent while trying to stay balanced by stepping the hindquarters out.

If we position the outside rein across the neck to push the shoulder we can create a counterbend, restrict forward motion, and just confuse the horse and make them resistant. Then we can get too much pressure on both reins, the outside leg, and possibly the inside leg when forward motion becomes a problem caused from the pressure of both reins, and then we can have horses that are heavy and dull from all the rein and leg pressure.

When we have too much effect from the outside leg on the more responsive horse, it can create bend in the poll to the outside tipping their nose out, putting them in a counterbend, and they can be off balance. This can make the horse stiff in the jaw and neck and can result in a heavy and dull horse.

But then quite often the solution for the heavy or dull horse to our reins is to flex the horse to get the soft feel again. Then the horse is refreshed on being suppled and giving to the inside rein again, and the cycle continues.

Think of the inside rein to only direct the horse and the outside leg to drive the horse. This means only the inside rein positions the horse's head and neck. The position of the rein can be more important than the amount of pressure. If the rein is out and or back too much, it can cause too much bend. If the rein is forward and up slightly, the neck and shoulders can stay straighter and lighter to the inside hand.

If we learn to measure out just the right pressure in just the right position, the outside rein will not be needed.

Here's a very simple test of our feel, timing, and balance, in my opinion. Simply put your outside hand on the horse's neck with a loose rein while you raise the inside rein up close to the horse's neck without doing enough to cause too much bend, and wait. Then lightly put some outside leg on your horse to create forward motion toward your inside rein.

This simple request can answer several things with your horse and how you are communicating with them. If they haven't been overflexed, their front feet should go toward their nose and the hind feet toward their front. With the inside rein and outside leg, only!

You can grade your own paper.

Can you position the head where you only see the inside eyelashes without using the outside rein to stop the bend? Can you start forward motion with your outside leg without the shoulder falling outside or inside of the directions of the nose? To me when we can find just the right proportion of influence with the inside rein and the outside leg, nothing else is needed.



“HURRY UP, I WANT TO GO FOR A RIDE!” – THE POWER OF TASK ANALYSIS

By Deb Bennett, Ph.D.

One of the most important ways that Ray Hunt and Tom Dorrance helped me was to teach me to take care of the foundation which must be solidly in place before riding can be safe, fun, or productive. Before I met them, I saw performances as the audience at a circus sees the High Schooled horses, or how a little kid watching Roy Rogers re-runs on TV perceives what he sees Trigger do. We tend to take it all in as a seamless whole, without noticing any of the elements of which it is composed.

In this article I'm going to use mounting the horse from a block as a working example. Before I met Ray and Tom I thought “mounting the horse” was one single unitary thing because I WAS that little kid watching TV. Now it's 2019, not 1959 and I am no longer young. My worn-out knees are arthritic and painful, so that I can't mount from the ground. I guess it isn't surprising that I'm writing about how to train a horse to mount from the block (or a rock, a fence, a platform, etc.), as by now I not only have a lot of experience with it, it is an absolute necessity if I'm to go on being able to ride at all.

TASK ANALYSIS

“Task analysis” is a term used in education schools to describe what Tom and Ray called “teaching the horse one step at a time.” I like the term “task analysis” because it is succinct and accurate: what we have to do is define the task by analyzing it, which means breaking it down into smaller steps.

I learned the term from my friend Howard G., a retired special-ed teacher. Howard sometimes leads a college-level master-class which is open only to teachers who have already worked five or more years in the classroom. He shared with me that the very first thing he has the teachers do is break up into teams. The teams have to write out a protocol—a list of steps—suitable to the understanding of a six-year-old, of how to take a tee-shirt out of a bureau drawer, unfold it, and put it on.

After ten minutes, the teams report back by reading off the steps in the protocols they wrote. Howard smiles as he recalls that many times, if you had tried to follow the steps specified by the supposedly experienced teachers, you would wind up with the shirt on wrongside-out or backwards or even be trying to put it on while it was still folded. The reason for this, Howard explains, is that the teachers don't visualize each step with sufficient clarity. They leave out steps, and they make the mistake of “assuming” that the child would “already know” how to tell when a shirt is wrongside-out. And mind you—the people in Howard's class are the same folks that your eight-year-old is trying to learn long division from. Good luck.

Just as much as children, our horses need to be shown how to do things one step at a time. To build a solid foundation, each step must be mastered before going on to the next. To teach effectively, we need to make explicit all that is involved in any task we might ask our horse to perform. It really surprised me to learn how much hard thinking, careful planning, and outright creativity task analysis actually requires.

THOUGHTFUL AND CONSIDERATE VS. RIGID AND DEMANDING

Let's see what results when this style of thinking is used—or not. I begin with a couple of true stories illustrating what happens when it is not.

Folks at the stables where I boarded my gelding Oliver have seen me mount from the block a zillion times. Sometimes, I would ask them what they saw; their answer consistently was, “well, you brought the horse up to the block and he stood there, and then you got on him.”

I then asked them “HOW did Oliver stand there,” and they said, “well, quietly. And then they added—(choose one from the following list):

1. Quietly, because he's old.
2. Quietly, because you must be feeding him calming supplements (or “because he's been drugged”).
3. Quietly, because he's lazy.
4. Quietly, because “he's a sleepy kind of horse.”
5. Quietly, because “he's an advanced horse.”

BOGUS IDEAS IN HORSEMANSHIP



The sheer illogic of this last one always blows me away—the person suspects that the real reason I’ve asked them to tell me what they see is to give me the opportunity to criticize them because their horse doesn’t stand quietly and is therefore difficult to mount. They protest, “Dr. Deb, you can’t expect my horse to perform like yours because my horse is green and your horse is advanced!” Never mind how he got that way!

I imagine that Ray and Tom must have gotten a lot of the same kind of noise, because that’s what onlookers MUST see when there is more going on than meets their eye. To them the above are all “reasonable” explanations, because in the world they inhabit, aplomb and inner equanimity are not primary goals. They’re just trying to get on their horse!

FIG. 1



Sometimes, though, injury tips over into actual insult. A fellow boarder whom I will call “Cindy” had often seen Oliver not only stand quietly in order to “let” me mount, he actively HELPED me by leaning toward me when he felt weight coming into the left stirrup, and often also by raising and arching his neck, thus pushing my body upward as my left arm simultaneously pushed down against his mane. She saw me mount, but she did not perceive these “details.”

Now Cindy owned a handsome Thoroughbred gelding about eight years old. This horse had tons of energy, intelligence, and joie de vivre. He would play for hours with a rubber feed tub, picking it up, tossing it high in the air or across his pen, chasing it, pretending to be afraid of it, stomping on it, and then trotting off with it into a far corner. Then, chuckling all over himself, he’d begin the game again. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a horse so trainable, practically begging for something to stimulate his brain. My offers to help Cindy learn to teach her gelding how to mount the drum, fetch, perform plie bow, do stick work, or longe correctly were met with indifference. Begrudgingly, with eyes rolling or arms akimbo, Cindy would sometimes agree to let me show her something, but the next time I’d see her she’d be right back to doing things the way she had always done them before.

One day, I rode into the arena to find her standing on top of the mounting block, attempting from that position to get her horse to settle close enough that she could get on. But every time she reached for the stirrup, he would swing his neck around and nip her on the calf of the left leg; or else he would swing his quarters away. The horse went round and round the mounting block numerous times. Frustrated, she finally picked up a dressage whip and, reaching over the saddle, began whacking him on the right side of the body in an attempt to discourage him from angling his quarters away.

This quickly made the horse mad. He began rearing, cow-kicking, and striking. Finally he pulled away so hard that he jerked her right off the top of the block. Luckily he did not kick her in the chest as he wheeled and tore away. Doggedly she stood up, dusted herself off, cursed the horse for breaking one of her fingernails, and went and caught him at the far end of the arena. Then she brought him back to the block and with no attempt

to set him up or show him where to settle, she again climbed to the top step with her whip. I then said to her, “Cindy, please stop! You’ve seen me mount Oliver a million times. Have you ever seen me try to position him for mounting with me standing on top of the block?”

“No,” she replied. “You always position him from the ground.”

“That’s right,” I said. “It’s a lot easier to teach the horse to stand still next to the block when I’m not on the block. It gives me a lot more control. So why don’t you take this one step at a time? Show him that you’ll reward him for just doing the one thing; that is, you lead him up to the block and reward him for doing nothing more than just standing still while he’s there. Why don’t you do that?”

“Because,” Cindy harrumphed with a little toss of the head, “MY horse has to grow up sometime.”

Implication: Cindy thinks that Oliver stands quietly because I pamper and mollycoddle him. What she is saying is: “Real cowgirls DEMAND that their horse ‘just do it.’” You can add that one to the list of ways to fail, dear readers.

MORE GOOD WAYS TO FAIL

Oliver, my gelding, came with papers from the Rocky Mountain Horse registry. Although the breed has experienced some growth since its inception, there are still only about 12,000 “Rockies.” Imagine my surprise when, upon moving to a new boarding stable a number of years ago, we found that the horse living in the very next pen was also a Rocky. All Rockies are closely related, descending from only a few 19th- and early 20th-century ancestors. This tends to make them similar to each other not only in appearance but in their aptitude for learning. Oliver was delightfully easy to train and I believe most other Rockies are, too.

The Rocky in the next pen belonged to “Stan.” Stan was not a very skillful rider—having never had a riding lesson, he preferred, like Cindy, to simply demand that his horse do what he had seen other horses do at shows and on TV. One thing Stan liked very much was going fast, and Rockies can indeed move along in a running walk or rack at a pretty good clip. They also canter and gallop, and some of them are as quick off the mark as any Quarter Horse.

Stan had paid good money for his horse, which was well broke and had

good manners. When I first met Stan’s horse, it would readily allow itself to be led up to the mounting block and would stand quietly to be mounted. However—Stan’s horse, like Oliver, was very quick on the uptake. Having an intelligent, trainable horse is a two-edged sword: unless you are careful, the animal may learn the wrong thing. Why is it that so many people have difficulty getting their horses to do what they want them to do, and yet the very same horses learn to open stall latches or untie themselves? Why is it important to be sure that the feed-room is locked? More seriously—how do so many horses learn to bull into the person leading them, duck away from being bridled, or chase the feeder out of their stall?

Stan’s procedure for mounting was, like Cindy’s, to first climb the mounting block and then attempt to position the horse. His Rocky was much more OK about this than Cindy’s horse. Once it came to a stop somewhere within a couple of feet of the block, Stan would reach over, grab the horn, quickly stick his left foot into the stirrup, and throw his right leg over. Then, the moment his butt hit leather, Stan would stick his spurs into the horse’s sides and take off at top speed. Nor at any time after that did he slow down—there was no rest for the horse and no plan or structure to Stan’s rides.

Because Stan did not notice “details,” his horse was free to

FIG. 2



BOGUS IDEAS IN HORSEMANSHIP



set itself up at the block. The first day, I noticed that just before Stan's horse came to a stop, it would untrack slightly with the inside hind leg so that its hindquarters swiveled over a little farther from the block than its shoulders. The first day, the angle was minimal and the distance from the stirrup to the block was about one foot. Stan could easily stretch over this gap in order to get on.

The next day, I noticed that the horse untracked a little more deeply, creating a steeper angle and a little more distance between the top of the block and the stirrup, perhaps eighteen inches. Oblivious to what this signals, Stan just made up for it by reaching over a little farther so as to more or less jump from the top of the block into the saddle.

On the third day—do I need to tell you what happened?—the horse positioned itself still a little farther from the block, with its hindquarters at yet a greater angle. Its timing was wonderful; it waited until Stan's body was exactly in mid-air as he went to leap on before bolting right out from underneath him. Stan hit the dirt with a whump, square on his tailbone with his legs still spread wide apart. He picked himself up with a groan—dusty, embarrassed, bruised—and angry.

Unfortunately, the story does not end there. Although for several more years Stan continued to keep his horse next to

mine, I never saw him ride the gelding again. Stan declined offers of help from me and instead asked a neighbor to come over to help him “retrain” the horse. By now expert in how to time a vigorous exit, the horse spilled this guy too. Stan and his friend then “disciplined” the horse by whipping it with the tail end of a lasso. Two or three of these “lessons” made the horse not only unmountable but taught it to suddenly pull away when being led.

Stan's “accident” was created largely by his insistence on living out a little-boy fantasy (remember how Roy used to grab the horn and step on when Trigger was already moving)? I don't know about Stan's finances, but the \$400 per month it costs to keep a horse at that stable is more than a trivial percentage of my monthly budget. It cost us both the same, but the difference is—every ride on Oliver is delightful fun from start to finish. It took three or four years for Stan to get the gelding which he had ruined sold. During that time, which of us was getting better value for our money?

TASK ANALYSIS: PRINCIPLES

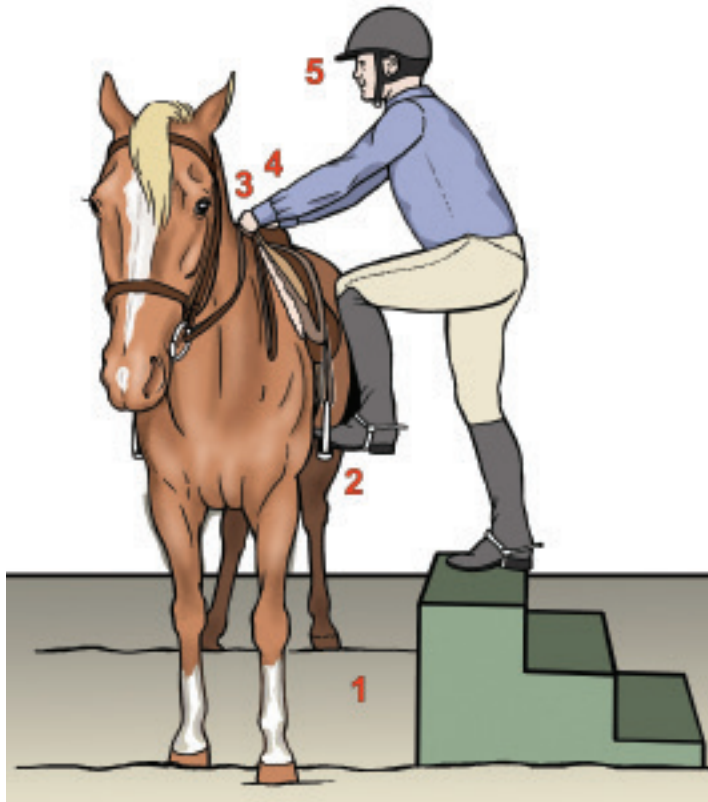
The overall goal in educating a horse is not only to teach him what we expect him to do, but to cause him to want to do it—with enthusiasm, enjoyment, and even a kind of commitment, as if he felt himself to be a partner in important work. My friend Germán Baca, a trainer of champion Peruvian Pasos, sums this up by saying, “A good horse is ashamed to do a bad job.”

The main procedural steps in mounting are: position the horse at the block; grasp mane and reins with left hand; adjust reins so that the right rein is shorter; climb the block; place left foot in left stirrup; grasp right side of pommel or fork with right hand; rider pull her body forward and upward and swing right leg over; quietly sit down; take up the right stirrup; give horse permission to move off.

The above protocol goes into no detail and does not mention common problems. I encourage you to learn task analysis by expanding each step to include specific details, such as exactly where along the crest the rider should grasp mane and reins, exactly where the horse should be positioned relative to the block, or precisely what “taking up the right stirrup” entails. You should also practice envisioning what you're going to do at any given step in case the horse makes a wrong response. What will you do if he comes out of position? How will you respond if he swings his quarters away? Let me give you a major hint: when the horse makes a mistake, think STOP AND SET UP AGAIN rather than “ignore the horse's response and keep trying to mount.”

Instead of writing out the protocol in excruciating detail—that's your homework!—I want to use this space to emphasize the principles of effective teaching. Once you have learned them, your responses to your horse's actions will consistently

FIG. 3



be “correct” —that is to say, useful to you and clarifying to your horse. Furthermore, your teaching will become flexible and creative as you adapt to mounting from a fence or from a rock or ditch when out on a trail ride. The same principles apply, in fact, to teaching any task we might want our horse to perform.

FIRST PRINCIPLE:

Each step in the protocol must be fully mastered before moving on to the next. This begs for what educators call “evaluation.” Ray Hunt encouraged this by saying, “in the last five minutes of your ride, what would you have kept? And what would you have changed?”

How do you know when your horse has mastered a given step? When he consistently performs it correctly upon your request with calm confidence; when you see that he thinks to himself, “Oh, here’s that same set-up again. I know what I’m supposed to do with it!”

SECOND PRINCIPLE:

If at any point the horse seems to “forget” what he is supposed to do, or for any reason shows that he is neither calm nor confident, you must drop back to a step that he can complete

with calm confidence, and begin again from there. Never just “go on”! School yourself to STOP AND SET UP AGAIN when things start to come unraveled.

THIRD PRINCIPLE:

Every identifiable task is itself a step in a larger process; there are always steps “beneath” the step we think we are on. We will not be able to mount the horse from the block if, for example, he does not lead easily; is afraid of the block; has issues with being saddled or girthed; is afraid of the stirrups banging against his side; objects to our boot touching his side; is afraid of arms, legs, or objects reaching over his back; feels trapped; is worried by something in the immediate area, or has his mind focused on leaving. It is extremely helpful before beginning work with the mounting block if the horse has already mastered stepping up onto a circus drum, platform, or a plank or sturdy jump-pole set securely in place on the ground (this is called “stick work”).

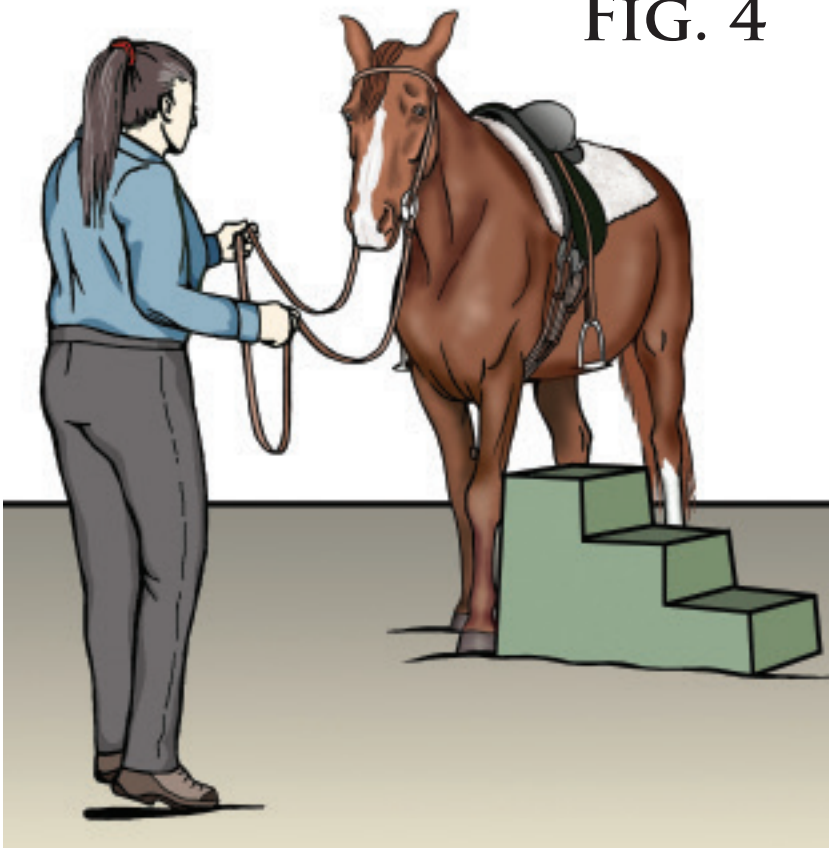
In short, task analysis demands that we think back through the whole checklist of competencies—ultimately arriving back to that first moment when the foal and the human first looked into each other’s eyes. To me, this constitutes an awesome level of responsibility and a huge challenge, because even if you raised your horse yourself, you know you made some mistakes along the way which caused confusion and uncertainty. Every time they manifest you must notice and address them: see Principle Number Two.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE:

Learn how to create good set-ups. In the early 19th century, horsemanship genius François Baucher said, “Your goal should be to set the horse up for each movement in such a way that the movement not only occurs, but is inevitable.” This is the ultimate source of Ray Hunt’s repeated admonition to “prepare the horse to get him into position” before trying to do anything.

Practice at task analysis will open your eyes: you begin perceiving that even small movements of your body influence the horse’s responses (Fig. 4). As your focus shifts from the gross to the fine, it will become important to you to know which of his legs the horse is standing on, because he cannot easily pick up a weighted foot. Your horse will take the exact steps (literal steps) that you request only when you learn to request that he pick up the foot that he was going to pick up anyway. Tom Dorrance expressed this to me when I begged him to teach me how to teach my horse to lie down. Tom said: “Debbie—when you see that Painty Horse is about to lie down, then tell him to lie down!”

FIG. 4



BOGUS IDEAS IN HORSEMANSHIP



SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES:

Define the task, break it up into small components that the horse can master one at a time, set the horse up for each component, ask him to respond, then evaluate what he does. This is what it means to “observe, remember, and compare.” Generously reward correct responses while ignoring wrong responses. “Always reward the smallest change and the slightest try.”

ILLUSTRATIONS – EXERCISES IN TASK ANALYSIS

Each picture is meant as an exercise to help you get better at task analysis and learn the principles of effective teaching. Read my commentary and respond to the questions that go with each picture. Answers are given at the end of the article.

Fig. 1 Do you see anything in this picture that could make it difficult for the rider to mount? Notice that the block is tilting – it’s rocking and making a noise. The rider could have taken a few seconds to set the block up on more level ground, but she didn’t. The horse, a three-year-old Arabian, is finding this worrisome. List five things that the horse is doing which signal that he is afraid of the mounting block.

The rider is doing the right thing by grasping mane with her left hand (rather than holding the pommel) and grasping the pommel (rather than the cantle) with her right hand. She’s also doing right by looking at her horse (and hopefully noticing his signs of fear). Questions: 1. Where do you think the horse’s body will be by the time the rider gets both of her feet planted on the top step; in other words, will the horse settle within six inches of the block, or will it likely be farther away than that? 2. If he settles a couple of feet away, should the rider consider that “good enough” and just stretch over the gap and get on anyway?

Fig. 2 The camera caught this wreck in progress: the Warmblood gelding has reared, shied hard to the right, and started to take off. The rider, clutching hard at reins and saddle, has been jerked right off the block and is about to get her britches dirty. Questions: 1. The photo reveals a major error in the rider’s thinking—and thus in the set-up she creates. What is that error? 2. While the rider was climbing up the steps of the block this horse was already giving signs of discomfort. Please list five. Of these, which was the first to appear?

Fig. 3 This horse calmly accepts being mounted from the block and has settled with weight evenly distributed on his feet. This much is good, but nonetheless the picture shows five errors which we would want to change (numbered). Please name or explain each.

Fig. 4 This picture shows me walking slowly backwards as I lead Oliver forward, asking him to take one literal step at a time as I set him up at the mounting block. Questions: 1. Oliver’s weight is just coming on to which front foot? 2. Which front

foot will he find it easy to lift next? 3. Notice that my body is tilted slightly to my right and that my left hand is raised. What does this signal the horse to do? 4. How close is Oliver’s left forelimb to the block? 5. How many more steps forward will I ask Oliver to take before allowing him to settle? In other words, where do I want my left stirrup to be relative to the top step of the block? 6. What does Oliver’s facial expression say to you? 7. Once I allow Oliver to settle, I will walk up to him, pet him softly on the neck, put the reins over his head, grasp mane and reins with left hand, and use right hand to shorten both reins (but the right rein a little more). What will I do immediately after that? 8. If Oliver were to “come unsettled” and start moving while I was in the process of climbing up the block, what will I respond by doing?

Fig. 5 This rider is doing a lot of things that we love to see. Questions: 1. How close is the horse to the mounting block? 2. How close is the rider’s body to the body of her horse? 3. Are the reins adjusted to equal length? 4. The rider has ahold of the right rein, even though she is simultaneously doing something else with her right hand. What is that other thing? 5. What does the horse’s facial expression convey to you? 6. Does it look like the horse is preparing to move? Is his tail quiet? How is he standing? 7. When the rider goes to put her foot into the stirrup, where will her toe be? What could she have done to prevent this and make the set-up even better?

Fig. 6 This rider has a wide homemade mounting block to work from. Questions: 1. The number “1” on the picture indicates that the rider’s toes are facing forward – parallel to the horse’s body—especially the toe that’s in the stirrup. Is this a desirable thing, and if so, why? 2. The number “2” on the picture indicates that the horse could have been asked to settle farther forward. Why would this be desirable? 3. What is the problem indicated by number “3”? 4. What’s the problem at “4”? 5. What’s the problem at “5”? 6. What does the shape of the horse’s tail say to you?

Fig. 7 This image shows a second attempt by the previous rider, and represents a nearly perfect set-up. 1. How has the placement of the rider’s right foot on the top step of the block changed? 2. How has the position of the horse relative to the block changed? How can you tell whether he is likely to move? 3. What is the rider grasping with her left hand? 4. What is she grasping with her right hand? 5. What is she looking at? 6. Are the reins adjusted to equal length? 7. What does the shape of the horse’s tail say?

Fig. 8 Here’s a picture of me and Ollie just after I had mounted him from the block. Questions: 1. Where are Oliver’s front feet relative to the block? 2. Where is my left stirrup relative to the block? 3. Even though I’m settled in the saddle, the picture shows that there is something that I haven’t done yet. What is that? 4. I’m smiling and talking to the photographer. What’s the MOST important thing that I am doing?

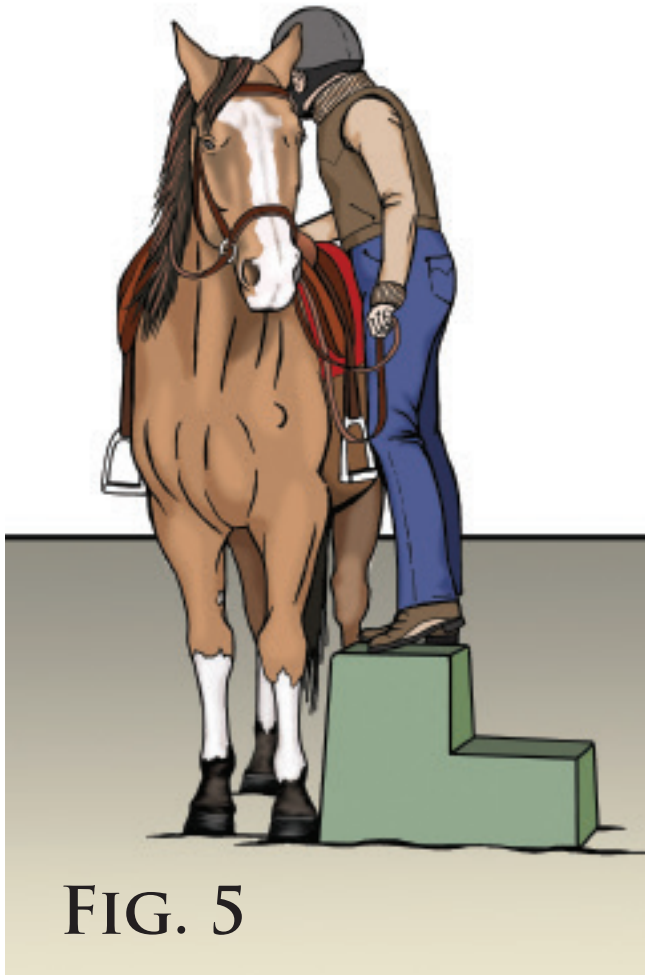


FIG. 5

FIG. 6

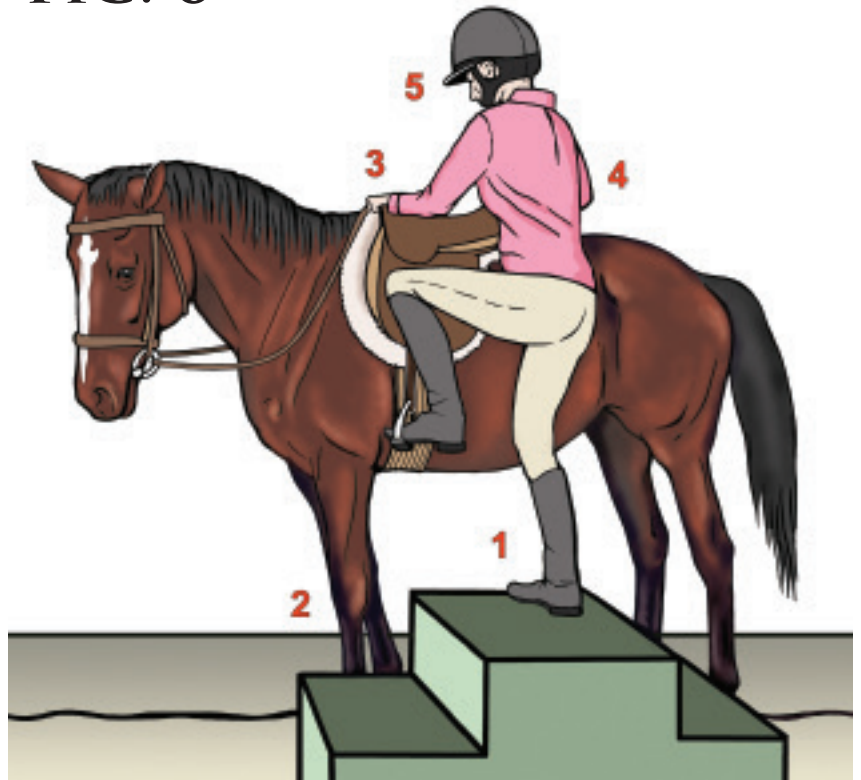
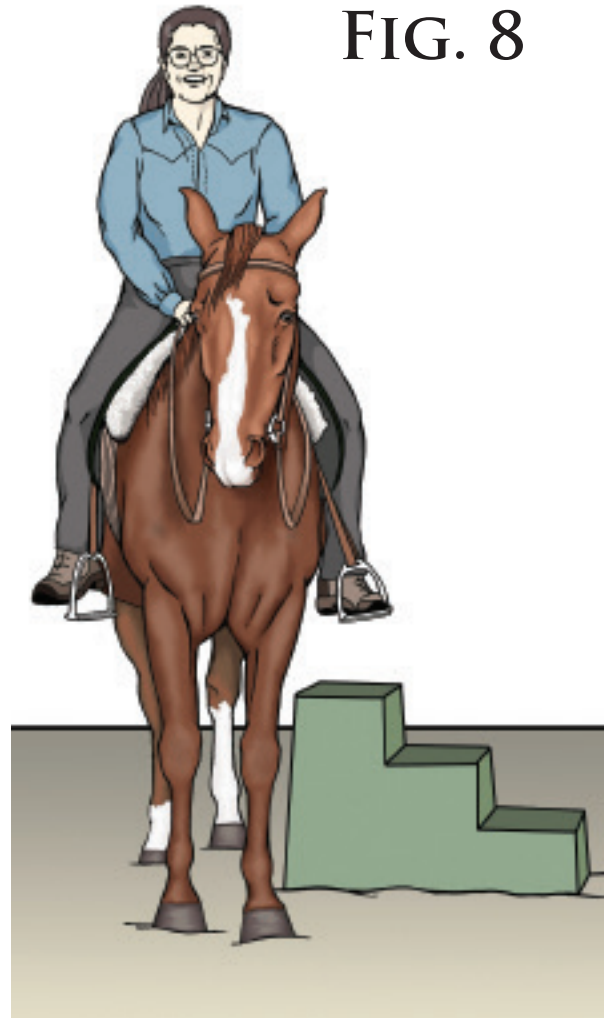
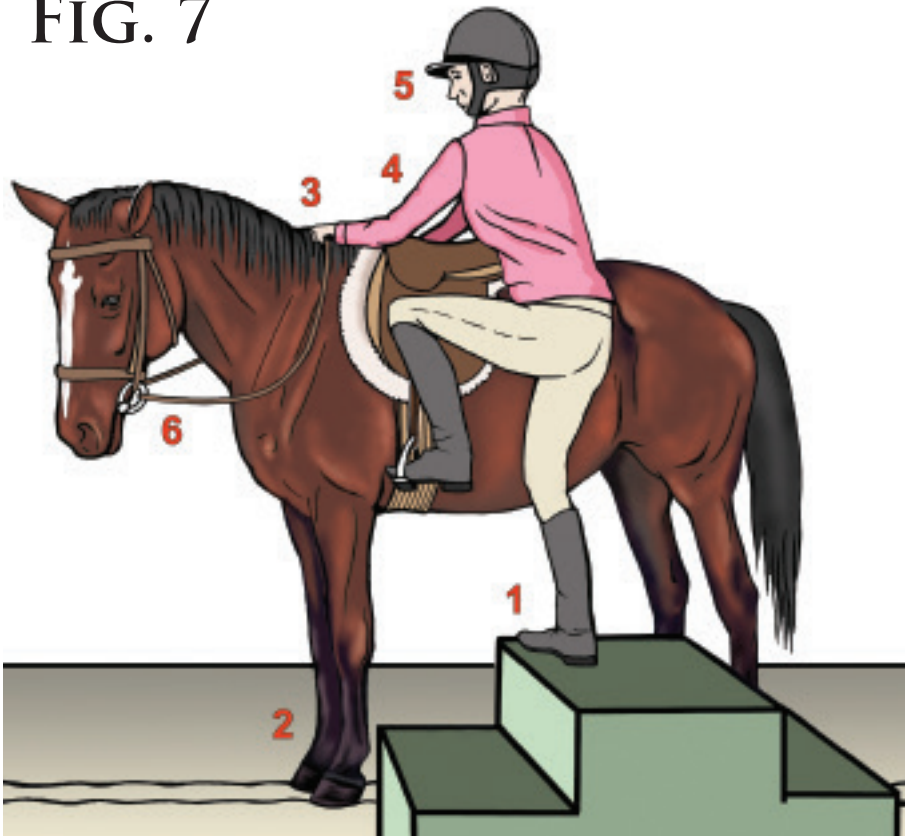


FIG. 8

FIG. 7



BOGUS IDEAS IN HORSEMANSHIP



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS: (FROM PAGE 10)

1. (a) He stares at what he's afraid of. (b) His breathing becomes audible. He flares his nostrils; blows; gets a "roller in his nose". (c) He leans away from the block. (d) He swishes his tail. (e) He untracks (brings the inside hind leg across under his belly), which (as soon as he puts his left hind foot down) will cause his hindquarters to wheel away. Questions: (1) Farther away. (2) Absolutely not! She should get down off the block and set the horse up again, using the technique shown in Figure 4. If the horse has not previously been taught how to step up on a drum or do "stick work," then these skills should be mastered first. Bottom line: this girl's real problem is not mounting.

2. (1) She thinks that it's a good idea to confine the horse so as to "make" him let her get on. Many people will create a narrow alleyway, thinking that this will keep the horse from wheeling its quarters away and force it to stand nearer the block—but a trapped horse is a scared horse. The gelding shows that his rider is blind to his discomfort and has not made it a priority to help him feel "100% OK on the inside" BEFORE she attempts to mount.

(2) More than five ways: horse's body feels stiff and hard; breathing becomes audible; tossing head; moving feet, unable to settle; swishing tail; horse's eyes and mind focused far ahead because he wants to be "out of there." Almost always, the first negative sign to appear is that the horse's breathing becomes audible. Signs of discomfort here are so blatant that I suspect that the horse needs to be re-started beginning with approach, coming at call, petting and grooming, saddling, girthing, haltering, leading, and bridling. Bottom line: this rider's real problem is not with mounting.

3. (1) Horse is not standing right next to the block, forcing rider to step/reach way over and almost "jump" on. (2) Rider's toes are facing forward, causing her to jab horse in the ribs. (3) Rider grips pommel with her left hand. (4) Rider grips cantle with her right hand. When the rider's right hand grips the cantle, to make room for her right leg swinging over she will have to move it anyway. Using a forward grip on the right pommel or fork gives much better leverage and greatly reduces the possibility of twisting the saddle as the rider pulls herself up. (5) Rider is not looking at her horse; her eyes are focused into the distance and her mind is "elsewhere."

4. (1) Left. (2) Right. (3) To weight his left hoof and lift his right hoof. (4) Brushing right up against it. (5) One or two—so that the left stirrup hangs not over the block but slightly ahead of it. (6) Oliver's focus is entirely on me, and his expression shows his intention to do exactly what I ask. Horses are even better at task analysis than we are! (7) I will step up onto the mounting block. 8. I will climb down off the mounting block, take the reins back over his neck, lead the horse off on a wide circle, then come back to the block and set him up again. And I commit to doing this as many times as necessary until the horse realizes that the thing he's primarily being rewarded for doing is simply standing stock still when positioned near the block. When he understands that to be his job, he'll stand there quietly whether I am on the ground, climbing the block, putting my foot into the stirrup, swinging over, or fishing for my right stirrup.

5. (1) Very close, almost touching. (2) Very close. (3) The outside rein is shorter. Shortening the right rein makes it difficult for the horse to untrack with its left hind leg, and

a shortened right rein—or at most a well-timed tug on this rein—is all that is necessary to discourage most horses from wheeling their quarters away. (4) Petting and rubbing the horse's croup or areas on the right side of his body. (5) He's enjoying the pet-and-rub. (6) He's not thinking of moving at all. Tail quiet, feet square. (7) Poking him in the ribs with her toe. An easy fix is to set the horse up so he's one or two steps farther forward relative to the top step of the block.

6. (1) Because it prevents poking the horse in the ribs with the toe of your left boot, which the horse can easily misinterpret as a request to move. (2) Because it guarantees that your boot will go into the stirrup parallel to his body. It also tends to draw the rider's right hip and body closer to the horse, so that mounting becomes more a movement from back to front than from left side to right side. (3) Pommel grip. (4) Cantle grip. (5) Looking down at ground, rather than at the horse. (6) Lifted; kink in the tailbone; somewhat uncomfortable; "questioning".

7. (1) Moved forward. (2) Moved forward. His forefeet are planted square (compare to Fig. 6). (3) Mane and reins. (4) The right pommel or fork. (5) She's looking at her horse's expression so as to enable her to evaluate his intentions, responses and reactions. (6) The outside rein is shorter. (7) Quiet.

8. (1) About one foot ahead of it. (2) About one inch ahead of it. 3. I haven't picked up my right stirrup. I am in no great hurry to do this because it will involve a certain amount of fishing around—some commotion or "unquietude" on my part. Rather than have my horse misunderstand this as a signal to move, I sit down and then just wait, conveying that I am not asking for movement. (4) The most important thing I am doing is Nothing. In educating a horse, Nothing is one of the biggest "somethings." I am offering Oliver Nothing, capital "N," which is another way to say, I am making zero demands of him, and, as cowboys say, I am "putting a lot of 'wait' on my horse." The lesson I am conveying—again—is that the primary thing Oliver is being rewarded for is standing stock-still, balanced and at ease, whenever he's near the mounting block.

I will eventually pick up the right stirrup—somewhere between twenty seconds to a minute after I have sat down. If Oliver moves off before I ask him to, it will not hurt a thing for me not to have my feet in both stirrups. In fact, I don't want my feet in the stirrups at all if the horse is going to bolt or do anything else extreme. After I finally put my right foot in, I wait some more before I request that my horse move off. I don't wait so long that he gets tired of it and starts thinking of moving off before I give him permission; there's a window of time when it is right for the rider to suggest that the horse move off.

When we depart, it will be at a quiet walk. Only when we're well clear of the block will I ask Oliver to take up a vigorous walk. In short, I arrange it so that all the real work happens somewhere away from the block. This tends to make the block a real desirable place that the horse looks forward to standing quietly by.

Notice that my reins are slack. If Oliver were still learning to stand still, I'd set up a closer feel so that if he moved his feet, I could remind him almost immediately to stop them. Either way, we will move off on the slackest rein possible. I do not want to have to stop him with the reins; my goal is to create a set-up for mounting that is so thorough that Oliver would not think of leaving without me. I want my horse to stand because he knows it is expected of him, not because he is trapped or held in position.

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF EQUINE BEHAVIOR ~ PART 1



Dr. Robert Miller (l) and Lester Buckley (r). Photo by Mary Buckley.

A CONVERSATION WITH DR. ROBERT M. MILLER AND LESTER BUCKLEY

Edited by Katherine Rosback

Last September I videoed a discussion between Dr. Robert M. Miller and Lester Buckley. This conversation took place prior to an Equine Behavior Symposium led by Dr. Miller and Mr. Buckley in Kentucky. The following article contains excerpts from a DVD that will be released later this year.

Lester Buckley:

Bob, we have been working together for 25 years and you have lectured on the "10 Principles" for most of this time. These principles are so important in the way they affect how we live, work with, raise, and ride our horses. We will be talking about this in our symposium tomorrow, but I thought we could take this quiet moment and explore them more deeply. Usually we will start with the first principle, which is that the horse's primary defense is flight.

Dr. Miller:

I spent the first half of my career working with all species. I did a lot of zoo and circus work—even sea mammals—as well as horses. In veterinary school, we only worked with 6 domesticated animals and now I was working with countless different animals, so I had to think things out. By working with those other species and trying to understand them, I found that if I looked at an animal's natural habitat and how evolution adapted them to that habitat, I could understand them. Assessing their

primary defense mechanism helped me to understand and safely work with each of the species.

I found that, if you look at the anatomy of any creature, you could evaluate their primary defense (there are usually a variety). For example, in cattle you see one weapon: horns. That is their primary defense. The alternate defense might be flight or to kick. When we look at a porcupine or a skunk, it is obvious what their primary defense is! The wolf's one weapon is the tooth. In the case of the horse, you see a grazing animal that lives in a herd group. It doesn't have horns. Its primary defense is flight, instantaneous high-speed flight. And how far they run when they are frightened is slightly farther than a lion can charge.

It is important to understand that we are not a flight animal. What's our primary defense? We are tool-using species. The whip? That's our instinct. But we have to understand that if we are trying to communicate with a flight species, we have to modify our behavior and not resort to what instinct tells us. Understanding them helps protect us and helps us communicate without intimidating them.



CONVERSATIONS

Lester Buckley:

Another principle that you talk about is the perceptivity of the horse. We've discussed how horses notice our eyes, our posture, where we are looking, or if we are looking away. When you were starting those colts back in the 1950s, that first day you would sit outside the roundpen and not even look at them. Can you share more about that principle?

Dr. Miller:

Perceptivity. If you are going to stay alive by running away from anything that frightens you and that you don't understand, you've got to detect it. The horse is the most perceptive of any domestic animal—it is far more perceptive than we are! When I first started working with those colts, I didn't even look at them. These colts were wild and had just been isolated into a pen, separated from the herd. They were frantic! They were running around and around, looking for a way out. If you step into a pen with a horse that has never been handled, there is invariably fear. All I did was sit for 15 minutes with my back to them. By the end of the 15 minutes, they had stopped running. They are still apprehensive, they are looking at me, their ears were forward—but they stopped the flight. That was the first day's lesson.

In the second day's lesson, I went into the pen with them and this time I sat facing them. They didn't run away anymore. They had learned the day before that flight is not necessary. But they are still afraid and concerned. On the third day, I get on my feet and start to walk around. Then I put a rope on them. By the end of the third day, whichever way I pull, they are starting to face me, because they are more comfortable.

Lester Buckley:

This is key when we approach horses. It is important to understand that some horses we approach are quite confident and gregarious—they'll come right to us. Others are more hesitant, but if we give them a bit of grace, wait and don't force them, their curiosity will come back and say, "Now you look friendly."

Dr. Miller:

That is what horse training is all about: comfort and discomfort. Discomfort does not have to be infliction of pain; it can be mild discomfort. Comfort does not have to be a delicious food reward. It can be simply just stepping back and facing away, in a non-predatory position. If you look at hunting dogs, lions, and leopards, they crouch and they stare. The horse interprets that as a charge coming. Its instinct is to run away from it. So, if we just become more casual by looking 45 degrees away from the horse and maybe stand with our weight on one leg, that relieves the fear and desire to run.

Lester Buckley:

So what does perceptivity mean to us as riders or folks who handle horses?

Dr. Miller:

The important thing to understand is why horses are so exceptionally perceptive. In the wild state, the animal that is not perceptive is the one that does not stay alive to reproduce. The horse has the same five senses we do: vision, hearing, sense of taste, sense of smell, and sense of touch. But they are extremely refined.

It's impossible for us (being a fight species) to identify with the perceptivity of the horse. It is just like we can't possibly identify with the sense of smell of the dog. We can appreciate it and respect it, but we can't identify with it. The same is true of the horse.

Horses are so perceptive, they can read our facial expression. If we are tense, if our fists are clenched, the horse interprets that as predatory. Even if we fake it, the horse picks up on that. They have a sense of what we are feeling, whether we are on their back or on the ground. If we are tense, that concerns the horse.

Lester Buckley:

Another principle that we should visit about is what is unique about the horse's response time.

Dr. Miller:

That goes back to #1: the flight instinct of the horse. All nine of the next principles go back to one. The horse is a large and powerful and strong animal, but it is also very fearful. This makes sense. The faster you see, feel or smell something and respond to it, the more chances you have of staying alive! Those with a slow reaction time, they did not live to reproduce.

This fast reaction time has made the horse useful to the human being because of this speed and reactivity. But it has also made the horse dangerous to the human being; they can move faster than we can.

Lester Buckley:

There were two different times, once with a gelding and once with a stallion, where I got to experience that. Both horses had a couple weeks of training. I approached the stallion and I had the scent of a dominant stallion on my glove. When I got to a certain distance from the stallion and I let him reach out to smell me, I heard the intake snort that a stallion will do sometimes. I was looking straight at him to make sure I didn't miss anything [after hearing that sound], and his front foot came up and struck me through the eye so fast that I couldn't see it. All I heard was the "WHACK." It was that fast.

It happened the same way with a gelding. I had snugged up

a rope to help him face up a little bit quicker. I remember seeing him pin his ears and then he came down through the rope and I am looking straight at him to not miss a thing, and all I heard was the “whack.”

That is how fast they move—you can't even see the leg coming! This just stresses the importance of the quick response time. On the one side of the coin, it gives us beautiful movements if we are training a cutting horse, dressage horse, or jumper. On the other side, it stresses the importance of getting a read on what has yet to happen.

Dr. Miller:

Absolutely.

Lester Buckley:

Your third principle deals with the rapid desensitization or “speed of learning.” Why is this important to us as riders and horsemen or, more importantly, why is it important to the horse?

Dr. Miller:

Imagine, for a wild horse, seeing tumbleweed for the first time on a windy day. It is terrifying! But they are quickly desensitized to the point where they totally ignore it. If they didn't desensitize, they'd be running all the time! There would be no time to eat, drink, rest, or reproduce. In the wild state, the horse has to quickly desensitize to things they are frightening or don't understand.

We can utilize this in domestication and training horses, if properly trained. Because if this is improperly trained, it can increase their fear.

Lester Buckley:

That's a key point. We can habituate horses in a relatively short time if it is done properly.



Lester Buckley instructing at the Equine Behavior Symposium. Photo by Dede Jones.

It's important to know when to remove the stimulus and know when to keep it going. That is our responsibility as stewards to shape the horse and to not overload them, but not to quit too early.

Given that we just talked about their speed of learning, we probably should explore the memory of the horse.

Dr. Miller:

Horses have an incredible memory. Because it is a flight animal, the horse has one of the best memories of any domesticated animal. In my experience, it even has better memories than humans in many ways. To survive, they have to remember how to respond to an alarming or frightening stimulus that they don't understand. Horses with bad memories got eaten.

This superb memory is one of the reasons why that first experience that any horse has with a trainer or any human is so, so important. A horse will always remember it. If the horse had a traumatic experience, say the first time that the foot is worked on, the horse will never forget that. You may overcome the fear reaction, but you don't erase it.

That means the first thing we do with the horse for the first time in its life: the first time that it is haltered, that it is led, that it's foot is worked on, that you take it's temperature, that you put a saddle on its back. It means the first everything. The horse will never forget. You have to make that as gentle and as acceptable—the horse has to accept it—as possible. And that is the essence of horsemanship that you teach and preach.

Lester Buckley:

Some people think that the way you teach a horse to stand tied up is just to tie them up one day. Often that doesn't work out well at all. The horse gets afraid and they become claustrophobic and the reasoning is gone and they just sit back, and they break the lead rope or whatever they are tied to. That bad experience is in there for life.

Normally when we were starting horses, they wouldn't even be halter broke. We would just offer them a feel and get them to following us around. We'd saddle and get on and ride them and get them to follow us around on a day-to-day basis. After about 6 weeks, you can lay the lead rope over a fence and at about 7 weeks—after not even ever working on tying a horse—they have learned to follow this feel just as by-product of riding. Then one day you can put a knot on it. They get to the end of that feel and they come right back. It is just not a big deal.

Dr. Miller

Yes. Even some of the mechanical devices that teach horses to tie are better in not traumatizing a horse. The Blocker Tie Ring or other elastic devices—friction allows the horse to pull back and back and finally, it is still tied! But it hasn't hurt or traumatized itself. The horse yields. Those methods are better than tying a horse and letting it fight itself, traumatize, or injure itself. I have seen lots of horses in my veterinary career who have crippled themselves with neck injuries or permanent injuries.

Editor's Note: Look for a discussion of the remaining principles in a future issue.



This Is Why We Call It The UH OH RANCH

By Cosette Moormans

“This is why we call it the Uh Oh ranch!” I heard Mindy say with a laugh. I could appreciate the irony as my colt gave one last buck before deciding it was easier just to move forward off my legs.

I still laugh thinking about it. Likely most any novice rider could ride the few bucks of protest that had come when I asked for a trot. But I classified myself as “greener than green,” a term I didn’t fully realize the accuracy of until my first days at the ranch. Day one I was put on one of the most solid horses there—a 19-year-old named Jack—and about came off when he took a simple turn at a trot in the arena. Next was Clifford the roan draft horse. If he so much as tripped, I fixed to fly between his ears and just barely kept my balance by pushing on the back of the saddle horn.

If Mindy was concerned by the soft-spoken greenie who landed on her doorstep, she did a marvelous job not showing it. Instead she took every opportunity to work on both the “soft spoken” and the “greenie” portions, as well as identifying and challenging other areas where I needed to grow.

Serious doubts set in just a few hours into that first morning at Uh Oh ranch. I wondered more than a hundred times that day how on earth I got the scholarship. I felt like a ridiculously slow learner and though I hate to admit it, it was very challenging for me to adjust to the new “classroom” and my new teacher. Most of the time I felt overwhelmed. It isn’t hard to be intimidated by Mindy Bower. Mindy is a skilled, hands-on instructor who does not waste words. Safety and the betterment of all parties involved are her top priorities. She aims to instill “awareness” and “common sense” and emphasizes these concepts constantly as she instructs. I laugh while writing this because in many ways I could also be describing my parents, who spent 18 years educating me and my siblings at

home. I imagine after years of rehashing these same ideas, they may be relieved to have outside help reinforcing the lessons they strove so hard to instill.

I constantly wondered whether I would make it through to the end of my stay. When I applied for the scholarship, I had wondered how many times one was allowed to apply. It never occurred to me I would get in the first time. So, I struggled with feeling that it was all an unfortunate mistake for everyone involved that I was now a scholarship recipient. I was sure Mindy saw the error the committee had made, and even if she graciously tolerated it for a while, would eventually tell me that I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and that I was far from ready to be there.

How wrong I was!

My pride was feeding my fear of being vulnerable with my own inexperience. I had to recognize that no one is ever “too much of a beginner” to learn.



Learning to work a colt off of another horse. Photo by Mindy Bower.

Fortunately for me, Mindy Bower doesn't give her students much time to think about insecurities. Dare I say she doesn't give you much time to think about anything except the task at hand. That is a beautiful thing! Living in the moment is something that modern society has lost. I'm the worst at being so caught up in a million fears and worries and plans and thoughts that have everything to do with anything but the present. If that last sentence was confusing and stretched...well, that's kind of my point. My mind gets as scattered as the tenses I try to live in and I lose sight of the importance of keeping myself in the present. Yet that is how animals operate. So how could I expect to gain even the slightest ground if I'm unable to stay with them in the moment?

Mythril (my rescue mule) certainly agreed, if I couldn't even keep up with him mentally there was no way I was trustworthy enough to keep up with him period. Could I blame him?

About halfway into the first week I bribed Mythril over to the arena (bribing being an intricate process of using Gimli—my formerly Amish mule—and food and very timid body language to try to give some sort of direction to his trajectory once leaving the enclosure). If Mindy was already skeptical about me then, I figured once Mythril came into the picture it'd be the proverbial "nail in the coffin."

Once in the arena we lasted perhaps thirty seconds before he got tight and pulled away. Thanks to Audrey's help early on in my journey, he was slightly easier to catch and more reasonable in general than when I first got him. That itself is a testament to how deep the waters were that I'd gotten myself into when acquiring these two mules. I glanced over despite the rising heat on my face, but couldn't read Mindy. She just motioned for me to hand her the lead rope once I'd caught him for the third time in the last five minutes.

"He's a pro," Mindy said with a wry grin, as despite much more assertive efforts at keeping him with her, he pulled away from her too and trotted with his head held high to the far end of the arena. I didn't feel like grinning, even slightly. If he could pull away from Mindy Bower, then it must be hopeless. I wish I could say I wasn't this self-absorbed, but unfortunately all my insecurities just led me down the rabbit hole of feeling completely out of place and very out of sorts. I had been focused on fixing Mythril. I was going to fix him, miracle or no miracle. And yet now, the idea of ever "fixing" him now seemed as absurd as my presence on the ranch in the first place.

I had overlooked a very important fact, the fact that I might be the one who needed fixing.

It was more than my skill (or lack thereof) when it came to horsemanship, that needed work. I eventually came to realize that the root of my behavior was my own selfishness and pride. While I thought I was being humble and realistic, I was actually being self-focused and letting my fears get the best of me.



Finding straightness out on the snowy prairie. Photo by Mindy Bower.

Selfishness dampened my awareness and kept me from seeing beyond myself and recognizing the needs around me, especially the needs of Mythril. My pride kept me focused on what others thought of me and prevented me from giving myself fully to anyone or any situation. It was inhibiting my ability to live vulnerably in the moment and thwarting my ability to learn and grow. I had to recognize these unhealthy patterns and change. The first was almost simple to do—the second not quite as easy, but absolutely necessary.

Those were my problems when arriving at Uh Oh Ranch. And coming to that realization ultimately confirmed for me that I was exactly where I was supposed to be. I had to get past my convoluted perspective as a first step toward dealing with the heart of the issue—my mindset needed to change.

Bit by bit, and day by day, I recognized that my initial perspective and the things that challenged me when working with Mindy had mostly to do with these weaknesses and my need for maturing. After days of speculating if I would survive the feelings of intimidation, frustration and helplessness, I realized that if I didn't toughen up and change quickly, I would miss the opportunity of a lifetime. Though relatively young at age 19, perhaps I had bought into the notion that change takes a long time. I didn't have a long time. My parents told me many times over the years that we can never change anyone else. We can only change ourselves. I was finally understanding. Change, at least in myself, could be as instantaneous as I wanted it to be. And it had to start in my heart and mind.

As my perspective changed, so too did my appreciation for the new environment and Mindy's very direct and pointed approach. She was shaping not only my horsemanship but my character as well. The time when Mythril first pulled away from Mindy (it wasn't to be the last for either of us) seemed an omen of the end of my horsemanship journey. Now as I look back, I see it was simply another beginning.

We got Mythril back to the round pen and I received some

SHARING OUR STORIES



lessons in roping. I spent the largest portion of that time missing whatever I was aiming for, but what a mixed feeling of relief and satisfaction when my loop finally caught! Then we worked on everything we could from the ground, setting it up so that I could “help him leave” when Mythril thought about leaving, and encourage him to stay when he chose to. In the smaller confines of the round pen I had a better chance of “getting with him” more quickly. We did a lot of catching him and then turning him loose. Then there was lots of saddling and bridling prep, working with the flag—helping us both to gain confidence in a variety of areas. Mindy set me up with a lead rope that was long enough to keep ahold of him from anywhere in the round pen; this helped him learn that leaving wasn’t always the answer. When doing the groundwork, as he would go to leave, Mindy would coach me to time up with his feet: letting him move away and then bracing across my hips and giving a firm bump so that he would hit the end of the lead rope. She emphasized to me how critical it was to not let him find out how much I actually weigh. As long as I would use a bump or anchor myself to let him hit the end of the lead rope without applying steady and constant pressure, I could be fairly effective if he didn’t figure out that he could still pull me around just like before.

We worked on this from the ground for the first week. I would catch or, if I could, rope him out of his pen and lead

him through the corrals to the round pen. There I’d work on all the basic groundwork and if it went well, would build on it. Sometimes I’d take him to the arena with everyone else and try to work him there, using the smaller pen at the back of the arena to work from square one again if I was having trouble. This trouble spot would persist, but we could layer a lot of good experience where he was able to find peace staying with a human. Then, hopefully, he’d start searching for peace with me before searching for it somewhere else (e.g. at the other end of the arena.)

After observing and working with us both, Mindy decided the best place for me to continue working with him would probably be on his back. I remembered how light and easy he had felt to me when I first rode him just before we bought him. I was curious after riding some of Mindy’s other truly light horses, how he would feel to me now. It had, after all, been two years since the last time I’d ridden him.

He got really tight as soon as I got on but moved off quietly, if somewhat braced, when I asked. I picked up one rein and he turned as light as a feather...and as stiff as a board. While he was responsive it was just shy of reactive, complying out of worry more than anything. It was as if there was something simmering under the surface but stayed trapped there like a pressure cooker.



Riding Mythril in the round pen at the Uh Oh Ranch. Photo by Emily Kitching.

I didn’t really register all of this at the time. What I did sense, I could hardly have put into words. Mainly I was just ecstatic to finally be on him again.

I rode him around rather aimlessly for a few minutes at which point Mindy told me to support him by giving him more direction: “He’s going to forget you are up there if you don’t get busy,” she cautioned. I walked some figure-eights around the tires which highlighted a particular brace he had on the left side. He would lean when I picked up on that rein and it was a challenge to get to his hindquarters. When the steering improved slightly Mindy suggested I ask for a trot. As soon as I closed my legs he got really tight, but didn’t respond right away. When I asked with a little more pressure he broke into a trot, but I lost him mentally and the mutual feeling between us quickly turned to panic. He sought support and I was too nervous to think about doing anything but holding on. He didn’t do anything silly except to trot off as if he were pulling away, but this time I was on his back and with me getting tight and compromising my balance, he got increasingly worried and everything just escalated. Mindy called out to bend him and once I finally got the nerve to let go of the saddle horn and shorten

up on one rein, we eventually wound down to a stop.

We went back to steering at the walk. Mindy did for me what I was failing to do for Mythril—she supported and directed me, and in turn helped me be available to do the same for him. I so value step-by-step, minutely specific direction and it came as a shock to me that I didn't even consider that the equine would be seeking something similar from me. Not only had it not even occurred to me how much more I need to be there for them, I wasn't terribly good at it either! When we ran into trouble I'd be more likely to get them deeper in it because of my own reactions or poor riding skills than help them work through it.

Things simmered down after that little jaunt and when I put him back in his pen we both felt more confident and peaceful. It was such a small step, but in the long run it was still an important lesson, for me especially.

The next couple of weeks were fairly busy at the ranch, riding most of the day with Mindy, Amanda, another scholarship recipient and Kinsee, a working student who had been in Reata's colt starting class the last semester at MSU. Much of my learning came as the result of making mistakes and subsequently learning how to both avoid them in the future and instead make different ones.

I was now able to ride Mythril almost daily, though he would still pull away at least once nearly every time we did groundwork. It increasingly felt he was using it as an excuse rather than due to actual fear, since we were both gaining confidence in each other. Ray, a builder who had been working at a job site next door to the ranch for the last two years, had been hanging around the arena during his breaks. Mindy enlisted his help to get us over the next speed bump.

The goal was to carry over the progress we'd made from the round pen to the arena, where it was harder to back ourselves up in helping Mythril to stay. Consistency was critical at this step. Since the lead rope was about 20 feet long, it bought us some time when he went to leave. We still couldn't keep ahold of him the whole time like we could in the round pen. Mindy was very creative. There was enough rope for her to hold the portion closest to Mythril and do groundwork while Ray held the rest. As soon as Mythril went to pull away, Mindy dropped her part of the lead rope and Ray leaned back and anchored himself on his end. We jokingly called it sand skiing. Since the footing was sandy, Ray was able to stay on his feet and skid along with him, but the length of the rope kept him a safe distance away from Mythril's hind feet. This was a big surprise to Mythril as the pressure didn't let off but actually came with him. After traveling about ten yards he spun around and stopped. Then they started the process all over and repeated as many times as necessary.

Ray helped all that evening. The next day it was my turn. Without the foundation that had been laid, this scheme may not have succeeded. At this point Mythril was learning that leaving



Riding at the Buck Brannaman clinic in Kiowa, Colo. Photo by Emily Kitching.

would mean more work. With a weight dragging along behind him, he simply didn't get the release he was expecting. After a few more days of this sand skiing, Mythril turned a corner.

To help with the annual branding, the Dickenson family drove up from Okalahoma and spent a week. Between brandings, Aaron Dickenson spent an evening working with Mythril and me. He added a whole different dimension to how we were approaching things. His advice was to let go of Mythril if I couldn't keep ahold of him, and help him to leave faster simply by dropping the lead rope before he could feel himself hitting the end of it. He suggested doing this for a while in the round

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pen first where I could back myself up before moving to a larger enclosure. He also spent a lot of time working with Mythril trying to lead him without anything on, just by using his hands on Mythril's face. If Mythril gave to the pressure of his hands, then he rewarded it by releasing; if he resisted and left, Aaron helped him to go. By the end of the evening, you could lead Mythril all over the round pen with just a hand under his jaw. After the Dickensons left, I tried to see just how much I could do without a halter: saddling, drawing and driving, handling his feet, working on lateral flexion, getting to the hindquarters. It really helped to look at things differently and to have fun experimenting.

The combination of all these things led to a big mental change in both of us. I stopped seeing Mythril's leaving as such a big deal. He stopped making a big deal of it. While he'd still test me regularly, it felt half-hearted compared to what it had been. Before I knew it almost three months had passed and I struggled to recall the last time he'd gotten away from me.

It was August now and Mythril had become somewhat of an odd steady-Eddie: he was generally nonplussed no matter what the situation or stimulator, but would randomly run off with you if he wasn't interested in what you had asked of him. For example, I could ride him right through Mindy's sheep without hesitation, whereas my other mule Gimli and most of the horses would understandably become anxious. But if I asked for him to turn right when he wanted to turn left, he'd simply flatten out and leave. I'd stay on him, but he'd be checked out mentally and generally aimed for another horse and rider or some other frustrating destination, like under a low-hanging cottonwood tree. Though improving, he was still somewhat predictably unreliable.

A week before the Buck clinic, Mindy and I went out for a quick ride on one of the back pastures. Cottonwoods are scattered more thickly near the creek bed and there are several trees lying around that had come down years prior. It is a fun place to ride with lots of opportunity to use the trees to guide your horse around and over. Mindy was on Luna—a colt that she had let me help her start (it was a big first for me)—and I was on Mythril. We reminisced over the past few months, laughing as we recalled the amusing trio the mules and I were when we showed up with all of our challenges.

"Mythril would make a good jumper. You should have seen how he loved to jump our brush pile every time he pulled away from me back home," I jested.

"Have you ever jumped him?"

"No, but if you don't think it's an insane idea, I'd love to have your help getting him to the point one day where I could casually jump him. Just for fun, not to compete, but I think it'd be neat. I'm probably crazy though. He's already come so far."

Mindy didn't miss a beat. "Go try that log up ahead. The longer one. Just aim for the middle and hold his mane so you don't pull on his mouth."

I thought she was kidding.

"Oh, um, I meant in the future once you think he's ready."

She nodded. "Go try that log."

I wished she was kidding.

We walked over with great uncertainty and I asked him to go over it. He wasn't convinced either and stepped over it hesitantly.

"You'll have to actually ask him to go," Mindy teased.

I turned around and trotted toward it and this time he jumped. I lost my balance some because I was behind the motion and not organized. He grabbed himself and got tight for a moment due to my poor riding. I stayed on, but it was all around sloppy on my part. He just stopped on the other side and waited, probably half expecting he'd get in trouble for doing something he wasn't supposed to. I was thrilled. Feeling more confident, I tried another, and for the next several minutes Mindy and I rode around finding different hurdles to try. I'm sure it wasn't the prettiest jumping you've ever seen, but we were sure having fun.

We returned to the arena with both us and our mounts in good spirits. One of Mindy's students had arrived for lessons and we were all sitting on our horses chatting when Mythril started acting like he wanted to lie down. I moved him around a little but Mindy noticed and stopped me. "It's different in each situation, but with him right now I'd let him lie down with you on him if you are comfortable with it." I nodded and let him stop. He relaxed and took a deep breath, then adjusted himself and lay down.

I sat really still, making sure my feet stayed out from under him, and rubbed his neck. He sat there for a few seconds then got back up and took another deep breath. It was a huge and very tangible change from the Mythril I was used to. I got off, feeling deeply pleased and so humbled.

The Buck clinic was that weekend. The day before I still didn't know which mule I would take. I wanted to take Mythril, but didn't want to set ourselves up for trouble being in a different environment where it'd be especially harder to back myself up if he decided to leave. After talking with Mindy about it, she not only thought it was feasible to take him, but recommended that I do. I was starting to learn to expect the unexpected from her.

The Dickensons and some of their friends had come that week for the clinic and brought their horses. We had three trailers and nearly two dozen horses that we ended up taking, some of them for Mindy's students who were going to meet us at the clinic. I can't remember exactly why, but I didn't have the halter with the 20-foot lead rope with me. I only had the regular one I used to tie Mythril in the trailer. I don't know who was more nervous. It was the first time since we owned him that Mythril was trailered to a new location without Gimli. Any hopes of me being inconspicuous or keeping a low profile quickly went out the window. Though Mythril was very respectful on the

end of the lead rope and didn't show signs of leaving, every few minutes or so he let out a great big bray and looked around anxiously. I was hoping he'd quiet down by the time Buck rode in and we actually started, but alas, he continued at regular intervals to alert everyone to his presence. So not only the long ears, but the constant braying made it clear to everyone that a mule was in their midst. To my utter mortification, he even did it several times over Buck's explanations. As hard as it was, I had to let it slide, stomp out my self-consciousness and pride yet again and get busy learning just as if I were back at the ranch.

Two hours later, I felt as if I was walking on air. I had just put up Mythril and was grabbing a snack as we waited for the Horsemanship Two class to start. He had been golden and I was indebted to Mindy for preparing us to reach this point. Riding in the Buck clinic was amazing, but it wouldn't have been possible without Mindy's intense involvement the months prior. She did exactly what she does for the horses—set us both up for success so we could continue to make progress.

The second day we ran into what in the past would have been a significant hitch, but that day was confirmation that we were getting somewhere. As we were walking through the arena to pick up my name tag, speakers turned on with a loud popping noise just as we were passing. I didn't have time to jump (it startled me as well) before Mythril shot backwards and twisted his head away, wide-eyed and very much set up to leave. I had little time to react, but I moved to try to get a better angle when he stopped, looked at me, and then resumed walking forward. I didn't know whether to be relieved or tickled; I was both I suppose.

At the end of the third day I walked over to thank Buck with my friend and roommate Mandy, who had flown over from Holland to also stay at the ranch. He was very kind and warm despite likely being very tired and having already heard different expressions of gratitude dozens of times from other riders. It was all still somewhat surreal to me. I was brimming over with gratitude to everyone who had been a part of this journey. I remember Buck telling me at some point during the brief conversation: "That mule can stop. Make sure you get a good stop on him." Though I didn't fully understand or appreciate what he was saying at the time, I was grateful for that advice and made a mental note to work on it.

As I watched the afternoon class finish up, I thought more about the process that had led to this point. Mindy's approach could loosely be compared to throwing a toddler into the deep end of the pool to teach them to swim. I liken Buck's approach more to the bulleted checklist of how to prepare for your first swimming lesson followed by a step-by-step walkthrough of just that lesson. I tended to think I worked better with the



Rainy day fun trying to ride in sync. Photo by Mindy Bower.

checklist and detail-oriented instruction. I have certainly been more inclined toward that approach all my life probably because it feels safer to me since I can regulate my progress to be as gradual and comfortable as I can handle. I can wade into the water on my own, so to speak. Now I realize that it was critical that I was "thrown in the water" first. It was crazy scary at points - struggling to keep my head above water and not sinking in resignation - but I had learned that just like with the horses, often the ideal place for learning lies just outside my comfort zone.

Mandy and I were still talking about that clinic long after it was over. I was gushy as usual talking about how amazed I was with Mythril—how he had done so marvelously and made so much progress—how I could hardly believe how far he'd come based on where he'd been when we started out. At one point, Mandy stopped me and said, "You know, you've got to stop focusing on his past as if he's the same mule he was two years ago, or even two months ago. He doesn't think the same way we tend to about past baggage and progress. He just changed. He's moved on. At some point you have to, too, if you are going to really get somewhere together."

I was very inclined to be defensive at first—after all, I wasn't holding it over him like some dark cloud, but rather as a wonderful comparison to show his progress.

But Mandy was right. And her wise words helped me turn a corner. He had changed. And more importantly, he had moved on. By constantly remembering and talking about what he used to be, I was limiting what he could become. I was shortchanging him. He didn't need the same old Cosette who tiptoed around him with my own self-imposed idea of feel and support. He needed me to meet him where he was now - in the moment. This truly was no longer about fixing him. It was about continuing to fix me. And about us taking the journey together—each changing ourselves.

The irony was that this all went back to how I eventually hoped to use the God-given chemistry between humans and horses, especially broken ones, to heal both.



Preventing and Dealing With Foot Phobias

Part One: Handling Foal Feet – Training for Trimming

By Heather Smith Thomas

It's not natural for a horse to pick up his foot and hold it up for a person to pick out the dirt and rocks, trim it or shoe it. This is as unnatural as allowing a person to throw a saddle on his back and get on and ride. The horse must become tolerant of an unnatural situation.

Good foot-handling manners is learned behavior. This is part of a horse's training—and should be given as much attention as any other aspect of training. Most horsemen work on getting a young horse easy to catch, halter, tie up, accept bridling, saddling, etc. but often don't spend enough time working with the feet. This makes the farrier's job difficult when it's time to trim or shoe that horse. Sometimes the farrier must work on a young, inexperienced horse that hasn't had enough foot handling, and sometimes it's an older horse that has been neglected in this aspect of training, or had improper handling (bad experiences) and resists any efforts to work on the feet.

Many horse owners need to spend more time training their young horses to be foot-friendly, or working to correct bad manners/bad habits of older horses that are difficult to trim and shoe. People sometimes buy a young horse that is maybe halter broke, and the horse might go into a trailer, but that's the extent of its training. Then they call the farrier to have that horse's feet trimmed—or shod if the horse is being trained to ride—and assume the horse is going to stand there and have its feet worked on. This can potentially be a traumatic situation for the horse, the owner and the farrier.

STARTING WITH A FOAL – Every young horse should have his feet handled as part of his daily grooming or training routine so he will be comfortable with this aspect of his care—and patient about having his feet cleaned or trimmed. It's always wise to start handling the horse's feet at a very young age, for two reasons. If you start in early foalhood and do a good job, he will be very cooperative about foot handling for the rest of his life. Also, when he's a baby, he is not bigger and stronger than you are.

When you first start working with the foal, be patient. Spend a little time each day, but not long sessions or the foal will become tired and resist. A good trainer knows when to quit on a good note. Work with each foot equally, and make sure the foal can balance himself on the other 3 legs. Hold the leg up for only a short time at first, and never let him take it away from you. Set it back down when he is not struggling. He must learn that you are the one to decide when it is put down, not him.

Once he has learned to balance himself and is at ease with having you hold up a foot, gradually hold each one for a longer period of time. Don't just pick up a foot for a couple of seconds and put it right back down again. Hold it up in shoeing posi-

tion (between your legs for a front foot, across your thigh for a hind), and actually clean it. If he gets accustomed to holding his foot up for a longer and longer period, he will not be so impatient or upset when the time comes for trimming or shoeing. When cleaning the foot, also tap on the hoof wall with your hoof pick occasionally, to get him used to the feel of it, and more ready to accept having nails pounded.

Remember that young horses, like young children, have a short span of attention and patience. If you do your own foot trimming, try to keep the young horse happy and comfortable when you do his first trimming. If your farrier does it, make sure he or she tries to keep the youngster at ease with the task.

The foot should be held in a position that does not cause the horse any discomfort or anxiety—not too high, nor twisted out to the side. Remember that legs bend within a very specific range of motion, and should not have any strain put on the joints. This is also very crucial when trimming or shoeing an older horse that might have stiff or arthritic joints, or a horse with an old injury that might become uncomfortable if the leg is kept flexed too long.

The leg should not be held at such an angle that it might cause pain, and should never be pulled out from the body at shoulder or hip. Your position (or that of your farrier) should be dictated more by the horse's comfort than your own (or the farrier's). A tall person sometimes has more trouble accommodating the angle of the horse's leg (especially on a hind foot) than a shorter person who can keep the leg closer to the ground or more under the horse.

Work smoothly and swiftly, and put the leg back down before the horse becomes impatient and wants to have it back. This may mean doing just part of the job, going on to the next foot, and coming back again to the first one after the horse has had a chance to stand on it awhile. For a young horse experiencing his first real trimming or shoeing, it often works well if the person doing it works on each foot in stages so that none of the feet must be held up very long. The horse will generally stay more cooperative.

The person doing the trimming can clean each foot, then make the rounds again with the hoof nippers, then come back to each foot again for the final rasping and smoothing. That way the youngster doesn't have to hold a foot up for what seems to him an unbearable length of time. Alternating work on each leg in short stints gives the horse a positional rest, and he stays more comfortable. If he's comfortable, he's less apt to resist and try to take the foot away.

The same principle holds true when shoeing a young, nervous or impatient horse. The faster and more efficiently the



shoer can do the job, the less likely there will be a fight with the horse, since the horse can usually tolerate having his foot worked on for a short time, but may not want to hold it up for a long time.

Here again, the person working on the horse can rotate around the animal, if necessary, trimming and preparing each foot for the shoe, shaping the shoes, nailing them on, then coming back around to clinch them. If a person is too slow and methodical, and tries to do everything on one foot before going on to another, the horse may lose patience.

A person just learning to trim or to shoe should do the first sessions on patient, well-trained horses. Letting an experienced farrier continue to do the young ones or restless ones (until the novice farrier becomes more proficient and can do them more quickly) can save a lot of frustration for both the novice shoer and the horse; you want the trimming or shoeing to always be well tolerated by the horse and not turn into a wrestling match. If you start handling the feet regularly when the horse is a foal, he will be well mannered by the time he needs his first trim. That first trim might be needed at a few weeks to a few months of age, depending on his conformation (if he needs corrections at an early age) and the amount of wear on the feet.

Tia Nelson, a veterinarian/farrier in Helena, Montana, says it's wise to have a farrier look at the foal at 1 or 2 weeks of age if you are concerned about crooked legs that might need some corrective trimming to straighten them. "The earlier the better, for corrections to be effective," she says.

"When teaching the young foal to stand, I put the foal against the mare, or a wall, and start with a hind foot. It's easier for the foal to balance himself with a hind foot off the ground," says Nelson. Putting him next to his mom or the stall wall gives him support and security on one side.

If the foal is nervous, just hold on to the foot briefly, and don't hold it very high off the ground. This is less threatening to him. Horses are prey animals and instinctively feel threatened if

a leg is "trapped" and they are no longer in control of it. Nelson points out that escape is the horse's method of self-defense against predators; they instinctively feel vulnerable if they can't flee. "If you are picking a foot up and holding it, you are going against their hard-wired instinctive response and they become anxious. I always take plenty of time when working with foals, and teach people how to run their hands down the leg and then pick up the foot."

Dean Moshier, a farrier in Delaware, Ohio, says that with young foals he doesn't hold the foot very high when he does the first trim. He doesn't even put a front foot between his legs if it's a flighty youngster. "I don't want that foal to feel restricted and trigger a fight," he says.

"It's easier to handle their feet for their first few times when they are still with the mare. For the first trim, it helps to have the youngster in the stall watching mom get done. Then they have a clue about what is going on and it's not such a foreign idea. It's amazing how easy it is to train a horse if they have some idea about what is expected of them. The same thing with the feet. So I trim the mare before I even attempt to do the baby the first time. Then the baby has some idea about what I am doing, what I smell like, the tools, and what the tools sound like. Nothing is scary; they can see that mom is calm about this. But if their first trim doesn't happen until they are weanlings, we're at a disadvantage because we don't have mom as a role model," says Moshier.

Desensitizing the young horse, getting him used to being touched and realizing it won't hurt him, may take longer with some horses than others. You have to play it by ear and take as much time and patient handling as needed. Properly imprinting a foal at birth can make foot handling easier later, but doing it improperly can backfire, according to Tommy Boudreau, a farrier in Mineral Wells, Texas.

"When the horse is a baby, a lot of people like to touch it all over as soon as it's born," says Boudreau. "I've had a lot of clients who try to imprint their foals and then don't do anything else with them until they bring them in as weanlings to halter break. They just can't believe it when that colt is spooky and trying to get away from them and won't let them pick its feet up."

"People also need to realize that it takes more handling than just the first day!" says Boudreau. There is no substitute for spending a lot of time with a horse, starting slowly, with gradual steps, to gain the horse's trust and keep it.

"You have to treat them like your own kids. You want them to love you but you also want them to respect you. There has to be firmness along with kindness because you don't want to spoil a young horse. Sometimes it takes a firm jerk on the lead rope or a back hand to the belly if they are trying to bite or paw at you or go over the top of you. They have to learn their limits of behavior, and respect you."

Foals and young horses understand the concept of discipline because this is how the pecking order works in the herd. A youngster that is too aggressive when nursing his mother (bunting and impatient) gets a nip on the backside. A bold youngster who tries to have his own way gets put in his place by a more dominant herd member. Sassy foals also need to learn respect when you are working with them, and realize that nipping, biting, kicking, or temper tantrums when you pick up a foot are not allowed.



Human Ego in Horsemanship

By Ross Jacobs

One *of the reasons I have avoided doing clinics with obstacle courses is because people often get fixated about completing the obstacles and less interested in the horse's emotions and okay-ness with which the obstacles are negotiated.*

I know it does not have to be this way, but it seems to be human nature that when presented with a challenge (like an obstacle), completing the challenge successfully takes priority over everything else. It's hard for people to resist the gratification of getting a horse to do something they wanted, but it didn't.

Now substitute the obstacles to say a half-pass. Dressage is often treated like another obstacle course. The gratification of performing some "wow" movements can sometimes take precedence over the okay-ness of the horse. Then add competition to the mix, and humans seem unable to resist the lure of a blue ribbon or shiny medal.

If you extend this idea a little further I believe that any challenge or competition feeds into the nature of people to need a reward. We look to a judge's approval or praise from our friends or instructors. Or we get a dopamine surge when our horse jumps a log or finally does one step of a side pass.

I use to think competition was benign, and the problem was just a few people who took it too seriously. However, now I believe competition is evil in itself—like gambling machines—because it exploits a fundamental flaw of human ego at the expense of a horse's welfare. It's uncommon to see a competitor take competition as a "fun day out with their horse" if they come in last.

But whether the elusive prize we seek is found in success in the competition ring or on the trail or in the wash bay, the problem continues to be that many of us look to making our horse do something as the thing we honor above all else.

It is easy to understand. Getting a horse to do stuff is relatively easy. They are highly submissive and we have a few thousand years' experience and several thousand gadgets to back us up to help get a horse to do stuff. Making a horse to do stuff is easy. But making a horse feel stuff is hard. That's why the idea of a horse's emotional comfort is little more than lip service for many, despite the recognition by most people of its importance.

I mean everybody wants their horse to feel good and they know if they feel good the training goes more smoothly. We all want our horses to feel relaxed, comfortable and happy to do the job

Yep, I want my horse to feel better and relaxed, but look how fast he went around those barrels?

Yes, I want him to be relaxed, but did you see how much more expressive his passage was? How do I get that much expression and still have him relaxed?

Getting a horse to feel stuff is hard. How do we fight human nature for the sake of the animals we love?



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luannresort@aol.com
lastresortquestriancenter.com

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Equine Ventures
406-889-9875
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407-617-3473
kennewmanllc@yahoo.com

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Calendar of Events - See eclectic-horseman.com for entire year's clinics/event listings. Always check with sponsor before event as details may change.

California

7/14-16 Joe Wolter horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2/cow working clinic, Morrow Bay, contact Katy 805-714-5156

7/20-21 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Lazy Double D ranch, Creston, contact Colette Enemark 831-750-1200

Colorado

6/13-15 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Gunnison County Fairgrounds, Gunnison, contact Megan 719-406-2072

6/15-17 Wendy Murdoch clinic, Last Resort Ranch, Ft. Collins, contact 970-568-7682

6/29 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724

7/6 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724

7/8 Steve and Amy LeSatz private cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724

7/20 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724

7/26-28 Kip Fladland horsemanship 1 and cow working clinic, Evergreen, contact Heather 313-638-0994

8/2-4 Buck Brannaman horsemanship 2 clinic, Eagle River Center, Eagle, contact Moni and Steve 970-524-2320

8/3 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724

8/9-11 Buck Brannaman horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2 clinic, Elbert Country Fairgrounds, Kiowa, contact Mindy Bower and Kevin Hall 719-541-5550 Uho ranch.com

8/16-18 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Boulder Country Fairgrounds, Longmont, contact Sherry Gulley 970-351-7444

8/17 Steve and Amy LeSatz cow working clinic, Bridle Bit Ranch, Wellington, contact 970-978-9724

Georgia

6/29-30 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Tiger, contact Kelly 706-344-8690

Illinois

6/14-16 Buster McLaury horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2 with cows clinic, Vandalia, contact Tom & Lea Sommers 618-593-0999

6/19-21 Lee Smith 3 day ride program, Edwardsville, contact Marcy 618-558-7746

6/21-23 Kip Fladland horsemanship 1 and cow working/ranch roping clinic, Pittsfield, contact Trent 217-224-0101

6/22-24 Lee Smith video clinic, Edwardsville, contact Marcy 618-558-7746

Indiana

8/2-4 Jatón Lord clinic, Genesis Equestrian Center, Noblesville, contact Alicyn Arnold 317-690-9307

Iowa

8/9-12 Buster McLaury horsemanship 2 and cow working clinic, Ankeny, contact Brad Coulson 515-313-8789

Kansas

7/28-30 Joe Wolter colt starting/green horse, horsemanship 1, horsemanship 2/cow working clinic, Bar K Bar Arena, Lyons, contact Justin Waggoner 620-335-5063

Kentucky

6/14-16 Brent Graef foundation and advancing horsemanship clinic, Glasgow, contact Alison Paczowski mucksal@gmail.com

6/20-23 Buster McLaury horsemanship 2 and cow working clinic Burlington, contact 859-240-4210

Maine

7/10-17 Luke and Kelli Neubert colt starting, restarts, working with problem and advancing horses clinic, Limerick, contact Frannie Burridge 207-793-4101

Michigan

6/21-23 Brent Graef cow working and horsemanship clinic, Parma, contact Terra tbortels09@gmail.com

7/6-8 Lee Smith foundation and advancing clinic, Negaunee, contact Brandi 906-362-0078

7/13-14 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Sweetwater Farms, Ann Arbor, contact Katie Leader 734-663-0126

7/25-28 Buster McLaury horsemanship 2 and cow working clinic, Harbor Springs, contact Leah Keller 231-838-8498

8/24-25 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, White O'Morn Farm, Chelsea, contact Gail 734-649-5706

Minnesota

7/12-14 Kip Fladland horsemanship 1 and cow working clinic, Le Sueur, contact Jan Ryan 612-414-3118

8/9-11 Kip Fladland foundation horsemanship and

horsemanship 1 clinic, Stewartville, contact Sue Eisman 507-696-5420

Missouri

8/29-30 Ty Evans mulemanship 1 clinic, Ozark Mule Days, Springfield, contact Les Clancy 417-986-8070

8/30-9/1 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, The National Equestrian Center, Lake St. Louis, contact Trent and Katie 217-653-3424 honeycreek-ranch.com

Montana

6/14-16 Bryan Neubert and Randy Rieman colt starting and horsemanship clinic, Choteau, contact Prairie 406-570-8559

6/14-18 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver ranch branding clinic, North Fork Ranch, Babb, contact Brendan Beatty 406-431-4079

6/21-25 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver ranch branding clinic, North Fork Ranch, Babb, contact Brendan Beatty 406-431-4079

6/26-28 Dressage Principles for the Horseman with Jim Hicks, Aspen Ridge Ranch, Red Lodge, contact Storey Hart 973-326-6200 or Hannah 425-652-2273

7/12-14 Jatón Lord clinic, Hardin, contact Wendy Stockton 406-861-0115

7/12-14 Bryan Neubert colt starting and horsemanship clinic, Bozeman, contact Jess Holloway 406-579-3357 or 406-763-4113

7/17-19 Buck Brannaman horsemanship 1 and cow working clinic, McGinnis Meadows Ranch, Libby, contact McGinnis Meadows Cattle and Guest Ranch 406-293-5000 mmgranch.net

7/19-21 Kip Fladland foundation and horsemanship 1 clinic, Big Timber contact Chad Hoover 406-490-6864

7/19-22 Bryan Neubert colt starting, horsemanship and cow working clinic, Wibaux, contact Jen 701-260-2108

7/22-24 Buck Brannaman horsemanship 1 and cow working clinic, McGinnis Meadows Ranch, Libby, contact 406-293-5000

7/26-28 Buck Brannaman horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2 clinic, Gallatin County Fairgrounds, Bozeman, contact Double Diamond Halter Co., Pete & Sharon Melniker Buck@doublediamondhalters.com

8/9-10 Tom Curtin stockmanship clinic, Park City, contact Robbie Cattle Company/Boe Robbie 406-855-0015

8/22-25 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver ranch roping clinic, Lucky Star Ranch, Columbia Falls, contact Geoff 406-253-2254

8/23-25 Joe Wolter ranch roping with Scott Grosskopf clinic, Rocking 74 Camp, Ballentine, contact Jimmie Wolter 806-777-2766

8/28-30 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver ranch roping clinic, Conrad, contact John Balkenbush 406-278-3569

8/31-9/1 Dave Weaver and Gwynn Turnbull Weaver advanced ranch roping clinic, Conrad, contact John Balkenbush 406-278-3569

Nebraska

7/15-19 Ricky Quinn ranch clinic, North Platte, contact Ricky Quinn 308-539-3009

8/23-25 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Chance Ridge Event Center, Omaha, contact Kip Fladland 406-223-2691

New Hampshire

7/19-21 Wendy Murdoch clinic, Periwinkle Farm, Weare, contact Susan Goldfischer 508-395-3877

New Jersey

7/12-14 Joe Wolter colt starting/green horse, horsemanship and cow working clinic, 7 Springs Farm, Pittstown, contact Susan 908-377-7167

New Mexico

8/1-31 Lee Smith clinic, Harmony Hills Ranch, Estancia, contact Lee 602-684-3884

New York

6/28-30 Buster McLaury horsemanship 2 and cow working clinic, Amsterdam, contact Pat Coppola 518-928-9378

7/11-14 Buster McLaury horsemanship 1 and horsemanship 2 clinic, Little Valley, contact Hank Minor 585-245-2126

Oregon

6/20-22 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Grant County Fairground, John Day, contact Sherri Giffin 541-792-0771 Deb Bennett 541-620-4681

6/22-23 Alice Trindle dressage clinic & lesson sessions, T&T Ranch, Haines, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234

6/23-25 Dave Ellis natural bridge to cowboy dressage, Bend, contact Patti 541-306-1088

6/26-27 Dave Ellis Parelli fitness clinic, Bend, contact Patti 541-306-1088

7/5-7 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Benton Country Fairgrounds, Corvallis, contact Doug and Deanna 541-936-0071

7/6-7 Alice Trindle clinic, T&T Ranch, Haines, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234 tnt

7/13-14 Alice Trindle clinic, T&T Ranch, Haines, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234

7/27-28 Alice Trindle dressage clinic & lesson sessions, T&T Ranch, Haines, contact 541-856-3356 or 541-519-7234

Vermont

7/5-8 Buster McLaury clinic, Waterbury Center, contact Stephanie 802-244-7763

Washington

6/26-29 Ty Evans foundation mulemanship, mulemanship 1 and mulemanship 2 clinic, Nine Mile Falls, contact Joe & Jenny Urness 509-993-8750

6/27-30 Buck Brannaman colt starting and horsemanship 1 clinic, Columbia County Fair Grounds, Dayton, contact Robert & Janet 509-520-8777 or Clay & Kathy 509-520-6469 TheHorseFellowship.com

7/12-14 Buck Brannaman foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, Ellensburg Rodeo Arena, Ellensburg, contact Trent and Julie Marquis 509-728-3190

7/17-18 Dave Ellis natural elements of cowboy dressage clinic, Port Angeles, contact Jerry or Mary 360-460-6410 or 360-460-5733

7/19-21 Dave Ellis natural versatile horsemanship clinic, Port Angeles, contact Jerry or Mary 360-460-6410 or 360-460-5733

8/2-4 Brent Graef foundation and advancing horsemanship clinic, Brush Prairie, contact Lynnae Berg mabjoy@gmail.com

8/3-6 Wendy Murdoch open clinic, Circle B Ranch, Snoqualmie contact Becka Knapp 425-891-4262

8/5-7 Brent Graef foundation and advancing horsemanship clinic, Brush Prairie, contact Lynnae Berg mabjoy@gmail.com

Wyoming

6/13-16 Buck Brannaman colt starting clinic, Houlihan Ranch, Sheridan, contact Reata 307-752-7987

6/17-21 Dave Ellis purpose for our horsemanship foundation principles clinic, Buffalo contact Terri 307-684-7771

6/27-7/1 Tom Curtin horsemanship clinic, Tipperary Ranch, Buffalo, contact Amy Gonzales 307-758-4632 Tana Lutterman 817-901-8815

7/25-27 Bryan Neubert colt starting and horsemanship clinic, Chugwater, contact Kimberly 307-715-9518

7/29-8/7 Trina Morris The Ranch Clinic, foundation horsemanship, horsemanship 1/2, cow working, and ranch roping, The Hat Creek Ranch, Wheatland, contact Trina Morris 307-331-8245 or Heather Sweet 831-455-5697

Canada

6/14-16 Tom Curtin clinic, Erin, Ontario, contact Ron Chauvin 519-833-9704

6/15-16 Trina Morris foundation horsemanship and horsemanship 1 clinic, 3 Lazy D Arena, Edmondton, AB, contact Lauren 780-292-1223

6/22-23 Trina Morris horsemanship 1 and cow working clinic, Forsyth Ranch Arena, Medicine Hat, AB, contact Donnie 306-299-7505 or Stacey 306-661-0120

7/12-14 Martin Black advanced horsemanship and cattle handling clinic, To-field, Alberta, contact Jamie Dodds jamieson_dodds@yahoo.ca

7/13-14 Jec Ballou western dressage clinic, Alberta, contact anequineapproach@hotmail.com

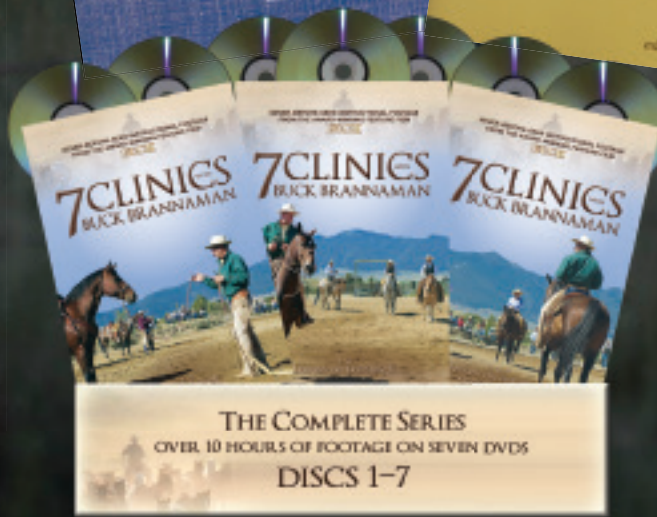
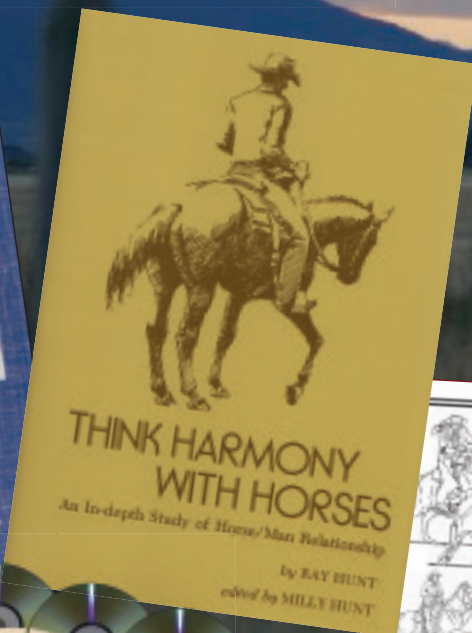
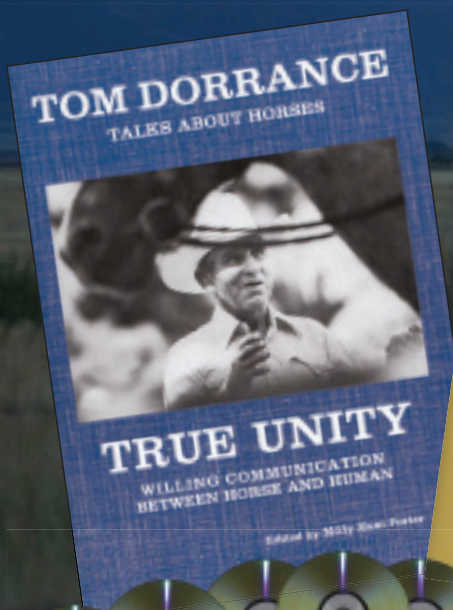
7/22-24 Martin Black horsemanship 1&2 – Hackamore and Two-Rein Stage clinic, Cochrane Ag Society Arena, Cochrane, Alberta, contact Cynthia Austin 403-836-5900

7/25-28 Martin Black clinic, Pincher Creek, Alberta, contact Maria Didkowsky, mdidkowsky@hotmail.com

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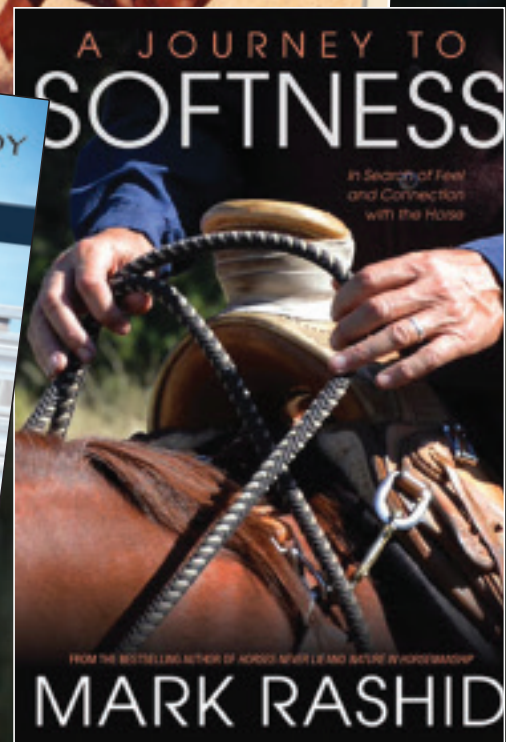
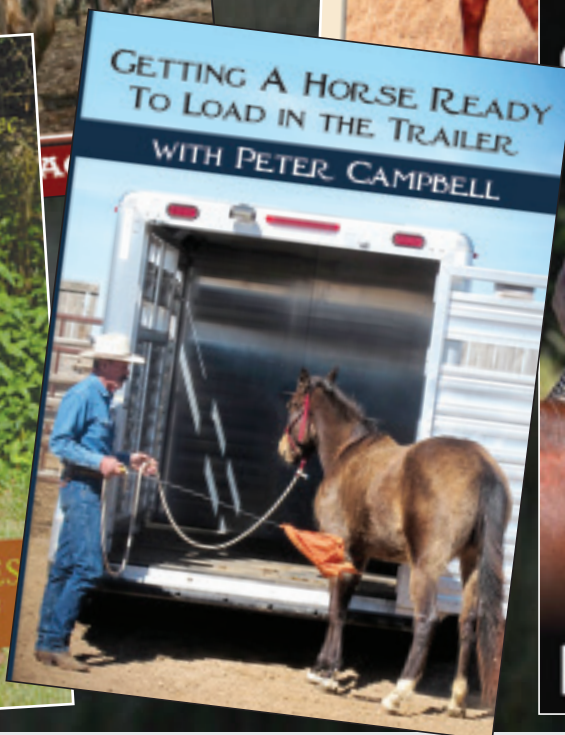
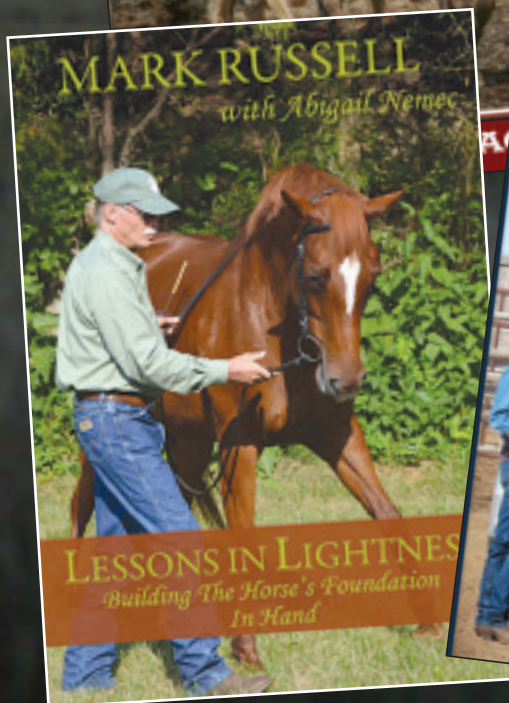
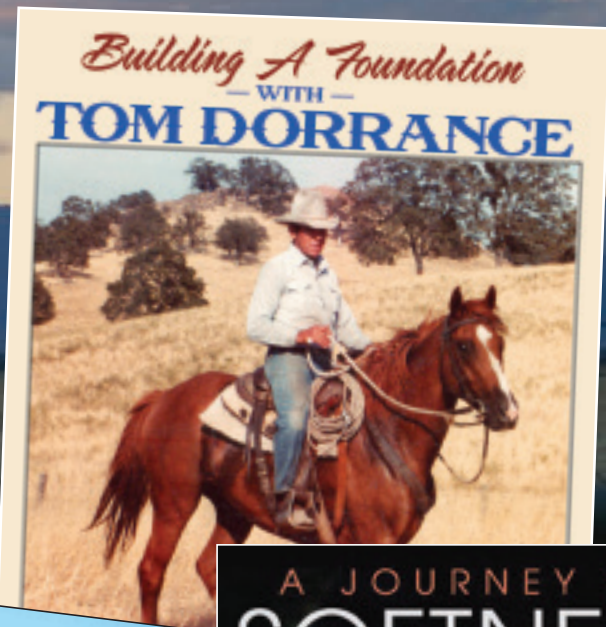
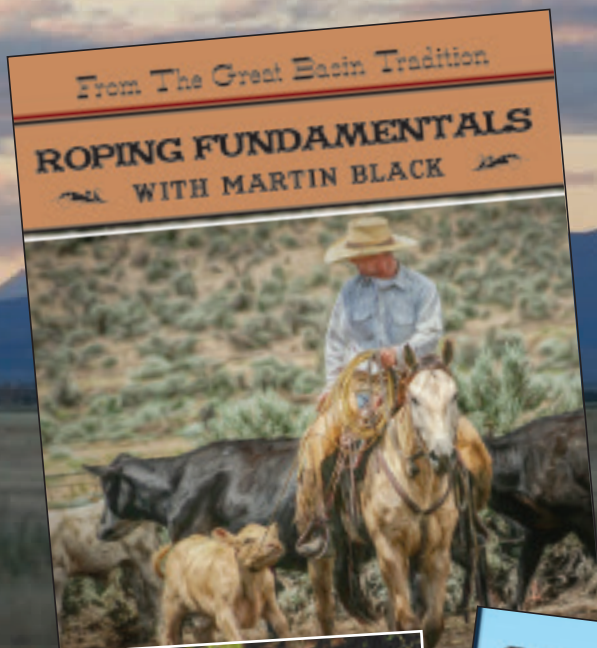
"When you ask your horse to do something it should be his idea... he wants to do it, he understands how to do it, and he does it." Ray Hunt's philosophy of the ideal relationship between horse and man. That philosophy is discussed in this book, in a manner that makes the reader feel as if he is listening to Ray talk. Hardcover, photos, 87 pgs.

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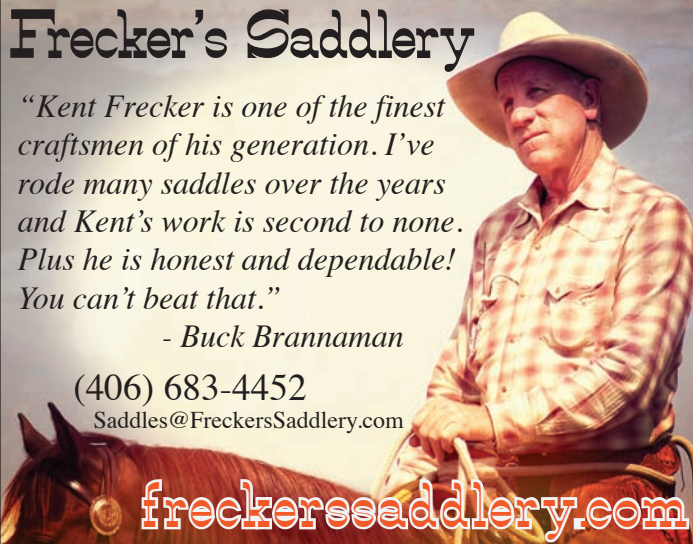

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What were they thinking?

"I'm going to wait. I'm not going to force this. I know if I wait, my idea will become her idea and we'll move that cow together."

Mike Wilson and his mare, Pebbles, during a Brent Graef clinic in Michigan. Mike says, "Brent is a genuine horseman who is courteous and patient. A really nice guy that horses and humans can get along with. Brent's horses want to try for him and that's what I was looking for in this moment." You can read more about Mike and Pebbles in EH #101.

